

**Proposed Extension to the time limit for  
the implementation of planning  
permission and conservation area  
consent relating development at the  
Thames Hotel, Maidenhead**

**Design and Access Statement**

Prepared by:



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# 1 Introduction

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## Introduction

- 1.1 This Design and Access Statement, which has been prepared in accordance with the guidance contained with the Department for Communities and Local Government Circular 01/2006, and the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) (Amendment) (England) Order 2006, has been prepared to accompany applications to extend the time limit for the implementation of planning permission and Conservation Area Consents relating to the demolition of various extensions to the rear and west of the Thames Hotel, Maidenhead, and to replace them with extensions more in keeping with the existing building.
- 1.2 The Statement seeks to demonstrate how the design of the development has evolved, how it has been prepared taking into account the appearance of the existing building, its surroundings, and the need for increased accessibility and inclusiveness.

## 3 Site and Surroundings in Context

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### Context

- 3.1 The hotel is located in a predominantly residential area, with dwellings immediately to the north, west, and south on the opposite side of Ray Park Road. Ray Mead Road abuts the site to the east, beyond which is the River Thames.
- 3.2 There are large (four- and five-storey), relatively new apartment buildings to the north and west of the site at Lockbridge Court, while to the south is the conservation area characterised by large, detached Victorian dwellings (or converted dwellings), set within substantial tree-lined gardens.

### Entrances

- 3.3 At present, there is a single point of public access to the hotel. This is located at the south-eastern end of the building, and is accessed directly from Ray Park Road. There are further accesses to the rear of the building, used by staff to access the small storage buildings at the rear, and as an alternative entrance/exit without going through public areas.
- 3.4 Access to the hotel's bar and restaurant can be gained through the terraced area fronting Ray Mead Road, which has doors leading into the bar area. There is a stepped entrance to the terrace from Ray Park Road.

### Active Frontages

- 3.5 The hotel has two frontages, facing Ray Mead Road and Ray Park Road. The Ray Mead Road frontage is particularly important as it faces the River Thames, which plays a crucial role in tourism for Maidenhead and the Borough as a whole. It can already be described as an 'active frontage', with many windows, doors and balconies, as well as a terrace area at ground level. It is proposed to carry out only minor alterations to this frontage, with the intention of upgrading its appearance and functionality through the extension of existing balcony areas (enabling occupants to make the most of the river location), and the replacement of existing windows.
- 3.6 The Thames Hotel elevation fronting Ray Park Road is also an 'active frontage' with a range of windows, doors and balcony features. It is proposed to substantially alter this frontage through demolishing the existing western extent of the building, and to replace it with a new extension, more in keeping with the main hotel building.

## 4 Design Principles

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### National Guidance & Development Plan Design Policies

- 4.1 As set out in the accompanying Planning and Heritage Statement, the development accords with relevant national guidance relating to design, in particular the policies provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework relating to conserving and enhancing the historic environment.
- 4.2 The development would also be consistent with the policies set out in the development plan which comprises the South East Plan (2008) and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM) Local Plan (Incorporating Alterations, adopted in 2003).
- 4.3 In terms of the RBWM Local Plan, the development would accord with policies **TM2** relating to the development of additional hotel accommodation, **N2** relating to development affecting the setting of the Thames, **DG1** which sets out design guidelines for development, and **CA2** relating to development in conservation areas.
- 4.4 **Policy BE1** of the South East Plan seeks to "*promote and support design solutions relevant to context and which build upon local character and distinctiveness and sense of place, including the sensitive reuse of redundant or underused historic buildings*". As previously, the design proposals accord with this guidance.
- 4.5 An analysis of the proposal in relation to these policies and guidance is set out in the Planning and Heritage Statement which accompanies these applications.

appearance of the car park when viewed in particular from the conservation area and the apartment blocks to the north and west, and give it a far greater visual connection to the hotel.

