

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

CHESTER HOTEL, 31-32 ARGYLE SQUARE, LONDON, WC1H 8AP
APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION AND LISTED
BUILDING CONSENT IN RESPECT OF PROPOSED REAR
EXTENSIONS AND EXTERNAL ALTERATIONS TO THE FRONT
ELEVATION

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This National Planning Policy Framework Compliance Statement has been prepared by Signet Planning on behalf of G & A Gorrara Ltd in support of a planning application (I.p.a. ref. 2012/0930/P) and associated listed building application (I.p.a. ref. 2012/0922/L) seeking two rear extensions and external alterations to the front elevation of 30-32 Argyle Square, London, WC1H 8EP to facilitate the refurbishment and enhancement of the building for continued hotel use.
- 1.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 27 March 2012 and now represents the Government's planning policies for England and revokes and replaces existing planning policy statements and guidance notes as of 27 March 2012.
- 1.3 As a consequence of the submission of the above applications prior to publication of the NPPF, this Compliance Statement addresses the compliance of the submitted applications with the NPPF.

SECTION 2: NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012)

- 2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 27 March 2012 and now constitutes guidance for local planning authorities and decision takers and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications (paragraph 1).
- 2.2 The ministerial foreword by Greg Clark confirms that "The purpose of planning is to help achieve sustainable development" and that "development that is sustainable should go ahead, without delay a presumption in favour of sustainable development that is the basis for every plan, and every decision". In addition, the ministerial foreword confirms that "in order to fulfil its purpose of helping achieve sustainable development, planning must not simply be about scrutiny. Planning must be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which we live our lives".
- 2.3 The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development (paragraph 6).
- 2.4 Paragraph 7 confirms there are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. These dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles:
 - An economic role contribute to building a strong, responsive and competitive
 economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right
 places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying
 and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of
 infrastructure;
 - A social role supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being;

- An environmental role contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, and minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.
- 2.5 Paragraph 8 confirms that these roles should not be undertaken in isolation because they are mutually dependant. In order to achieve sustainable development, economic, social and environmental gains should be sought jointly and simultaneously through the planning system. It is confirmed the planning system should play an active role in guiding development to sustainable solutions.
- 2.6 At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking. For decision-taking, this means:
 - Approving development proposals that accord with the Development Plan without delay, and
 - Where the Development Plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
 - Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this framework taken as a whole; or
 - Specific policies in the Framework indicate development should be restricted (paragraph 14).
- 2.7 Paragraph 17 confirms that, within the overarching roles the planning system ought to play, a set of core land-use planning principles should underpin both plan-making and decision-taking. These principles include:
 - Proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places the country needs.

- 2. Encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value;
- Conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.
- 2.8 The Government is committed to securing economic growth in order to create jobs and prosperity, building on the country's inherent strengths, and to meeting the twin challenges of global competition and of a low carbon future (paragraph 18).
- 2.9 The Government is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth. Planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth. Therefore, significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system (paragraph 19).
- 2.10 To help achieve economic growth, local planning authorities should plan proactively to meet the development needs of business and support an economy fit for the 21st century (paragraph 20).
- 2.11 Investment in business should not be over-burdened by the combined requirements of planning policy expectations. Planning policy should recognise and seek to address potential barriers to investment, including a poor environment or any lack of infrastructure, services or housing (paragraph 21).
- 2.12 Local planning authorities should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. In developing this strategy, the Local planning authority should take into account:
 - The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
 - The wider social, cultural and economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;

- The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness (paragraph 126).
- 2.13 Paragraph 128 confirms that in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the asset's importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.
- 2.14 Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including development affecting the setting of the heritage asset), taking into account the available evidence and any necessary expertise (paragraph 129).
- 2.15 In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:
 - The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
 - The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities, including the economic vitality; and
 - The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness (paragraph 131).
- 2.16 Paragraph 132 confirms 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. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a Grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of a higher significance should be wholly exceptional.

- 2.17 Where a proposed development would lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply;
 - The nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and
 - No viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that would enable its conservation; and
 - Conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
 - The harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use (paragraph 133).
- 2.18 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 securing its optimum viable use (paragraph 134).
- 2.19 Local planning authorities should not permit loss of the whole or part of the heritage asset without taking all reasonable steps to ensure the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred (paragraph 136).
- 2.20 Local planning authorities should assess whether the benefits of a proposal for enabling development, which would otherwise conflict with planning policies but which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset, outweigh the benefits of departing from those policies (paragraph 140).
- 2.21 Local planning authorities should look for solutions rather than problems, and decision-takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible. Local planning authorities should work proactively with applicants to secure developments that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area (paragraph 187).

2.22 In assessing the determining development proposals, local planning authorities should apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 197).

National Planning Policy Framework Compliance

- 2.23 It is considered the submitted proposals for the application site are fully compliant with the NPPF.
- 2.24 The application site is located within the Central Activities Zone in a highly accessible location. The applications propose the beneficial re-use and enhancement of an existing building. The applications thus represent sustainable development. The thrust of the NPPF is to support sustainable development. There is therefore a presumption in favour of the grant of planning permission for the submitted application.
- 2.25 The emphasis of the NPPF is to facilitate economic growth. This is an aspect to sustainable development as noted by paragraph 7. The submitted application contributes to economic growth providing an enhanced commercial use on the site in a sustainable location resulting in the creation of jobs and adding to the visitor infrastructure of London. This also weighs heavily in favour of the application.
- 2.26 In respect to the heritage aspects to the proposal, you appreciate that no loss of the Grade II listed building is proposed. The only loss relates to the rear extensions which were built post the listing of the building. In respect to assessing heritage proposals, it is not considered that the application results in 'substantial' harm. In the context of less than substantial harm any harm which may occur (which is not considered to be the case) must be weighed up against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use. As explained in the original submission, the refurbishment works and the new extensions to the rear ensure the whole scheme including the enhanced works to the front of the building are viable.

SECTION 3: SUMMARY

3.1 It is considered the application comprises sustainable development and assists in creating and promoting economic growth and job creation as well as performing an important economic role in adding to London's tourism infrastructure by creating additional hotel bed spaces in close proximity to a major transport node. It is not considered the proposals result in any harm to any heritage asset. As such, it is considered the application is fully compliant with the National Planning Policy Framework.

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