



Dear Friend(s),

In Summer 2008 Urban Splash submitted plans for the development of Morecambe Central Promenade. These were withdrawn after their unfavourable reception (thanks partly to the volume of objections) but have now been revised and re-submitted. However, very little seems to have changed from the original proposal.

The area under consideration is on the seaward side of Marine Road, from the Midland Hotel to the car park opposite Northumberland Street. At present this is occupied by the hotel itself, gardens (including the Remembrance Gardens and War Memorial), the old Swimming Stadium/Bubbles and Dome sites, and some car parking. These have always permitted **public access** (some with entrance fees) and a view of Morecambe Bay and the Lakeland Hills from Marine Road.

Urban Splash's proposal is to build seven blocks pointing out to sea and rising at their seaward end to six storeys in height (the Midland Hotel is only four storeys). These will be largely for **private residential use** with possibly some extra hotel accommodation on the upper floors and commercial development at ground level. The block furthest from the Midland Hotel is designated for entertainment purposes.

On the landward side, in front of the Midland, is the so-called 'Midland Circus' – part road, part open-air events area – whose construction will entail the demolition of much of the hotel's boundary wall and a partial re-alignment, cutting off a section of the hotel's car park. This wall is an essential element of the overall design of the Midland, built at the same time in 1933. Although listed at only Grade 2 as opposed to the hotel's Grade 2* status, it deserves the same respect.

Alarminglly, the first phase of the development is to concentrate on the 'Midland Circus' and the two apartment blocks nearest the hotel. The first block, rising to six storeys, is only a few metres from the steps of the Rotunda café and thus will replace the Midland's view over the bay to the Lake District with a wall of apartments (see accompanying sketches). This is in direct contravention of Lancaster City Council's own planning guidelines about safeguarding the setting of the Midland Hotel and building on a Conservation Area. The proposed blocks, which have little architectural or aesthetic merit, are more suited to a heavily urbanised city centre location where there is no pressing need to reflect local characteristics or preserve open space. They will overwhelm the Midland Hotel and could seriously compromise its future success.

Please turn over.....

