



Our Ref: Ramada Hotel, Hatfield.
Your Ref: TBC

Head of Development Management
Council Offices
The Campus
Welwyn Garden City
Hertfordshire
AL8 6AE

PLANNING DEPARTMENT
16 JAN 2014
RECEIVED

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

16 JAN 2014
SG-2014/0048-E1

BY RECORDED DELIVERY

15 January 2014

Dear Head of Development Management

Part 2 Regulation 5 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 – Land at the Ramada Hatfield Hotel, St Albans Road West, Hatfield, Herts, AL10 9RH. Request for Screening Opinion.

I write on behalf of our client Lester Hotels in connection with obtaining a Screening Opinion from Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (hereinafter referred to as the LPA) as to the requirement for an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for a proposed development at the above cited address. A Land Registry Title Plan is enclosed sufficient to identify the land. This submission contains a Title Plan, a description of the proposal and envisaged effects on the environment and information deemed pertinent to allow the adoption of a Screening Opinion.

The design is at an early stage though is sufficiently advanced in outline form to permit the submission of this Opinion. In brief the proposal entails enlarging the existing C1 (hotel) facilities via adding an additional floor of accommodation above the modern components of the hotel located to the rear of a listed building at the front of the site (see below). The exact number of additional rooms has not been established but will be in the 10s rather than 100s. In addition it may potentially also be proposed that an A1/A4 or A5 use occupy part of the ground floor.

Having regard to Paragraph 10 (b) of Schedule 2 of the Regulations, it is considered that the proposal falls within the definition of an 'Urban Development Project' in light of the application site exceeding 0.5ha (at 1.533ha) and the nature of the development proposed. However having regard to the indicative criteria shown in Schedule 3 and Circular 02/99, the nature of the proposal (extension of existing and potential change of use), applicable policy designations, juxtaposition to Statutorily Designated sites (see below) and other pertinent factors that the proposal is not one where an EIA would be required.

With particular reference to Annex A (para A33) of Circular 02/99, it is highlighted that in the case of Urban Development Projects, EIA is generally not needed unless that proposed would result in development of significantly greater scale than existing, would result in quantifiable 'impacts', be demonstrably different in nature to that surrounding or result in higher levels of contamination. Annex A quantifies that where the site area exceeds 5 hectares (or provides 10,000sq.m of commercial floorspace and/or more than 1000 dwellings) then EIA is more likely to be required. The proposal falls far short of all these thresholds.

In light of the above we do not consider that an EIA will be required.

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Background:

The Ramada Hotel originally opened as The Comet Hotel in 1936 (the name derived from the DH Comet Racer aircraft which won the 1934 England to Australia air race). The Comet name was subsequently reused for the first jet passenger plane later built at the De Havilland airfield/aircraft factory then found to the west. The original Hotel layout was in the form of an 'aeroplane shape' evidence of which remains in part despite subsequent extensions. This unique layout and associated history partially justified the building being Grade II listed in July 1981 (ref 1101036).

Subsequent to being Statutorily listed, the building was (in the writer's opinion) unsympathetically extended following the grant of consents in the 1990s and early 2000s. The building's setting is completed by extensive areas of car-parking, signage and the exposed relationship to the road network bordering 3 sides of the site.

- S6/2000/0861/FP and S6/2000/0860/LB - Single storey extension to form linen room to bedroom block
- S6/1998/0447/FP - Demolition of staff block and erection of two storey extension to provide 26 additional bedrooms and construction of 26 additional car parking spaces
- S6/1992/0233/FP and S6/1992/0252/LB - Alterations and extensions including erection of new bedroom block to provide 51 bedrooms and 2 meeting rooms; single storey extension for laundry room; new entrance lobby and refurbishment; additional car parking facilities

Purpose of this correspondence:

The LPA are requested to issue a formally adopted Screening Opinion under Part 2 Regulations 4 and 5 of the EIA Regulations as to the requirement for an EIA for the proposal described above.

The LPA are also requested to confirm, in accordance with paragraph 37 of Circular 2/99 'Environmental Impact Assessment', whether a nature conservation body i.e. the Natural England, has notified the LPA under Article 10(u) (ii) of the General Development Procedure Order (as amended) of a desire to be consulted in the event of proximity to a Site of Special Scientific Interest. Normal consultation zones are 2km so it is not envisaged an exception has been made by Natural England in this instance though confirmation is requested.

Having reference to Paragraphs 36 and 38 of Circular 02/99 proximity to a SSSI is not in itself a cause for an EIA except under the circumstances highlighted in the preceding paragraph.

Site Characteristics and Surrounding Designations:

The site is not subject to any particularly onerous Planning Policy designations save the Statutory Listing. Surrounding land is washed over primarily by economic/commercial related designations (principally those applying to the former De Havilland airfield site to the north and west) though the majority of land is simply designated as lying within the 'built up area' of Hatfield. There is a Grade II listed milestone marker outside the site on St Albans Road West – this will not be affected by the proposal.

