

North Hertfordshire District Council

Building Conservation comments

File Ref: 22/00170/FP & 22/00171/LBC

Date: 23/05/2022

Planning Officer: SE

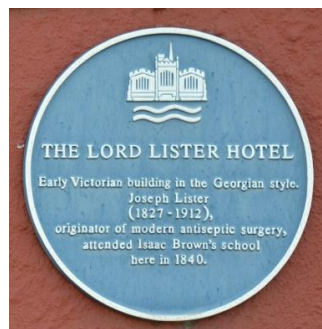
Address: The Lord Lister Hotel, 1 Park Street, Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG4 9AH

Subject: Change of Use from Hotel (C1) to Sui Generis (accommodation with support) and associated external alterations (as amended by plans and additional information received on 6 May 2022) and Change of Use from Hotel (C1) to Sui Generis (accommodation with support) and associated external and internal alterations (as amended by plans and additional information received on 6 May 2022).

1.0 Context

- 1.1 The Lord Lister Hotel is grade II listed and is located in the Hitchin Conservation Area. The building and the area are, therefore, Designated Heritage Assets for the purpose of applying the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The list entry for this property reads as follows:

Early C19. Stucco, Welsh slated roof. 3 storeys, eaves cornice with paired brackets. 4 flush set windows with glazing bars, sashes to lower floors, casements to 2nd floor. Centre doorway has pilasters, entablature. Yard entry on right. Joseph Lister (1786-1869) educated at a school here.



- 1.2 Is the intention for the building to retain its current name or is this to be removed from the front elevation – if so I suggest that this is included in the description for the LB application?
- 1.3 An 1885 photo in the book entitled 'Old Hitchin' depicts the building at Bull Corner (The Triangle) with external shutters to ground floor windows and light coloured stucco.
- 1.4 On 21/01/1985 under ref: 84/01873/1, planning permission was granted for '*Alteration and conversion of outbuilding to facilitate its use as four additional bedrooms in association with existing hotel*' (see left-hand image below) whilst under ref: 17/04422/FP, planning permission was granted for '*Erection of detached two storey building to provide manager's flat over existing parking bays*' for which I gave no comment so the recommendation was made without any conservation input (see right-hand image below)

- 1.5 I am slightly confused by 4.4 of the submitted Design, Access and Planning Statement (January 2022) in which it states:

*“The ‘managers apartment’ which is located above the four car parking spaces (reference 17/04422/FP) next to the outbuilding will be used by staff working on the Site. No changes are proposed to this building and **will remain as is.**”*

This apartment has not currently been built, therefore, I take it that the comment that this ‘will remain as is’ is a reference to the planning permission and not to a building already erected?



- 1.6 I suggest that the descriptions are slightly amended as follows:

- **22/00170/FPH**
Change of Use from Hotel (C1) to Sui Generis (accommodation with support). Installation of external CCTV cameras. Erect 1.8m double-leaf timber swing gates within carriage entrance and erect 1.8m fence with 0.3m trellis on northern boundary (as amended by plans and additional information received on 6 May 2022).
- **22/01171/LBC (note comment at 1.2)**
Internal and external alterations to facilitate change of use from Hotel (C1) to Sui Generis (accommodation with support) (as amended by plans and additional information received on 6 May 2022).

- 1.7 At 2.2 of the submitted Design, Access and Planning Statement (January 2022) it states that:

“... The existing hotel has 24 self-contained rooms which include 4 bed spaces which are located in the two blocks to the rear of the Site. There are 10 existing car parking spaces which are accessed through the coach entrance....”

2.0 Local Plan / NPPF

- 2.1 The emerging North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 Incorporating the Proposed Main Modifications (November 2018) and further Proposed Modifications (May 2021) is nearing adoption and the policies within carry material weight i.e. Policy HE1. In addition, the relevant paragraph numbers for heritage matters are at Section 16 of the July 2021 and are as follows:

197. In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*

c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

199. 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 should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

200. 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.....

202. 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.

206. Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.

3.0 The proposal

- 3.1 The key issue is to assess the impact of the internal and external alterations on the special character of this listed building and the impact of the fencing on the northern boundary upon the setting (and hence significance) of The Lord Lister Hotel.

