

## **The Thames Hotel, Ray Mead Road, Maidenhead**

Statement in Support of Applications for renewal of  
Planning Permission and Conservation Area Consent  
to Demolish Part of the Thames Hotel and add part 3  
and 4-storey extensions to the Side and Rear.

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# 1 Introduction

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## Introduction

- 1.1 This Statement has been prepared by RPS for Spratley Studio Architects and their client Mr Cliff Owen in support of renewal applications for planning permission and conservation area consent to demolish and rebuild existing extensions to the Thames Hotel in Ray Mead Road, Maidenhead. Primarily there is a large two storey element, with a pitched-roof lantern light which forms an incongruous extension to the western flank of the building, fronting Ray Park Road. This would be demolished, and replaced with a slightly larger extension, which would match and closely replicate the appearance of the existing building. The overall footprint of the building would increase by just 8.7m<sup>2</sup>.
- 1.2 The development would be carried out to enable the complete refurbishment of the Thames Hotel, with the intention of raising its tourist 'star' rating from its current three-star status to four-star. Currently, the hotel has a number of very small bedrooms, no disabled access, and no direct public access from its car park. It is proposed to increase the size of the smallest rooms, to provide lift access to all floors, and direct access for all from the car park, while improving the external appearance of the building. No additional rooms would be created.
- 1.3 As part of this redevelopment, and as shown on the plans submitted, it is proposed to implement an existing planning permission (Ref: 06/02233/FULL, approved 21 December 2006) to add a three storey extension to the side of the building fronting Ray Mead Road, with dormers in the roof.

## Format of the Report

- 1.4 **Section 2** of this Statement describes the subject site and its surroundings, outlines the proposed development, and sets out the relevant planning history. **Section 3** reviews relevant local, regional and national planning policy and guidance and assesses it in relation to the Thames Hotel proposal. **Section 4** sets out the summary and our conclusions.



## 2 The Site and Proposal

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### The Site & Surroundings

#### Site Description

- 2.1 Thames Hotel is located on the corner of Ray Mead Road and Ray Park Road, in the east of Maidenhead. Ray Mead Road runs along the eastern boundary of the site, across which is the River Thames. Ray Park Road runs along the site's southern boundary.
- 2.2 The site is flat, and contains a large three-four storey hotel, the main part of which was erected between 1884 and 1886. It has since had a number of extensions added to it, including a large two storey addition to its western flank (along Ray Park Road), and a number of single storey additions to the rear (north).
- 2.3 The hotel is brick-built, with a tiled-roof of varying heights over. It has five small dormer windows at three storey level fronting Ray Park Road, as well as a single large pitched roof element to three- and four-storey level. This part of the hotel is painted white at the lower level, with red brick on the upper floors.
- 2.4 There is a further two-storey (with pitched-roof over, including a pitched glass insertion forming its roof pitch) element west of this which is in appearance a mix of mock-Tudor and more modern concrete archways. In construction, this part is essentially separate to but adjoining the main building, and sits lower than it both internally and externally.
- 2.5 Viewed from Ray Mead Road, the building has a central pitched-roof element to four-storey height, flanked to the north and south with side-facing pitched and hipped roofs (respectively) to three-storey level. There is a terrace along this frontage set around 1m above pavement level, facing the River Thames, which runs parallel to the carriageway across Ray Park Road.
- 2.6 There is a single-storey flat-roofed extension to the rear of the building which houses a beer store, and which lies within 0.5m of the site's boundary with the adjacent flats. There are also two single-storey, pitched roof extensions to the rear of the building, of different heights, set back some 2.8m from the site's northern boundary. The rear of the building also has an old metal external fire escape staircase from ground to first floor level, and several large exhaust outlets.
- 2.7 There is a close-boarded fence to around 2m in height along the site's northern boundary, immediately abutted and topped by a lleylandi hedge, on the neighbouring property.

- 2.8 There is a car parking area for the hotel immediately west of the building, abutting car parking for the adjacent residential block (Lockbridge Court).

