

20 October 2011

ST. GILES HOTEL, BEDFORD AVENUE, LONDON WC1B 3AS

## DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT INCORPORATING PLANNING STATEMENT

### INTRODUCTION

The proposal to be evaluated is a modified rooftop extension to Tower A, of the St. Giles Hotel, facing Tottenham Court Road, to provide additional quality bedroom accommodation combining the existing and proposed extensions in a cohesive manner.

### THE PROCESS

The existing hotel is located on a .3570 hectare island site in a prominent position at the South end of Tottenham Court Road bounded by Bedford Avenue, Great Russell Street and Adeline Place. The site is only 50 metres from Tottenham Court Road tube and Cross Rail station.

The hotel is rated 3 star and consists of 724 bedrooms, with conference facilities, 3 restaurants and a bar, with direct access to the Central London YMCA Club which occupy the whole site on three levels below street level. An NCP car park is located on two underground levels below the YMCA.

The bedrooms are located in 4 linked towers of varying heights orientated North South parallel to Tottenham Court Road. The reception and public areas along with retail and access to the YMCA are located in a two storey podium block with an additional level of plant above which services the whole development.

The entrance and bus/ taxi drop off are located in Bedford Avenue with taxi parking adjacent to the entrance. Car parking is provided in a public NCP car park, which is owned by the YMCA and located below the hotel.

The hotel is popular with its many guests and substantial repeat business is generated due to its location and accessibility, friendly service and value for money. The existing bar and restaurants are supported by outside visitors as well as by guests. Direct access to the largest YMCA Sports Club is also an additional bonus.

The St Giles Group is an expanding International Hotel organisation with Hotels in London, New York and in several locations in the Far East. They encourage the multi ethnic staff to develop their skills, by in house and local training activities.

Diversity of experience and promotion within the St. Giles Group is available for all staff who are interested. The hotel currently employs 400 staff at St Giles TCR on a full and part time basis and the proposed additional upgraded accommodation will further increase staff employment.

In order to sustain and develop its business in the light of the current economic climate and changing accommodation requirements in Central London, St. Giles have been forced to conclude that due to the limitations and restrictions in structure and size of the bedrooms housed in the original towers, if it is to maintain its qualitative and competitive edge, it is essential to provide some improved quality and size of accommodation to complement the existing restricted tower accommodation.

This has been accomplished to date in part by careful re planning of existing accommodation, by a proposed infill between the towers A & B, and by providing new rooftop accommodation which have already been approved and constructed on all 4 towers.

In order to meet the increased demand for the improved accommodation, an extension of the existing rooftop accommodation is now urgently being sought.

## PLANNING STATEMENT

The Planning approval for the roof top extensions was originally approved in 1997.

Modifications to this planning approval have been applied for to accommodate changing requirements.

A full and detailed planning submission for an additional extension to the West tower was made to the Council in October 2010 which consisted of two additional floors with the plan of the additional two floors extruded from the existing 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> floors. The external appearance adopted a bold vertical expression following the existing serrated fins of the tower.

Exposed structural columns supporting the upper levels were extended to roof level and structural glass fins attached to the columns to provide an additional dimension and reflective texture to the elevation.

The 2010 application was not approved and discussions with the Council were entered into in January 2011 to determine the concerns of the Council and to address the design issues.

The Planning officer advised that there were three main areas of improvement that required to be explored.

1. The Height of the extension on Tower A needed to be reduced to maintain the stepped relationship with the adjacent Tower B.
2. The vertical emphasis needed to be modified in order to reduce the bulk of the extension and stepping was indicated as a possible solution.
3. The external materials needed to be a lighter and glass was indicated as a suitable alternative.

Design changes were made and resubmitted to the Council for comment in February 2011. No response was forthcoming, apparently due to Council restructuring.

After a number of discussions with various officers within the Planning department, over several months, a further pre application meeting took place in September 2011.

The design was reviewed along with the 3D images of the extensions in context and was considered to have addressed the issues raised on the earlier scheme and was considered to be acceptable to submit as a full application.

During the meeting Cross Rail contributions and the Policy for providing Residential accommodation, should the extension be over 500m<sup>2</sup> were discussed and solutions considered.

As the overall area for these revised proposals amounts to only 442m<sup>2</sup> it is assumed that this does not fall into the new residential requirement.

## DESIGN

The existing hotel was originally designed in the 1960's as a YMCA Hostel utilizing a very economic serrated bedroom plan for the bedroom towers.

The original towers vary in height from 6 to 12 storeys above a three storey podium block. The below ground accommodation, still owned by the YMCA, consists of a very large Sports facility on several levels with two storeys of car parking below that.

The Hotel reception, public areas, retail and access to the YMCA are within two storeys of the Podium Block with an additional whole level of plant on the top level of the Podium.

The original construction utilized innovative engineering techniques to enable a rapid construction programme to be achieved. The architectural expression of exposed precast concrete was a favoured expression for a limited period in the 1960's.

The serrated tower plans were innovative for the period and varied in length to suit the site profile. They are connected at each level by glazed link corridors, with the lifts located in the tallest Tower B. The towers are supported on large transfer structures at podium level which enabled the underground YMCA to have a large column free clear span Sports Hall and swimming pool.

The external appearance of heavily profiled concrete panels was popular among architects of the period, giving rise to the descriptive phrase of "Brutalism" to this expression.

The roof top accommodation approved originally in 1997 and subsequently modified and reapproved is built of steel frame construction clad in light weight smooth bronze coloured aluminium panels and curtain walling, to contrast with the heavy concrete texture, to provide a light weight termination to the towers.

The revised proposals for Tower A - Oct 2011.