Interior (general)

- 3.2 The proposals are relatively 'light touch' with the only works undertaken pre site visit being the installation of CCTV cameras, some new lighting, removal of wall hangings and general redecoration which have not harmed the building's special character. The former hotel rooms remain as currently laid out with no internal works such as removing or erecting stud walls or doorways. The following 'before' and 'after' images give an idea as to the extent of works undertaken to date. I then turn to specific aspects of the proposals.

Hallway



Smaller Meeting Room



Office



Large Meeting Room



Kitchen



Internal doors

3.3 Only two doors are proposed to be replaced with FD60's and these both relate to the office. One door has been plain lined on the office side. The

replacement of both doors with new 6-panel FD60's to match existing doors onto the hallway is considered acceptable and will not occasion harm to the building's special character. I advise that the same or similar ironmongery is used.



Secondary glazing

- 3.4 Generally, this Authority has taken the view that secondary glazing, if designed and fitted well, does not materially affect the special character of a listed building and therefore does not require listed building consent and in some cases Certificates of Lawfulness of Proposed Works to a Listed Building have been granted. Each case is looked at on its own merits and because this aspect of the scheme is included within the application I will comment accordingly.
- 3.5 One problem that can arise with buildings of this type is introducing secondary glazing where there are shutters. There is one such case of this in the rear Meeting Room and where shutters extend across a 2-over-2 Victorian sash. The window and shutters are, in my opinion, of moderate significance and it is understood that the secondary glazing frame will be fixed to the front face of the internal architrave allowing the shutters to still operate. Secondary glazing is discouraged to this window but it is understood that it is necessary from a Secure by Design perspective. The detailing of this opening would not be so significant as to occasion harm.



- 3.6 It is acknowledged that the 'SUREGUARD SECURITY WINDOW FILM' is proposed to be applied to the secondary glazing of the ground floor windows which will screen the windows internally and will have some limited impact upon the appearance of the windows when viewed externally. It is also acknowledged that this is proposed due to the use and would not be a detail that one would readily apply if this was let's say, a dwellinghouse. Both the installation of secondary glazing together with its security film is ultimately removable and the alterations reversible, so would not be to the extent of causing actual harm to the significance of the windows or to the listed building as a whole.
- 3.7 What is important is the method of opening and where there are vertical sliding sashes that a vertical sliding system will be deployed and where a

different method of opening exists i.e. the top-hung, outward opening windows to the kitchen, a horizontal sliding system is installed.



- 3.8 Even if there is a concern regarding the installation of secondary glazing and applying a window film it should be noted that in 2005, listed building consent was granted under ref: 05/01313/1LB for the 'Replacement of all front elevation windows in timber'. Assuming that consent was implemented, the windows to the front elevation are not of historic value but do possess aesthetic interest. Furthermore, I observed on site that there is an eclectic array of window types on the south (side) elevation ranging from traditional vertical sliders, top-hung, bottom-hung, later poorly detailed sliders and even Upvc replacements at second floor. There are no proposals to replace these windows but there is scope, in my opinion, to significantly improve the fenestration on this side of the building.



Window to proposed laundry

- 3.9 One issue has arisen with respect to this window. The kitchen extract vent is no longer in use and is a detracting feature both internally and externally. I have advised that it would be a significant improvement if the opening reverted to a window to match the other windows above the transom. Ideally, a before and after elevation should indicate this change, otherwise, may be this could be covered by condition? In addition, the suggestion is that the metal hopper vent brackets to the two central windows are removed to facilitate the installation of the secondary glazing. This would be considered 'de minimis' and unobjectionable.



Fireplaces

- 3.10 At my site visit, I noted two fireplaces of special interest (assuming these not be replicas) and a much later (maybe inter-war brick/tile fireplace in the hall). I was unable to inspect Room A1 for fireplaces. The fireplaces are to remain.

Smaller meeting room



Office



Hall



Erect 1.8m double-leaf timber swing gates within carriage entrance

- 3.11 At 5.6 of the submitted Design, Access and Planning Statement (January 2022) it states that:

“The installation of the access gates will be to the rear of the coach entrance and so will not be visible or attached to the principle (sic) façade. The very limited changes to the external appearance of the building will preserve the character of Hitchin Conservation Area and would cause no harm to this heritage asset.”

I am satisfied that this will not harm the listed building’s special character or harm the character or appearance of the Hitchin Conservation Area.

