



## **ANNEX 1** White House Historic Building

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## LISTED BUILDING CONSENT APPLICATION FOR THE WHITE HOUSE HOTEL MELIA WHITE HOUSE HOTEL HISTORIC BUILDING REPORT

To be read in connection and as amendment to the previous Historic Building Report issued for the LBC 2020/3754/L

### **Commentary on the Proposals and description of the amendments.**

This report addresses the Melia Hotel International Group's wish to refurbish a portion of existing basement of the White House Building and convert it into a guest swimming pool.

The current layout and decoration of the basement was completed in 1999 -2000. The original interior layout or detailing do not appear to remain. This is highlighted in detail within Donald Insall Associates' Historic Building Report which accompanies the application with reference LBC 2017/2840/L. Overall, the works will improve the dated refurbishment of the early 2000s.

The aim is to improve the offering of the hotel and include a guest swimming pool and spa area which is aligned with the rest of rest of the hotel. The new interior has been designed by Melia Hotel Group designers ASAH. The quality of the detailing and materials will enhance the quality of the hotel and aligns with the operator's compromise o keep the hotel in good condition and offering good services to the clients while simultaneously respecting the characteristics of the listed building.

Within these proposals the low-quality traditional-style interior decorative scheme would largely be replaced and updated with a more streamlined interior design ethic that would be more in keeping with the original appearance and 1930s date of the building. Given that the suspended ceilings and partitions in the basement area are not considered to be original the proposed works would include their replacement.

The modern floors would be replaced by a combination of marble, and timber flooring, depending on the location. New doors would either be timber or glass, depending on their location. Where new walls are proposed whitewashed timber panelling and light lacquered skirting would be installed to match the existing appearance.

Overall these works would improve the internal appearance of the building, thus enhancing its significance.

### **Justification of the Proposals**

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is the legislative basis for decision making on applications that relate to the historic environment. Section 66 of the Act imposes a statutory duty upon local planning authorities to consider the impact of proposals upon listed buildings and their setting, and also to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the special architectural or historic interest of listed buildings.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2012) has, however, crystallised previous policy approaches to the historic environment. At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and it emphasises the need to take account of the pros and cons of any proposal to alter and adapt buildings of 'special' architectural and historical interest. Following on from this, the NPPF states that any 'less than substantial' harm to the significance of a heritage asset should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing the optimum viable use of a designated heritage asset (NPPF para 134 – see appendix).

The NPPF places a particular emphasis on having a balanced judgement as to the scale of harm or loss verses the significance of the heritage asset. On balance, any perceived harm would be out-weighed by the public benefits of the proposals.

The proposals would offer the following heritage benefits:

- the general upgrade of the unused basement and offering of a new service for the hotel guests.

### **Conclusion**

In accordance with the statutory duties outlined in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building would be preserved by the proposed works. In terms of the National Planning Policy Framework, it is considered that these works would enhance the significance of the listed building. The proposals are, therefore, considered to be acceptable in heritage terms.