

**WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - PLANNING, PUBLIC PROTECTION AND GOVERNANCE**

DELEGATED APPLICATION

Application No: 6/2019/3245/LB
Location: Comet Hotel St Albans Road West Hatfield AL10 9RH
Proposal: Installation of 2x Illuminated signage (2 no. locations)
Officer: Mr Antoine Commenville

Recommendation: Refused

6/2019/3245/LB

Context	
Site and Application description	<p>The site is a triangular-shaped parcel of land facing onto the roundabout junction of Comet Way and St Albans Road West in Hatfield. It contains the original Comet Road House which is shaped in a geometric representation of an aircraft and faces onto the roundabout. It is a Grade II Listed, two-storey, brick clad, flat-roofed building with a strong horizontal emphasis, designed by E B Musman and built in the 1930's. It is listed for its Art Deco architectural merit and its historic association with Hatfield New Town and the De Havilland factory and airfield.</p> <p>Listed Building Consent was granted under 6/2017/2746/LB for the extension and refurbishment of the Grade II listed building (Use Class C1) following demolition of existing rear and side extensions, erection of student accommodation (Sui Generis) with landscaping and associated works. This has been followed by a recent application for various signage display under LPA ref 6/2019/0957/LB.</p> <p>This application seeks Listed Building consent for the display of 2no. additional illuminated signage on the rounded ends of the building "wing" projections.</p>
Constraints (as defined within WHDP 2005)	<p>LBC - LISTED BUILDING Hotel. 1933. By EB Musman. Red brick with - Distance: 0 PAR - PARISH (HATFIELD) - Distance: 0 Wards - Hatfield Villages - Distance: 0 A4HD - Article 4 HMO Direction - Distance: 0 HHAA - Hatfield Heritage Assessment Area(Wilkin's Green) - Distance: 1.23 BLR - Brownfield Land Regisrty(Hatfield - Comet Hotel, St Albans Road West) - Distance: 0</p>
Relevant planning history	<p>Application Number: 6/2019/3244/ADV Decision: Pending Decision Proposal: Installation of 2x Illuminated signage (2 no. locations)</p> <p>Application Number: 6/2017/2746/LB Decision: Granted Decision Date: 15 February 2018 Proposal: Extension and refurbishment of the Grade II listed building (Use Class C1) following demolition of existing rear and side extensions. Erection of</p>

student accommodation (Sui Generis) with landscaping and associated works.

Application Number: 6/2017/2154/COND
Decision: Granted
Decision Date: 10 November 2017
Proposal: Submission of details pursuant to condition 6 (construction timetable), 12 (construction management plan) & 23 (contamination investigation) on planning permission 6/2016/1739/MAJ

Application Number: 6/2017/2763/COND
Decision: Part Discharge
Decision Date: 06 April 2018
Proposal: Submission of Details Pursuant to Conditions: 2 (Material Samples), 8 (Tree Protection/Removal), 11 (Cycle Parking), 15 (External Lighting and CCTV Cameras), 18 (Noise Protection Scheme) and 19 (Acoustic Report) on Planning Permission 6/2016/1739/MAJ

Application Number: 6/2019/0370/COND
Decision: Granted
Decision Date: 23 May 2019
Proposal: Submission of details pursuant to condition 7 (Hard and Soft Landscape Plan) 8 (Tree, Shrub or Hedge works) 10 (Approved Landscaping Plans) 13 (Location, Design and Specification of Refuse Bin and Recycling Materials) 17 (Urban Drainage) and 22 (Scheme for odour control) on planning permission 6/2016/1739/MAJ

Application Number: 6/2019/0798/COND
Decision: Granted
Decision Date: 23 May 2019
Proposal: Submission of details pursuant to conditions 20 (Noise), 21 (Acoustic) on planning permission 6/2016/1739/MAJ

Application Number: 6/2019/0957/LB
Decision: Pending consideration
Proposal: Various Signage Display

Application Number: 6/2019/0957/LB
Decision: Granted
Decision Date: 15 July 2019
Proposal: Various Signage Display
Signs 1 & 2: 2 no. Halo illuminated Fusion Students logo on student accommodation (sign type 1);
Signs 3-6: 4 no. Student block identification lettering on student accommodation (non-illuminated) (sign type 2A);
Signs 7-12: 6 no. Student block identification halo illuminated lettering on student accommodation (sign type 2B);
Sign 13: 1 no. Hotel entrance sign on Comet Hotel (sign type 3);
Sign 14: 8 no. Student accommodation glazing manifestation on student accommodation (sign type 4b);
Sign 15: 1 no. South east elevation Comet Hotel identification signage on Comet Hotel (sign type 6);
Sign 16: 1 no. Restaurant identification sign on Comet Hotel (sign type 5);
Sign 17: 2 no. Comet Hotel entrance totem signs (sign type 8); and
Sign 18: 1 no. North east elevation Comet Hotel identification signage on Comet Hotel (sign type 7).