The Ramada Hotel is a two-storey brick and clad detached building located in a highly accessible location sandwiched between Comet Way (the A1001) and St Albans Road West (A1057) and immediately adjacent to the De Havilland Campus of the University of Hertfordshire. It is a 3 minute walk from the Galleria Shopping Centre, a 2 minute drive from Junction 3 of the A1(M), a 5 minute drive/20 minute walk from Hatfield Town Centre/Railway Station and a 5

minute drive/15 minute walk from the University's other main campus at College Lane. The site is currently in use as hotel.

In light of its setting between roads and the lack of landscaping around the front, west and part of the east boundary, the building is readily visible within the locality. The building is however dwarfed by many larger buildings nearby including those on the adjacent Campus buildings and The Galleria. The site is triangular in shape, flat and comprehensively developed save for a pocket/copse of trees in the south corner of the site.

Surrounding land uses include residential to the west/south with commercial/educational uses to the north and east.

It is understood that there are no Tree Preservation Orders on site. Confirmation is requested.

The site contains a Grade II listed building. A Listed Building Consent application accompanied by an appropriate level of assessment will accompany the future application. However in light of the current situation it is not considered that the addition of a further floor to what is already a substantial extension to the rear of the building, will harm the features mentioned in the listing nor run counter to the rationale behind having listed the building in the first instance..

Having had reference to the Environment Agency's Flood Maps the site is not defined as being within Flood Zones 2 or 3. It is by definition therefore within Flood Zone 1. Within such areas it is sufficient to prepare a FRA which only details how surface water will be dealt with. Accordingly unless confirmed otherwise by the LPA in your formal response following consultation with the Environment Agency, it is not proposed that a full blown FRA will be commissioned.

The following table gives distances from the centre of the site to particularly sensitive land designations/uses within a 2km radius. Where more than 1 listing is found the nearest is quoted albeit multiple designations may be found with the cited radius.

Land Designation	Distance from centre of the site.
SSSI	None within 2km (nearest being 4km to SW at Water End Swallow Holes)
Special Area of Conservation	None within 2km
National Parks	None within 2km
RAMSAR Sites	None within 2km
Local Nature Reserve	Howe Dell c1575m to the east.
AONB	None within 2km
National Forest	None within 2km
World Heritage Sites	None within 2km
RSPB Reserves	None within 2km
Green Belt	390m to the west.
Conservation Area	None within 2km
Scheduled Monuments	None within 2km
Listed Buildings	The Grade II listed Comet Public House (ref 1101036 listed 6/7/81) is on site and will be affected by the proposal. A Grade II listed Milepost is located adjacent to the west boundary (ref 1100903 listed 10/12/1986). This will not be physically affected by the proposal.
National Trust Boundaries	None within 2km

It is contended that given the site is far distanced from sensitively designated areas. The proximity to the Listed structures is a material factor but is not in itself considered sufficient to warrant the LPA concluding that an EIA is required.

Assessment:

It is the applicant's opinion that the proposal constitutes Schedule 2 Development as defined in Schedule 2, Regulation 2 (10b) of the Regulations. It is contended that the nature of the proposal, site size and juxtaposition to neighbouring land uses coupled with its nature, siting and juxtaposition to Statutorily Designated sites, is such that the proposal would not, in the opinion of the undersigned, necessitate the submission of an EIA.

Schedule 3 paragraphs 1 & 2 of the Regulations, detail the selection criteria for screening Schedule 2 Development proposals. Paragraph 3 elaborates upon the assessment methodology and requires that an assessor further consider the proposal against 5 defined criteria areas to determine whether there is a '*potential significant effect of development*' attributable to the proposal.

It is opined that the proposal would not cause demonstrable harm with regard to criteria summarised in paragraphs 1 (a through f) or paragraph 2 (a through c).

We consider that there are no potentially significant attributable effects arising from the proposal per se – save for 'pure' planning assessments related to the acceptability of the proposal in relation to the Heritage Asset.

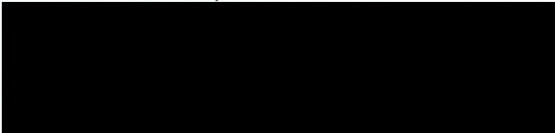
Summary:

It is considered that this submission contains the information specified in Part II Regulation 5 (2) to permit the LPA to adopt a Screening Opinion. However if more information is required please notify the undersigned in writing at your earliest convenience.

In accordance with Part II Regulation 5 (4) & 5 (5) it is requested that the LPA notify the writer of their opinion within the Statutory **3 weeks** of the date of receipt.

Please contact the undersigned should you have any queries regarding the above.

Yours sincerely



Iain Taylor
Planning Director
Village Homes (Southern) LLP

Encls: Site location plan.

cc: Lester Hotels.

Land Registry
Official copy of
title plan

Title number **HD403003**
Ordnance Survey map reference **TL2108SW**
Scale **1:1250**
Administrative area **Hertfordshire : Welwyn
Hatfield**



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