



**Lambert
Smith
Hampton**

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Planning Statement (incl. Heritage Statement)

At

Comet Hotel, St Albans Road, West
Hatfield, AL10 9RH

On behalf of

Comet Hatfield Construction Ltd

Prepared by
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Date: 23.12.2019
Ref: TM/PS

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Appendix A – List Description: The Comet

1. Introduction

Site Location

- 1.1 The Comet Hotel is located on the outskirts of Hatfield and is surrounded by a variety of uses. To the north is Hatfield Business Park, north west is University of Hertfordshire - de Havilland Campus, north east is The Galleria (designer outlet centre), east is Hatfield Lawn Tennis Club and Hatfield football association and to the south west are a number of residential properties.
- 1.2 The site is sustainably located west of the A1001 (also known as Comet Way); just off the A1. Whilst located centrally in Hatfield, the site also benefits from direct access to St Albans (via A1057) and to Welwyn Garden City (A1 and A6129).



- 1.3 Access into the site is via Comet Way A1001 or the A1057. The roundabout east of the site provides an overpass across the A1.

Context

- 1.4 The proposed signage will be located on the semi-circular curved extrusion of the building. The following images indicate the specific locations proposed:



Image 1 - South East
Facing Elevation



Image 2 - North West
Facing Elevation

2. Planning History

Summary

- 2.1 Following approval of applications ref: 6/2016/1739/MAJ & 6/2016/1740/LB, substantial redevelopment has begun. The proposals permitted refurbishment of the existing building, a replacement hotel extension and student accommodation on the western part of the site.
- 2.2 Further to the permission a subsequent set of applications were submitted to request permission for a series of advertisements and signs. These too were permitted.
- 2.3 All relevant applications have been detailed below:

Application Ref: 6/2019/0953/ADV & 6/2019/0957/LB

- 2.4 In 2019 an application was submitted for the following 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).

Application Ref: 6/2017/2746/LB

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.

- 2.5 This application was submitted to bring the proposals in line with the detailed design of the development.

Application Ref: 6/2016/1739/MAJ & 6/2016/1740/LB

- 2.6 In 2016 approval was granted for the following development:

EXTENSION AND REFURBISHMENT OF THE GRADE II LISTED BUILDING (USE CLASS C1) FOLLOWING DEMOLITION OF EXISTING REAR AND SIDE EXTENSIONS. ERECTION OF 7,253.7SQM STUDENT ACCOMMODATION (SUI GENERIS), LANDSCAPING AND ASSOCIATED WORKS

3. Planning Regulations and Policy Context

(Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007 (as amended)

- 3.1 In assessing whether to grant express consent for an advertisement, the local planning authority shall exercise its powers of control in relation to amenity and public safety.

National Planning Policy Framework (Feb 2019) [NPPF]

Advertising Consent

- 3.2 Consideration of how adverts are sited and designed are important considerations (Para 132). Advertising consent should be simple, efficient and effective. Adverts are subject to control, however, this control is in the interest of amenity and public safety.

Heritage Assets

- 3.3 Proposals related to Heritage Assets will require (Para 189) the applicant to describe the significance of the heritage asset affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail required should be proportionate to the assets significance and the level of detail required to understand the impact on the asset. As a minimum the relevant local historic environment record should be consulted and, where appropriate, expertise should be considered where necessary.
- 3.4 Local Planning Authorities will be required (Para 190) to identify and assess the significance of a heritage asset, taking account of all available information. This is intended to help minimise the conflict between proposals and the heritage assets themselves.
- 3.5 Key considerations (Para 192), when determining applications, related to heritage assets, include:
- Sustaining/enhancing their significance;
 - Putting them to viable uses;
 - Creating a positive contribution to sustainable communities and economic viability; and
 - The desirability of new development improving the local area.

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, 2005

Policy D1 (Quality of Design)

- 3.6 Applications are expected to incorporate high quality into the design of the proposals.

Policy D2 (Character and Context)

- 3.7 Proposals are expected to be of good design and respect the local character and context of the area.

Policy R25 (Works to Listed Buildings)

3.8 Works affecting a listed building will be expected to:

- Respect the character, appearance, and setting of the building;
- Architectural or historic features;
- The historic form and structural integrity of the building; and
- Provide full detailed drawings of the proposed works are submitted with the application.