#### Site Location

- 2.9 Thames Hotel is located just 1 mile east of Maidenhead town centre, fronting the A4094 (Ray Mead Road). It is just 200m north of the A4 which leads east to Slough and west into Maidenhead centre. The site is just 3 miles from the M4 leading east into London and west to Bristol and Bath, and continuing west to Wales.
- 2.10 It is just 1.7 miles from the Maidenhead railway station, and numerous bus routes of regular frequency run along the A4, east to Slough (and Windsor) and west to Maidenhead and Bracknell. It is therefore in a very sustainable location in transport terms.
- 2.11 The site is surrounded primarily by residential properties. To the west of the site is a modern three- and four-storey block of flats with undercroft parking (Lockbridge Court) linked with an open area to a higher northern block ('the Boathouse) with light industrial use at ground level. The area to the south, across Ray Park Road, is characterised by large detached dwellings, some of which have been converted for other uses including flats and a doctor's surgery. These properties are characterised by substantial rear gardens, and are set back from the street frontage, with large front gardens. Similar development fronts Ray Mead Road, all of which south of the site is included in a conservation area, as is a large part of the subject site.
- 2.12 The River Thames is opposite the subject site to the east, across the carriageway of Ray Mead Road. The Windsor and Eton Jubilee River Flood Alleviation Scheme is located some 450m east of the site.
- 2.13 In planning terms, the site is located at the northern edge of a conservation area, and is the only property on the northern side of Ray Park Road included in the conservation area. It is also in an area considered to be at risk from flooding, and in which development is considered to 'affect the setting of the River Thames'.

## **Planning History**

- 2.14 The subject site has a long planning history, dating from the erection of the original building around 1884. Many of these are minor applications seeking to erect signs, undertake minor alterations to the exterior, and site caravans on the property.
- 2.15 Of greater relevance, in 1980 planning permission was gained to add a three storey extension to the hotel to create 58 bedrooms, a reception, kitchen and dining facilities and car parking (Ref: 408714, approved 4 June 1980). Planning permission was later granted to redevelop

the site to provide 36 condominiums, with car parking at ground level (Ref: 415084, granted 18 May 1984). Permission was gained in 1987 for a residential development of the site to provide 36 two-bed flats, 3 one-bed flats, and a three bed flat (Ref: MFP87/555), and later, to provide 25 retirement flats on the site (Ref: MFP87/815).

- 2.16 In 1999, planning permission was granted to add a three storey extension to the side of the building, and create dormers in the roof (Ref: 98/33461, granted 5 February 1999). This permission was renewed in 2004 (Ref: 03/41246, granted 9 February 2004). Finally, a slightly revised scheme that incorporated all of the elements previously approved in 1999 and 2004 was approved in 2006 (Ref: 06/02233/FULL, granted 21 December 2006). Unfortunately, shortly after securing consent for the revised works, one of the two joint owners (Mr Yasser Hussein) died and it has taken some time to resolve probate. In order to keep alive the consent, instruct contractors and enable development to proceed, a renewal of permission is required.

## The Proposal

- 2.17 The applicant (Mr Cliff Owen who was previously joint owner of the property) is seeking planning permission and conservation area consent to demolish part of the hotel, and to rebuild and partially extend the building to increase the size of its smallest bedrooms, as part of a wider refurbishment.
- 2.18 It is proposed to demolish the western end of the hotel elevation facing Ray Park Road, around a third of the building's length viewed along this road. This part of the hotel is of a completely different design and appearance to the main building. It comprises a mix of styles, with mock Tudor features above, and concrete archways at ground level. A large lantern skylight is visible in the roof, effectively having the appearance of a conservatory at third floor level.
- 2.19 It is proposed to demolish this part of the hotel, and to replace it with an extension more in keeping with, and sympathetic to, the appearance of the main building. The replacement would comprise a three storey, pitched-roof extension which mirrors the appearance of the eastern façade of the Thames Hotel. At ground and first floor level the extension would continue the placement and style of windows in the existing frontage, while a large gable feature would be created at third floor level, reflecting that on the eastern end of the hotel facing Ray Park Road. The roof peak would be at the same height as the existing roof, rising to the gable end, then dropping slightly lower towards the western end.

- 2.20 At the western end of this extension there would be an area, set back some 3.6m from the main frontage, with an entrance/vehicle drop-off area at ground floor level, and hotel rooms with roof above, continuing the appearance of the main building. At ground floor, the area would be open on three sides, with large pillars on the western and northern corners. An enclosed protrusion would extend above, with a gable-ended element facing into the car parking area (west). This area would also be set back some 3.5m from the main rear elevation.
- 2.21 In carrying out these alterations, no further rooms would be created, but existing rooms would be enlarged substantially. It would also enable a lift to be installed at the western end of the hotel, linking directly to the hotel lobby proposed at ground floor level.
- 2.22 It is also proposed to demolish a number of smaller extensions at the rear. The rear of the hotel contains several single storey buildings with pitched roofs to various heights, extending along the length of the building. There is also a single storey, flat-roofed 'beer store' which extends further to the rear (north) of the site, closely abutting its boundary.
- 2.23 These would be demolished, and the existing building extended to the rear (north) to enable rooms at first and second floor level to be enlarged. Fundamentally, the rear elevation of the hotel, at first and second floor level, would be sited some 5m back from its current location, effectively extending above the rear elevations of the existing single storey elements. This would be accommodated through the insertion of a flat-roofed element above third floor level (see roof plan, drawing no. 1015.033). However, as seen on the elevational drawings, due to the size and layout of the other roof elements, the flat area of the roof would be screened from view so that in appearance, the roofline would be in keeping with the existing building and its surroundings.
- 2.24 Minor refurbishments are also proposed as part of the refurbishment. It is proposed to replace two windows at first floor level, at the eastern end of the building fronting Ray Mead Road, with doors, and to replace and extend the balcony at this level. The balcony fronting Ray Mead Road would also be extended along the full width of the building, at first floor level.
- 2.25 As part of the refurbishment, it is proposed to relocate the main entrance to the Hotel. The hotel is currently entered from Ray Park Road, near its junction with Ray Mead Road. It is proposed to create a new entrance from the hotel car park at the western end of the building.
- 2.26 The following drawings accompany this application:
- Existing:
- Drawing No. 1015-021 - Survey - Basement Plan
  - Drawing No. 1015-022 - Survey - Site & Ground Floor Plans