Consultations			
Neighbour representations	Support: 0	Object: 0	Other: 0
Publicity	Site Notice Display Date: 10 January 2020 Site Notice Expiry Date: 31 January 2020 Press Advert Display Date: 15 January 2020 Press Advert Expiry Date: 29 January 2020		
Summary of neighbour responses	No representations have been received.		
Consultees and responses	Place Services, Essex County Council (Conservation Advisor) - Objection		
Relevant Policies			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NPPF Others			
Main Issues			
Impact on the character and setting of the listed building and adjoining listed buildings	<p>Section 16 of the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act states that the local planning authority shall have “<i>special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses</i>”. The specific historic environment policies within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) are contained within paragraphs 184-202.</p> <p>Paragraph 192 of the NPPF states, ‘<i>In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;</i> - <i>The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and</i> - <i>The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness’</i> <p>Paragraph 193 of the NPPF outlines 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 and the more important the asset the greater the weight it should be given. Paragraph 194 states that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting) should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of: a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional; b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and world heritage sites, should be wholly exceptional. Where the harm is considered less than substantial Paragraph 196 states that this should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, its optimum viable use. The NPPF therefore does allow for a degree of harm to a heritage asset in particular circumstances.</p> <p>The application is for the installation of 2x Illuminated signage (2 no. locations)</p> <p>The Comet Hotel is a grade II listed building (list entry no: 1101036). Designed by E. B. Musman, it was constructed in 1933 and is characteristic of the Art Deco style. In plan it was intended to reference the shape of an aeroplane; the two rounded side projections depicting the wings.</p>		

	<p>Consent has previously been granted for the installation of signage (6/2019/0957/LB) on the front curved wall (north-east) and above the main doors on both the north-west and south-east elevations. The proposal was revised due to concerns over the prominence of the originally proposed signage on the north-west elevation. The signage was relocated from the parapet down to the first floor above the doorway.</p> <p>It is now proposed to install signage on the rounded ends of the "wing" projections. Historic photographs show that originally there was no signage in these locations. The Conservation Officer has been consulted and has commented that the streamlined appearance, simple details and sharp lines of the building are fundamental aspects of its style and character. The installation of further signage is considered to clutter the elevations and detract from its architectural interest.</p> <p>The extension is therefore considered to cause 'less than substantial' harm to the significance of the listed building as per para. 196 of the NPPF. Regard should also be given to para. 193 which requires great weight to be afforded to the conservation of heritage assets, and para. 194 which requires 'clear and convincing' justification for any harm caused. Para 196 states that 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, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use. While the applicant has explained that the proposed additional signage are intended to attract customers it has not been proven that the public benefits of the provision of additional signage outweigh the identified harm to the significance of the heritage asset.</p>
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Conclusion

The proposed development would materially harm the architectural interest and significance of the Grade II Listed Building and whilst this is less than substantial harm, there are no apparent public benefits which would outweigh the harm on the character and significance of this designated heritage asset. The proposal is therefore contrary to the above relevant policies.

Reasons for Refusal:

1. The proposed signage would materially harm the architectural interest and significance of the Grade II Listed Building. Whilst this is less than substantial harm, there are no apparent public benefits which would outweigh the harm on the character and significance of this designated heritage asset. As such, the proposal is contrary to Policy D1 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and National Planning Policy Framework 2019.

REFUSED DRAWING NUMBERS

2.				
	Plan Number	Revision Number	Details	Received Date
	Comet Stl 00 Zz Dr A P1004		External Signage Proposals	24 December 2019
	Comet Stl 00 Zz Dr A		Existing Elevations	24 December 2019

P1002		
Comet Stl 00 Zz Dr A P1003	Proposed Elevations	24 December 2019
Comet Stl 00 Zz Dr A P1001	Block Plan	24 December 2019
Comet Stl 00 Zz Dr A P1000	Location Plan	24 December 2019

1. POSITIVE AND PROACTIVE STATEMENT

The decision has been made taking into account, where practicable and appropriate the requirements of paragraph 38 of the National Planning Policy Framework and material planning considerations do not justify a decision contrary to the development plan (see Officer's report which can be viewed on the Council's website or inspected at these offices).

Determined By:

Mr Mark Peacock
27 February 2020