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan SDG (2005)

3.9 This Supplementary Design Guidance requires all new development to be of high quality, and respect and relate to the character and context of the area in which it is proposed.

Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (Draft Local Plan)

3.10 The Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council Draft Local Plan (the Draft Local Plan) has been published but has yet to be examined and found sound. Therefore, it is considered to attract limited weight as a material consideration. Relevant policies include:

Policy SP9

3.11 The policy requires proposals to respond to character and context and relate well to their surroundings.

Policy SADM 15

3.12 Proposals should seek to sustain and enhance the heritage assets in a manner appropriate to its function, significance, character, setting, materials, form and scale.

4. Proposed Development

Overview

- 4.1 Further to the previous advertising consent, and listed building consent, 2 (no.) additional signs are proposed to be added to the building. They are intended to be illuminated and reflect the existing style of advert signage currently approved.
- 4.2 Both signs will display “Restaurant and Bar”. They will be located at opposite sides of the building. The proposed signs will help advertise the restaurant and bar as well as helping with navigation of the site.

Materials

- 4.3 The proposed materials will include:
- Built up PPC stainless steel lettering with open stroke;
 - Internal face illuminated lettering to the same profile; and
 - Internal letters to have white opal acrylic faces and internal premium white GE LEDs to create even face illumination.

Amenity

- 4.4 The proposed advert has been designed to replicate previously approved adverts for the development. The same font, lettering and proposed materials are proposed in order to ensure contextual conformity within the local area.
- 4.5 The location proposed is considered to be the best position to attract customers and advertise the developments services.
- 4.6 The works are also considered not to affect the presence of any feature of historic, architectural, cultural significance or similar interests.

Highway Safety

- 4.7 The proposed adverts are located above the building and a significant distance from the public highway. For this reason no public safety issues have been considered relevant to the proposals.
- 4.8 The illumination is not considered to be distracting for drivers or pedestrians.

5. Heritage Statement

Listed Building

Description

- 5.1 The building is Grade II listed. The list description (See Appendix A) notes the following:

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.

- 5.2 The hotel is understood to have been built and first operated in the 1930's. The building was originally designed to provide a Hotel, to accommodate travellers opting to use motor transport; whilst also providing public house facilities as well.

Assessing Significance

- 5.3 The significance of a heritage asset is defined in the NPPF as the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The assessment of significance within this report has been undertaken in accordance with the policies and guidance contained in Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance (English Heritage, 2008). The significance of a heritage asset (termed 'place' within Conservation Principles) is defined with reference to four areas of value.

- **Evidential Value** is derived from "the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity" (English Heritage, 2008, p28) and primarily associated with physical remains or historic fabric. This is often associated with unique primary sources which do not need to be visible; evidential value is therefore generally equated with archaeology;
 - **Historical Value** is derived from "the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present" (English Heritage, 2008, p28). This can derive from particular aspects of past ways of life. Illustrative historical value provides a direct (often visual) link between past and present people, while associative historical value provides an association with notable families, persons, events or movements.
- Illustrative Value - Conservation Principles states:

'An historic building that is one of many similar examples may provide little unique evidence about the past, although each illustrates the intentions of its creators equally well. However, their distribution, like that of planned landscapes, may be of considerable evidential value, as well as demonstrating, for instance, the distinctiveness of regions and aspects of their social organisation.'

- Associative Value - This is less concerned with the asset physically, but more about what it can detail and illustrate to us about other key developments. Conservation Principles states:

'Many buildings and landscapes are associated with the development of other aspects of cultural heritage, such as literature, art, music or film. Recognition of such associative values tends in turn to inform people's responses to these places.'

- **Aesthetic Value** is derived from sensory and intellectual stimulation and including design value, i.e. "aesthetic qualities generated by the conscious design of a building, structure or landscape as a whole" (English Heritage, 2008, p30). It may also include its physical form, and how it lies within its setting. It may be the result of design, or an unplanned outcome of a process of events (i.e. fortuitous). This can also extend to the craftsmanship of an artist's/artisan's workspace. In such cases 'Strong indicators of importance are quality of design and execution, and innovation, particularly if influential.' ; and
- **Communal Value** derives from the meanings that an historic asset has for the people who relate to it, or for whom it relates to their collective experience or memory. It may be commemorative or symbolic in nature, and relate to identity or collective memory (English Heritage, 2008, p31-32).
 - Commemorative Value – These values reflect the meanings of a place for those who draw part of their identity from it, or have emotional links to it. They are important aspects of collective memory and identity, places of remembrance whose meanings should not be forgotten.
 - Social Value - This is associated with places that people perceive as a source of identity, distinctiveness, social interaction and coherence. Some may be comparatively modest, acquiring communal significance through the passage of time as a result of a collective memory of stories linked to them.