1. The overall design aims by use of the revised form and materials to achieve an integrated termination to the tower and the existing extensions to the other towers and to provide an additional 18 rooms to the Hotel.
2. The form follows the tapered plan of the Tower A and is set back at each level regularly to reduce the bulk as much as possible. The balcony of the existing 9<sup>th</sup> floor has been removed to allow more regular set backs to the whole extension to be achieved.
3. The floor to floor heights have been carefully reassessed to reduce the overall height as much as possible and allow the extension to terminate below the parapet of Tower B and thus maintain Tower B's visual dominance.
4. The materials used for the extension will consist of a bronze aluminium curtain wall system, to match the other extensions, but in this case predominantly glazed, with solid insulated panels faced in glass to provide an overall light and reflective expression.  
The existing two floor extension will be over clad in the same materials in order to integrate the whole.
5. The extension will mainly be visible as a long distance view when approached from the South up Charing Cross Road. Long distance views up Charing Cross Road will perceive a light and reflective new built form, capping the original building.
6. The extension cannot be seen from the East (Adeline Place and Bedford Square). Views from Bedford Avenue and Great Russell Street are also very restricted.
7. It is considered that due to the height of the existing building and its very limited visibility from close quarters on Tottenham Court Road, that any impact of the proposed increased height will be of minimal consequence to the surrounding properties
8. It is considered that this proposal will enhance the overall impression of the hotel in this prominent location. The revised integrated approach we believe will provide an improvement not only for the hotel but also to the long distance streetscape from where it will be visible.



### USE

The extension is planned as critically needed additional improved accommodation, with 10 rooms proposed on level 10, and 8 on level 11, a total of 18 additional rooms.

Due to the variation in height between the existing and proposed accommodation, both proposed levels will be accessed by staircases, from the 11<sup>th</sup> floor lobby of Tower B. The proposal does not impact on any existing rooms within the St. Giles hotel.

### AMOUNT

The overall site is approximately .3570 hectares (3570m<sup>2</sup>). The hotel extends to the boundary of the site.

The existing hotel consists of 724 bedrooms, conference facilities, 3 restaurants and 1 bar, with reception, kitchens and back up facilities appropriate to this size of hotel. The overall area of the hotel is approx. 18,250 m<sup>2</sup> (196,500 sq.ft)

The proposed expansion is for two additional levels of bedroom accommodation located on the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> floors of Tower A immediately above the existing rooftop extension on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> floor. A total addition of 442m<sup>2</sup>. (4757 sq.ft.)

The levels are served by the existing lifts located within Tower B and access to the new levels will be from the 11<sup>th</sup> floor lift lobby of Tower B.

A fire escape staircase will be added within the accommodation to escape to the existing escape route.

The existing employment on site is 400 full and part time staff. The additional accommodation will require an increase in some staff numbers.

### LAYOUT

The bedrooms are laid out similarly to the level 9 extension with 5 rooms facing West and 1 or 2 rooms each facing North and South. The rooms are accessed from a 'T' shaped corridor which connects directly to Tower B, and has a fire escape stair at the termination of the corridor. The room sizes vary, due to the plan form but are generous to compensate for the limited sizes of the rooms in the existing towers. The level 8 and 9 rooms have proved to be very popular, so the repeating of the accommodation will be a major asset for the hotel.

### SITING

The proposed extension is located on the top of Tower A which is the most westerly of the 4 towers. It faces Tottenham Court Road with uninterrupted views to the West, South and North. No overlooking problems exist with rooms in the existing extension, and no issues are foreseen for the proposed new bedrooms. Due to the uninterrupted views to the South and West, the Client wishes to install an array of solar panels on the new roof of the Tower A to make use of the orientation and siting for the generation of electricity to be used with the hotel.

## SCALE

In terms of the overall scale of the 4 towers and the 724 bed accommodation the proposed extension of 18 rooms is a relatively modest addition.

The proposal is a modification of the form of the existing tower on the Tottenham Court Road elevation.

The top floor extensions set back regularly at each level above the existing building and create a tiered termination to the tower, in scale with the remainder of the building.

The floor to floor heights of the extension are increased from the original building to accommodate appropriate services, but in the context of the overall elevation, remain an appropriate scale.

## APPEARANCE

The West elevation of the tiered extension is clad in fully glazed curtain walling to maintain the lightest possible appearance.

The proposed materials for the façade replicate the materials, panel sizes and colour of the approved extensions.

The curtain wall framing is in bronze coloured aluminium to match the other extensions, with glass external sheets both to the window areas and to cover the insulated panels where required.

The East elevation is clad in Bronze Aluminium panels and the North and South elevations, a combination of panels and windows.

The proposals aim to give the overall appearance of a light weight construction, integrated with the form of the existing building but floating above it.

## ACCESS

The location of the hotel only 50 metres from Tottenham Court Road underground station and the future Cross rail station, and within easy reach of numerous bus services has been a major selling point for the hotel.

The existing hotel is DDA compliant with access for pedestrians, although due to the space restrictions of the original plans, this has been a challenge to achieve in all areas.

The entrance and vertical circulation within the hotel remains unaffected. The hotel has made provision for disabled access accommodation within the more accessible areas of the hotel.

Access to the levels of new accommodation is of necessity via staircases as no lifts directly service Tower A. Special arrangements for access can be accommodated by management initiatives.

Due to the ease of access by public transport and the existing managed drop off facilities for buses and taxis, the fact that there are no car parking facilities directly associated with the hotel for guests has not historically been a problem for the hotel or its neighbours during its trading history.

Should guests require car parking, it is available within the NCP car park below the YMCA. No real problems have been encountered with this arrangement and this arrangement will not be affected by this proposal.

## DELIVERY and SERVICING

The existing delivery and service arrangements which currently deal adequately with the existing 724 rooms will not be affected by these proposals for an additional 18 rooms.