Erect 1.8m fence with 0.3m trellis on northern boundary

- 3.12 I note the SUPPORTING STATEMENT FOR SECURE BY DESIGN MEASURES (May 2022) in which it says:

“Installation of a new boundary fence next to the Half Moon PH along the entire length. This has been requested by the Half Moon PH and will also help the site’s own privacy, as in the middle of the boundary the fence line falls. There is an existing brick wall where the current outdoor/patio area is which can be the height to have the new fence.”

- 3.13 The wall in the image below was built pre-1st July 1948 and assuming that it was in the same ownership as The Lord Lister Hotel at the time of listing in 1951, I take the view that the wall is curtilage-listed. It is proposed to increase the height of this boundary with fencing/trellis.



- 3.14 Technically, increasing the height of part of this boundary by placing a fence/trellis on top of this wall requires listed building consent but the fact that the erection of a gate, fence, wall or other means of enclosure surrounding a listed building requires planning permission anyway, I am satisfied that the boundary treatment need only be dealt with under the planning application. I am also satisfied that this will not have an erosive impact upon the setting of

The Lord Lister Hotel, therefore, will not harm its significance and will not harm the character or appearance of the Hitchin Conservation Area.

CCTV cameras

- 3.15 Several cameras are proposed both internally and externally as follows and I consider that these would not harm the building's special character:

Listed Building

- 2no. external front elevation
- 5no. external on LB to side and rear
- 7no. ground floor
- 8no. first floor
- 2no. second floor

New block

- 1no. external to new build block
- 1no. ground floor
- 1no. first floor

4.0 Summary

- 4.1 At 5.5 of the submitted Design, Access and Planning Statement (January 2022) under the heading 'Impact on the Listed Building and Conservation Area' it states

*"The Proposed Development is only seeking to change the operational use of the Site internally with very limited changes internally and externally. **The impact on the building based on the listing description is nil**; the only external change on the principle (sic) façade will be the installation of a single CCTV camera which will provide security to the front entrance door."*

- 4.2 The above may be a little misleading in that a.) there is an impact on the listed building overall and even if the listing only related to the façade (which is not the case) the 2no. CCTV cameras, the film applied to the secondary glazing behind ground floor front windows and the installation of the 1.8m gates to the rear of the carriageway will have some impact on the building as viewed from the front and b.) drawing no. 22-04_PL02 Rev A shows that there are 2no. CCTV cameras proposed at the front and not one as stated at 5.5 of the DAPS.

- 4.3 Generally, the internal and external works are 'light touch' including the fact that the former hotel rooms remain as currently laid out with no internal works such as removing or erecting stud walls or doorways.

5.0 Suggested conditions (LBC only).

1. The work to which this consent relates shall be begun by not later than the expiration of the period of 3 years from the date of this notice.

Reason: To comply with the provisions of Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The replacement doors to the office shall be FD60 6-panelled doors with panel proportions to match other doors off the hallway and utilising

existing ironmongery (or new to match) unless otherwise agreed and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that special regard is paid to protecting the special architectural and historic interest and integrity of this grade II listed building under Section 16(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

3. The security window film shall only be applied to the new secondary glazing and not the existing ground floor windows unless otherwise agreed and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that special regard is paid to protecting the special architectural and historic interest and integrity of this grade II listed building under Section 16(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

4. In the event that the kitchen extract vent to window G08 (Laundry) on drawing no. 22-04_PL06 is to be removed, the opening shall be made good with a window to match other windows above the transom in this 4-light window unless otherwise agreed and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that special regard is paid to protecting the special architectural and historic interest and integrity of this grade II listed building under Section 16(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

6.0 Recommendation

- 6.1 Paragraph 197 of the NPPF says that in determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of *'the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness'* whilst at paragraph 200 it says 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.....'*
- 6.2 It is considered that the proposed works would not occasion harm to the listed building 's special character or its setting or, in terms of the external works, harm the character or appearance of the Hitchin Conservation Area. Subject to the above conditions, I raise **NO OBJECTION** on the basis that the proposal will satisfy the provisions of Sections 16(2) (LBC only), 66(1) (PP only) and 72(1) (both) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the aims of Section 16 of the NPPF and the aims of Policy HE1 of the emerging North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 Incorporating the Proposed Main Modifications (November 2018) and further Proposed Modifications (May 2021).

Mark Simmons
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