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Our Ref: P01216130

22<sup>nd</sup> October 2020

Dear Melissa Tyler

**T&CP (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015  
& Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990**

**Land Off, Gernon Road, Letchworth Garden City, Hertfordshire  
Application No. 19/02999/FP**

Thank you for your letter regarding amendments to the above application for planning permission. On the basis of the information available to date, we offer the following advice to assist your authority in determining the application.

**Historic England Advice**

Following our previous comments dated 29<sup>th</sup> June 2020 and 17<sup>th</sup> July 2020 Historic England are primarily concerned with the total loss of a building which contributes positively to the conservation area and is of historic importance, being one of the early buildings to be built within the Garden City and being designed by Cecil Hignett, who had worked for Parker and Unwin (the architects of Letchworth Garden City) from 1901 until setting up by himself in 1909. Please see our previous comments for a full assessment of the buildings significance.

At no point in the process have we been supportive of 'facadism' and indeed our comments have related entirely to the principle of the loss of the building being harmful to the character and significance of the Letchworth Conservation Area.

The amended plans indicate that the applicant has tried to address our concerns relating to the design and layout of the proposed new development by erecting two new buildings on the site that relate better to the scale and form of the street scene. In relation to this aspect of the development, we have no further concerns.

The design of the buildings poses a more philosophical dilemma. One is a pastiche of the front of the former Town Lodge building utilising the more municipal grander features in stone and brick, the other is a more domestic scale building utilising arts and crafts detailing found elsewhere on residential buildings within the garden city. The apartment block with the arts and crafts detailing would, if detailed properly be an asset to the street scene at this point and would be entirely appropriate within its context.



The copy of the Town Lodge building is more problematic. Although the building is the same scale and mass as the existing, it does not, and never can have, the same significance as the existing building. The building was designed by the same company as the overall garden village and therefore has a degree of gravitas and significance that a pastiche could never have. The demolition and its replacement with one that looks the same would still result in a loss of historical significance to the Letchworth Conservation Area.

We are generally supportive of the development of this site but consider that the main Town Lodge building should be retained and be adapted to sustain an alternative use.

### **Recommendation**

Historic England maintains our concerns regarding the application on heritage grounds. We are generally supportive of the development of this site but the demolition of the existing Town Lodge building and the construction of a copy, would result in less than substantial harm to the character and significance of the Letchworth Conservation Area.

Your authority should take these representations into account and seek amendments, safeguards or further information as set out in our advice. If there are any material changes to the proposals, or you would like further advice, please contact us.

Yours sincerely

### **Lynette Fawkes**

Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas

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