## **Accessibility**

- 5.7 The proposed development would result in a hotel with greatly improved accessibility, both within the site and with the surrounding area. The new entrance to be created at the western end of the building would enable access to the hotel for those with impaired mobility. A level access would be provided from the car parking area, leading into a lobby in which a lift would be provided. This would take occupants up to the adjacent reception area (and from there through to the hotel bar and restaurant), and to all floors.
- 5.8 In addition, it is proposed to create a drive-through area so that passengers could be dropped off and picked up in the area immediately in front of the new hotel entrance. This would greatly benefit those in wheelchairs and with reduced mobility.
- 5.9 Three dedicated car parking spaces for those with blue disability badges would be provided immediately north of the building. Presently there are no such spaces. Vehicular access to the site is to the west of the building, and will remain in this location.
- 5.10 The new entranceway would have a further benefit in that it would be a visual feature within the western flank, aiding those with visual impairments. It would ensure that those with disabilities would not be separated but would be able to use the same entrances and facilities as others.
- 5.11 The development would also be of benefit to accessibility of the surrounding area. It would reduce the number of people entering and leaving the site via the Ray Park Road entrance/exit, reducing both vehicular and pedestrian congestion at this point.

## **Safety and Security**

- 5.12 A major benefit of the development would be the improved safety and security of the car parking area to the west of the site. Where at present this faces a blank wall, as a result of the development the main entrance would be at ground floor level from the car parking area, and several ground floor windows would face it. This would result in a greater actual and perceived level of surveillance, and while it is not intended to light this area, would increase light to the car park through light spill from the additional hotel windows and door.
- 5.13 An added benefit of the proposal would be that a new fire escape route would be created to the west of the building. At present, the main fire exit route for hotel guests is via the main

viewed from this aspect, and would greatly enhance views from the west along Ray Park Road and the conservation area.

5.19 The height and massing of the proposed extensions would be a great deal more in keeping with the existing building and the surrounding area than the existing extensions they would replace. The roofline would largely continue that of the existing building, and features would be replicated on a smaller scale. Although slightly larger, the resulting building would be much more consistent in appearance, particularly in terms of height and massing.

5.20 The appearance of the existing main hotel building (i.e. its eastern wing which is to be retained) would be repeated in the proposed extensions. The design of the development has been carefully prepared taking into account the details of the existing building such as the size and location of its windows, the dominant gable features fronting Ray Park Road, and the height and pitch of the roofline. In repeating and mirroring these features we consider the resulting building would enhance the appearance of the conservation area.

5.21 The materials used in the proposed extensions would replicate as closely as possible those used in the existing building. Particular attention would be paid to the bricks and tiles used on the upper floors fronting Ray Park Road. Windows would be replaced throughout the building to give consistency in appearance, but also to upgrade the somewhat dilapidated appearance of the existing windows.

## Design Evolution

- 6.6 The present design has come forward taking into account a range of factors. The primary goal of the hotel owner was to improve the hotel's appearance and functionality to a four-star level. To do so required the enlargement of the smallest rooms, all of which are located on upper floors at the rear of the building. It was therefore apparent that an extension to the rear of the building would be required. It was also apparent that the design of the building would have to be developed very sensitively given the age of the Thames Hotel building, its location in a Conservation Area and beside the River Thames, and its relationship with neighbouring residential properties. The owner was also keen to fully refurbish the inside of the building, to provide disabled access to all levels and to improve the existing fire escape system.
- 6.7 The main issue to overcome was how to extend the building to the rear, without compromising its appearance through an incongruous roofline or the amenities of neighbouring residents. The present design was developed paying close attention to this, so that the roofscape appears, from all viewpoints, to respect and continue that of the main building. As can be seen from the roof plan (Drawing 1015.033), the roof would have a flat element in its centre. However, this would be screened from view by raised elements in all directions. To better reflect the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, a design that echoes that of the oldest part of the building has been used. Also, by relocating the main entrance of the hotel closer to the patrons' car park, the amount of time hotel visitors spend outside of the building would be reduced, reducing the potential for noise disturbance to local residents.
- 6.8 Through this approach, the hotel owner's requirements for upgraded accommodation would be achieved, without compromising the character and appearance of the building or the area, or the amenities of local residents.