

Design and Access Statement

& Heritage Statement

On Behalf of:

BDL Management Ltd

In Relation to:

Proposed Wooden Trellis

at

Ramada Hotel, St Albans Road West, Hatfield

July 2013

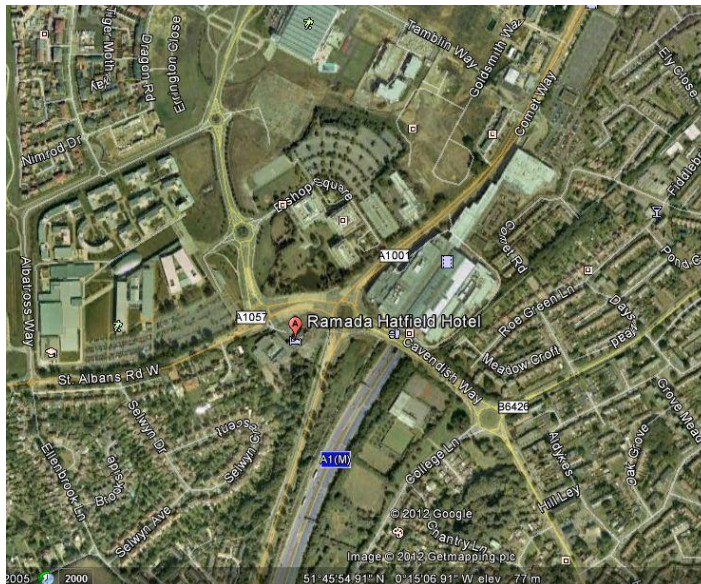
1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Statement has been prepared to support a combined planning and listed building application for the installation a 1.8 metre wooden trellis fence/screen on top of an existing dwarf wall within the car park of the Ramada Hotel, St Albans Road West, Hatfield.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The application site is located within the car of the existing hotel, which in turn is located at the junction of St Albans Road West and Comet Way, to the west of the A1. The land to the north of the hotel site comprises the recently developed Hatfield Aerodrome, which includes new offices, the University of Hertfordshire, commercial and residential development. To the north east of the site, the area is dominated by the Hatfield Galleria (which is located over the A1) and the complex of buildings which adjoin it, including a multi-storey car park located just to the north east of the application site. To the east of the site is Comet Way, beyond which is an open strip of land which forms the embankment to the A1. To the west of the site is a residential area. Hatfield town centre is located approximately 1.2 km to the east of the site, east of the A1.

Figure 1: The Site Context



- 2.2 The site is accessed from both Comet Way (a 'left-in left-out' arrangement) and St Albans Road West. The site comprises the original hotel building (constructed in 1933, in an 'art deco' architectural style), located in the north east corner of the site. This hotel was extended in the late 1990's, with the new accommodation being situated to the rear (west) of the original building. The extension is of a modern composite cladding style, which is designed to contrast with the original building. To the north, east and south east of the hotel building, the parking areas are located. The southern part of the site comprises a landscaped area, within the ownership of the hotel, which includes some mature trees which provide a backdrop to the hotel building.

Figure 2: The Demise of the Hotel



Figure 3: Area of Car Park where trellis is to be erected



3.0 THE PROPOSAL

- 3.1 This application seeks the installation of a 1.8 metre wooden trellis, on top of an existing dwarf wall in the car park to the south east of the hotel building. The existing dwarf wall, which varies in height between 0.75m and 0.93m, provides a retaining structure between parts of the car park which are of varying heights. The northern area of the wall is softened with landscaping. The wall, which has a 'dog-leg' within it, is approximately 32 metres in length.
- 3.2 The hotel wishes to erect the trellis fence/screen in order to help screen the rear part of the building. This rear part of the building is considered to be of poor architectural quality and the hotel considers that the overall appearance of the site, when viewed from the north and east, would be improved if this part of the building is screened.
- 3.3 Additional planting would be added to the landscaped areas to the north of the dwarf wall, including 'creeper' plants, with the intention being that these would be drawn to the trellis, thereby creating a more effective

screen to the building.

4.0 PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 4.1 This section of the Statement outlines the relevant planning policy at national and local levels, which are considered to be of relevance to the proposed development.

National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012)

- 4.2 This document sets out Government Policy on all areas of planning, replacing the previous system of PPGs/PPSs. The key theme of the document is the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Para 154 advises that this means *“approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay and where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, granting permission unless any adverse impact would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits...”*
- 4.3 Para 56 confirms the great importance the Government gives to the design of the built environment. Good design is seen as *“a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.”*
- 4.4 Section 12 deals with ‘Conserving and enhancing the heritage environment’. Para 128 indicates that LPA’s should require *“an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including the contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary.”*
- 4.5 Para 129 encourages LPA’s to identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of the heritage asset) taking account of available evidence and any necessary expertise. LPA’s are then directed to take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspects of the proposal.
- 4.6 Para 132 advises that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation. The guidance advises that any harm to a heritage asset (or its loss) should be required *“clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional”*.
- 4.7 Para 133 advises that where a proposed development will lead to a substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset, LPA’s should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss.
- 4.8 Paragraph 134 states:

“Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.”

4.9 Paragraph 187 states:

“Local Planning Authorities should look for solutions rather than problems, and decision-takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible. Local Planning Authorities should work proactively with applicants to secure developments that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area.”