Assessment of Significance

Overview

- 5.4 The proposed works intend to install 2 (no.) adverts to the external façade of the building; in particular on the curved extrusions of the building. For this reason this heritage statement/assessment is limited to assessing the significance of aesthetic and historical value.
- 5.5 Evidential value has not been considered, mainly as no physical alterations to the buildings original materials, layout or form are proposed.

Historical Value

- 5.6 The key historical significance of the building is related to the architect and the expansion of road side services in a post war era. The architect, Ernest Brander Musman; who in his own right exemplified the 1920's, Art Deco, modernist architectural style. Other examples include the Nags Head, Bishops Stortford. The style is typified by strong straight lines, glass, steel frame and sweeping curved features; extruding from the main form of the building.

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- 5.7 The Comet therefore provides a key example of modernist architecture. It is noted, however, that it is not a rarity amongst other national examples, but is considered to be one of Ernest Musman's designs; and one that has been well received. It is therefore considered to be of low-medium significance.

Aesthetic Value

- 5.8 The buildings most notable features is its 1920's style and layout, formulating what appears to be, in an aerial perspective, the shape of a plane. Key to this is its symmetrical properties which gives a well-proportioned and balanced appearance.
- 5.9 Whilst there are no strikingly detailed features, in relation to aesthetical elements (e.g. entablature), the key features here are the simplistic approach to design; commonly associated with art deco. Strong lines and sweeping curves that accentuate and ensure the building stands out, particularly in its modern context. Whilst this is a significant feature it is not one that is considered to be of particular rarity or a leading example of such a modernist style. For this reason it is considered to provide low to medium significance.

Communal Value

- 5.10 Not much communal value can be drawn from the building, primarily as the main purpose of the building was as a hotel, therefore would have been subject to a transient clientele. This, however, is not to say that the building would not provide memories for a very limited number of frequenting guests; or perhaps even local residents. For this reason the communal value of the building is considered to be of low significance.

Setting

- 5.11 The building has been the subject of expansion and development over its lifetime. More notably so too has the surrounding context. The immediate setting of the building is dominated by car parking facilities and minor landscaping arrangements. This helps provide a clear view of the building from a close proximity perspective. Further away from the building the setting is drastically impacted. High capacity roads, traffic calming measures and modern buildings dominate the setting, which significantly detracts from The Comet. For this reason the overall setting of the heritage asset is considered to be of low significance.

Assessment of Impact

Proposed works

- 5.12 The proposed works will install a set of 2 (no.) curved adverts. They will be stainless steel and illuminated. In assessing the impact it is worth noting that there is to be no alteration to the form, scale and or layout of the building as part of these proposals.

Impact

- 5.13 The proposed works are minor in nature. They will be located on the ground floor to ensure they are visible to the public and create an active frontage; with the ultimate intention of attracting customers.
- 5.14 In assessing the impact, consideration as to the shape and form of the advert is key. (I.e. curved). The proposed sign is designed to be curved to ensure it does not protrude unnecessarily, and also to help accentuate the curvature of the location the sign is to be attached to. This would be considered to fit and be in keeping with the most notable and key feature of the building.