- Drawing No. 1015-023 - Survey - First and Second Floor Plans
- Drawing No. 1015-024 - Survey - Third Floor Plan
- Drawing No. 1015-025 - Survey - Elevations
- Drawing No. 1015-026 - Survey - Elevations

Proposed:

- Drawing No. 1015-030 - Planning - Basement Plan
- Drawing No. 1015-031 - Planning - Site and Ground Floor Plans
- Drawing No. 1015-032 - Planning - First and Second Floor Plans
- Drawing No. 1015-033 - Planning - Third Floor & Roof Plans
- Drawing No. 1015-034 - Planning - Elevations
- Drawing No. 1015-035 - Planning - Elevations

2.27 In addition, a Site Location Plan is included as Figure 1 of this document. The application is also accompanied by a Design and Access Statement, and a Flood Risk Assessment.



## 3 Planning Policy & Analysis

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### Introduction

- 3.1 Section 70(2) of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 requires that any development proposal is assessed against the relevant Development Plan and other Government planning policy and guidance. Further, Section 38(6) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that:

*“If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.”*

- 3.2 In this Section, RPS reviews the planning policies and guidance considered relevant to this application.

### Planning Policy Context

- 3.3 The statutory Development Plan in relation to the site is the 2008 South East Plan and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM) Local Plan (Incorporating Alterations, adopted in June 2003).
- 3.4 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that Regional Planning Guidance and Structure Plans be replaced by Regional Spatial Strategies (RSSs), and that Local Plans be replaced by Local Development Frameworks (LDFs). The replacement LDF carries little weight at present for the reasons set out below.
- 3.5 The LDF for RBWM will comprise a number of Local Development Documents (LDDs) including a Core Strategy, a 'Delivery and Development Principles Document', a Planning Obligations and Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document, a Sustainability Appraisal and a Statement of Community Involvement. An original version of the Core Strategy was found to be unsound following Examination In Public and was therefore withdrawn in December 2007. Public consultation on a revised Options paper for the Core Strategy was undertaken in March 2009. However, as yet none of the LDF has been subject to an Inquiry, so it is considered to carry minimal weight in relation to the present applications.

- 3.6 RPS considers that national planning policy guidance as set out in Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 1: Delivering Sustainable Development, PPS 6: Planning for Town Centres, and Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 21: Tourism are of particular relevance to the present application. Other guidance may be discussed below as appropriate.
- 3.7 The Thames Hotel building is within a conservation area, although it appears that the car parking area to the west of the site is not. The site is in an area considered to affect the setting of the River Thames, and which is considered prone to flooding.

#### **Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Local Plan**

- 3.8 Policy N2 seeks to protect the setting of the River Thames, with development required to meet several criteria, including:

***“1) the character, height, scale and bulk of the development respects the water frontage together with adjoining development and land uses;***

***2) the protection of important views of and from the river.”***

- 3.9 The present proposal accords with both of these requirements. There would be negligible change in the appearance of the building when viewed from the river, with only the extension of balcony railings at first floor level likely to be visible. The impact on 'adjoining development and land uses' would, we consider, be positive as the western wing of the hotel is rebuilt to better accord with the appearance of the main building. This will be examined in greater detail in relation to other policies.
- 3.10 Policy DG1 sets out design guidelines for development proposals, with which the present development accords. Access, parking and facilities for disabled and those with impaired mobility would be greatly improved as a result of the development (clause 2). The main entrance would be relocated to the western end of the building, so that customers and staff can enter the building directly from the car park. In addition, a lift would be installed, with access to all levels of the hotel (see Design and Access Statement for further details). The proposed design of the extension would be a great deal more compatible with the existing street façade than the existing building in terms of scale, height, and building lines (clause 3). It has been carefully designed to mirror the features in the existing building, and would therefore greatly improve the streetscene. The 'roofscape' of the proposed extension would complement the existing building, with the 'flat-roofed' element proposed being completely screened from view from the street or adjacent buildings. The materials proposed would be the same as those used on the existing building, to ensure it blends and continues its form (clause 4).