Development Plan

4.10 The site and its immediate surroundings are unallocated by the 2005 Local Plan (saved in 2008). The Local Plan policies most relevant to the proposed trellis are Policies D1 and D2. Policy D1 relates to ‘Quality of Design’. This policy requires the standard of design in all new development to be of a high quality. The design of new development should incorporate the design principles and policies in the Plan.

4.11 Policy D2 requires all new development to respect and relate to the ‘character and context’ of the area in which it is proposed. Development proposals should as a minimum maintain, and where possible, enhance or improve the character of the existing area.

5.0 HERITAGE ISSUES

5.1 In accordance with the requirements of the NPPF, the correct way of assessing the impact of the proposed trellis on the listed building is to assess the significance of impact (arising from the proposed development) on the ‘heritage asset’ (namely the listed building). In undertaking this assessment we have had regard to advice contained within the PPS5 Companion Guidance (which remains in place despite the publication of NPPF) and the ‘Conservation Principles – Policies and Guidance’ report issued by English Heritage (2008). The latter gives guidance on how to assess heritage significance, and thereby consider whether a development would harm the historic value. The key message in assessing the significance of impact is that the assessment is based on the nature and location of the heritage asset and that analysis can only be made on judgement, based on the circumstances of the proposal and its location.

Assessment of Significance

5.2 The assessment of significance is set out below.

Overview of Listing

5.3 The starting point for assessing the significance of impact is to understand the nature of the heritage asset. In this instance, the property is Grade II listed and therefore the appropriate source of heritage information is the ‘Listing Notice’ maintained by English Heritage. The Notice confirms that the Hotel (referred to by English Heritage as ‘The Comet Public House’) was first listed on 6th July 1981. The Listing Notice gives the following description for the listing:

“Hotel. 1933. By E B Musman. Red brick with stone dressings on steel frame. The plan is supposedly in the form of an aeroplane. Two storeys. Projecting centrepiece with rounded end, the ground floor projects beyond the first. Wings on either side, also half round, single storey only. Five window side elevations. Largely original steel framed windows, the two modern ones in the front elevations are openings in originally blank walls. Clipsham stone dressings strip above and below windows and to parapets. Flat

roofs not visible, the original roof lantern has been removed. The interior has been altered. A pioneer hotel in the modern style.”

The Fabric and Evolution of the Place

5.4 The starting point in this instance is to understand the nature of the ‘heritage asset’. Whilst the Listing Notice (described above) refers to internal alterations and changes to the roof, it is relevant to note that there is no reference to the more recent extensions to the hotel, which were approved in the late 1990’s. These extensions are of a modern design (and use modern materials) which completely contrast with the original building.

5.5 On this basis, it is clear that the building was originally listed due to its unusual design (in the shape of an aeroplane) and its architectural style (Art Deco).

Relate Identified Heritage Values to the Fabric of the Place

5.6 Based on a review of the listing notice, it is clear the building’s heritage value is its art deco style. In reaching this conclusion we consider the second reason for its listing (i.e. its unique shape) has been diluted following the significant extensions that have taken place. Such extensions have irrevocably altered the appearance of the building. We have also demonstrated above, that the nature of the surrounding area has no relevance to its listing.

5.7 In light of the above, the proposed trellis is designed to help improve the appearance of the rear part of the hotel, particularly when viewed from outside of the site. Given that this part of the building is of no architectural merit (and is not mentioned in the listing notice), and since the key ‘heritage’ part of the building is its art deco appearance (which would remain completely visible following the installation of the fence), the proposed development cannot be considered to affect the integrity of the art deco design, nor its overall design quality. In fact, it is considered that the proposed trellis screen will enhance and improve the appearance of the building, positively contributing to its setting.

Impact on External Appearance and Views

5.8 The positive benefit of the trellis screen will improve the overall appearance of the hotel building when viewed from both outside the site and within the site. It will not affect views of the art deco facades of the original building, and can therefore not be considered to have an adverse impact on the heritage asset when viewed from both within the site, as well as longer views into the site.

ACCESS ISSUES

6.1 The proposed trellis fence/screen would have no impact on access to the site, nor on the free flow of movement within the site. It is to be fixed on top of an existing structure, currently located within the car park.

7.0 COMPLIANCE WITH RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

7.1 This section assesses the proposed trellis screen against the planning policies identified as being relevant in Section 4.0. The key issues to be considered when assessing the applications are as follows:

- The proposed screen is of a good quality design and appropriate scale and has been positioned to avoid impact on the key heritage part of the building (and enhance its setting).
- The proposals are entirely appropriate to the site and its context.

- The proposed screen would have no impact on the character of the building and its surroundings.
- The nature of the trellis would not have a physical impact on the listed building as it is not attached to it and is sufficiently distant from the building.
- In terms of listed building issues, it has been demonstrated that the effects of the proposed trellis would positively enhance the setting of the listed building. It is certainly not the case that the trellis would result in “substantial harm, to the listed building”.

7.2 In light of the above, the proposals accord with the requirements of Local Plan Policies D1 and D2, and the NPPF.

8.0 CONCLUSION

8.1 The proposed development is of a small scale and is designed to improve the appearance of the existing hotel building (and in particular its rear, more modern, extension – which is of no heritage quality), thereby positively enhancing the site and the setting of the listed building.

8.2 The proposed development complies with Policies D1 and D2, together with the NPPF. Accordingly, planning permission and listed building consent should be approved.