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- 5.15 With regards to the proposed locations of the signage, each sign has been located in symmetrical positions. This again is considered to be in keeping with the heritage assets key design features. This is considered to support the architect's original design and also the modernist style.
- 5.16 The proposed wording "Bar and Restaurant", in its most basic form, highlights the use of the building, or at least the particular service provided within this portion of the building. This service is the same service provided when the building was originally open and will still cater to a transient clientele. For this reason the specific of the wording is also considered to support the past use of the heritage asset and support its use.
- 5.17 The advert is proposed to be brushed stainless steel illuminated. Clearly such materials would not have been used in the early 1930's. However, the font used is exactly the same to that approved under a separate application, which detailed the majority of the signage around the site. This signage has been the subject of key consideration; in particular the font (Yu Gothic). This ties in with the wider "branding" of the site which has aimed to incorporate the style exhibited by the buildings era and final design (art deco). For this reason the continuity of the branding on the hotel is considered to preserve the heritage asset.
- 5.18 The front facing elevation of the building will have a single sign, already approved, "THE COMET HOTEL". This is located on the ground floor central to the buildings vertical centre point, ensuring its appearance relates to the symmetry of the building. Such design considerations have also been applied to this proposal. The signs are proposed to be aligned in a central position above the curved bay windows. A small portion of each sign will be visible on the front facing elevation (due to curvature), which is intended to attract potential customers round to either side to access the building.
- 5.19 The illuminated signs have also been positioned to support the symmetry of the building. By flanking each side of the main façade they support the original design narrative. The illumination would also emphasise the plane like shape by representing the navigation lights planes are required to use during flight under their wings. This pays homage to the designer's original intent of the building.
- 5.20 The primary purpose of the illumination of the signs is to attract passing trade, especially in the evening. The illumination is therefore considered to support the buildings original use, promote its design intent and ensure that the building can be used to its fullest potential and improve investment in the local economy.
- 5.21 It should also be noted that the proposed works only require the lights to be fixed to the external wall. This means that should in the future the use change the works are reversible and can ensure the appearance of the heritage asset is preserved.

Summary

- 5.22 In consideration of the above information the proposed works are not considered to impact the significant features of the heritage asset or its setting.

6. Conclusion

Amenity

- 6.1 No impact to local amenity has been noted; as a result of the proposals. They are considered to be respectful of the local character and appearance of the area.

Public safety

- 6.2 The proposed works are a safe distance from the public highway and are not in a position that would be considered harmful to the safety of the public; or obstruct necessary views in relation to highway informatives (e.g. signs).

Heritage Assets

- 6.3 The included Heritage Statement assesses the impact of the proposed works and concludes that there is no harm to the significance of the heritage asset or its setting. Furthermore it is confirmed that the works are reversible and adding further credence that the works preserve the heritage asset.

Summary

- 6.4 In summary, the application complies with legislation, national and local planning policy. It is therefore requested that the application be supported by the local planning authority.

Appendix A – List Description: The Comet

11/19/2019 THE COMET PUBLIC HOUSE, Hatfield - 1101036 | Historic England

 Historic England  

THE COMET PUBLIC HOUSE

Overview

Heritage Category:
Listed Building

Grade:
II

List Entry Number:
1101036

Date first listed:
06-Jul-1981

Statutory Address:
THE COMET PUBLIC HOUSE, BARNET BY PASS

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1101036> 1/4

11/19/2019

THE COMET PUBLIC HOUSE, Hatfield - 1101036 | Historic England

Map



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The above map is for quick reference purposes only and may not be to scale. For a copy of the full scale map, please see the attached PDF - **1101036.pdf**

The PDF will be generated from our live systems and may take a few minutes to download depending on how busy our servers are. We apologise for this delay.

This copy shows the entry on 19-Nov-2019 at 17:18:12.

Location

Statutory Address:
THE COMET PUBLIC HOUSE, BARNET BY PASS

The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County:
Hertfordshire

District:
Welwyn Hatfield (District Authority)

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1101036>

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11/19/2019

THE COMET PUBLIC HOUSE, Hatfield - 1101036 | Historic England

Parish:
HatfieldNational Grid Reference:
TL21274 08291

Details

TL 20 NW HATFIELD Hatfield BARNET BY-PASS 8/77 (west side)

6.7.81 The Comet Public House

- II

Hotel. 1933. By E B Musman. Red brick with stone dressings on steel frame. The plan is supposedly in the form an 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.

Listing NGR: TL2127408291

Legacy

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System number:
158340Legacy System:
LBS

Legal

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

End of official listing

Images of England

Images of England was a photographic record of every listed building in England, created as a snap shot of listed buildings at the turn of the millennium. These photographs of the exterior of listed buildings were taken by volunteers between 1999 and 2008. The project was supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Date: 22 Jun 2004

Reference: IOE01/12690/05

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1101036>

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11/19/2019

THE COMET PUBLIC HOUSE E, Hatfield - 1101036 | Historic England

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