3.11 Given the negligible increase in footprint proposed, there is minimal opportunity for additional landscaping (clause 6). However, as can be seen on the site plan (Drawing No. 1015-031: 'Site and Ground Floor Plans') it is proposed to provide some additional planting around the perimeter of the car parking area, and to remove three young silver birch trees. Although no intensification of site use is proposed, thirty-three car parking spaces would be formalised in the existing car parking area, including three disabled spaces (clause 7). This is further explored in paragraph 3.21 later in this report. The proposed approach to planting would enable a more efficient use of the site, while providing additional screening around the perimeter of the parking area which is considered more important in visual and landscaping terms, ensuring the parking area better blends with its surroundings. No additional traffic would be created as a result of the development as no intensification of either the accommodation or other facilities (bar, restaurant and conference facilities) is proposed (clause 9).

3.12 Finally, the development would not cause harm to the character of the surrounding area either through being cramped or through the loss of important features (clause 11). The main building would be retained and preserved, with only the more recent, incongruous western wing demolished. The development would be no more 'cramped' than the existing building, as it extends over the existing footprint. The bulk of the building would be expanded to the rear, as some single storey elements would be built to three storeys. However, this would have minimal impact as there are existing dormers at third floor level at the rear, along with a mix of pitched-roof single storey buildings. The expansion over the western end of the building would not be substantial, and would abut the car parking area, so would not result in a 'cramped' appearance.

3.13 Taking into account the above, we consider the proposal is in accordance with the requirements set out in policy DG1.

3.14 The subject site is the only property on the northern side of Ray Park Road which is within a conservation area. Policy CA2 states that in conservation areas, the Council will, among other things:

***"1) Require that any development will enhance or preserve the character or appearance of the area;***

***2) Require the retention of any building and the protection of views that contribute to the distinctive character of the conservation area;***

- 3) ***Require proposals for new buildings and extensions or alterations to existing buildings to be of a high design standard which is sympathetic in terms of siting, proportion, scale, form, height, materials, and detailing to adjacent buildings and the character of the area in general;***
- 4) ***Not permit the use of inappropriate synthetic materials and require the use of traditional materials for windows, doors, shopfronts, canopies, fascias and rainwater goods;***

3.15 The present proposal would comply with all of these requirements. The development proposed would 'preserve' the main bulk of the existing building, while 'enhancing' its appearance through demolishing an incongruous extension, and replacing it with one which repeats the design features of the main building. In doing so, the views which 'contribute to the distinctive character of the conservation area' would be retained. The extension has been carefully designed taking into account the appearance of the existing building. It repeats the form and siting of existing features such as dormer windows and the large roof gable, while retaining the overall scale of the building and its roofline. The new and replacement windows and doors used would be of a form which matches the existing, and each other - an improvement over the present situation. The proposal is therefore considered to directly accord with this policy.

3.16 Policy F1 sets out the requirements for development in 'areas liable to flood', as set out on the proposals map, including the subject site. It notes that development in these areas, including those proposing extensions in excess of 30m<sup>2</sup> 'will not be permitted' unless it can be demonstrated that:

***"The proposal would not of itself, or cumulatively in conjunction with other development:***

- 1) ***impede the flow of flood water; or***
- 2) ***reduce the capacity of the floodplain to store flood water; or***
- 3) ***increase the number of people or properties at risk from flooding. "***

3.17 Supplementary Planning Guidance has been adopted by the Council to accompany this policy, entitled "Interpretation of Policy F1 (Development Within Areas Liable to Flood)".

3.18 While the present proposal does not seek to add an extension of more than 30m<sup>2</sup> to the building (the extension previously permitted under application 03/41246 would not add any floor area to the building), the submission of a Flood Risk Assessment was considered necessary to demonstrate that the development would not result in an increased risk of flooding to other people or properties. As set out in the Flood Risk Assessment which accompanies the present applications the proposed floor level of the main building would, in its entirety, be some 200mm above the predicted 1 in 100 year flood level. At present, the western part of the building (the conference area) sits some 880mm below the main building, so is below the 1 in 100 year flood risk level. The proposed development would not alter the current impermeable area, and while it would result in the loss of around 6m<sup>3</sup> of flood storage, it is concluded in the Flood Risk Assessment that this is not a significant increase, and would not increase the number of people or properties at risk from flooding.

3.19 Section 4.4 of the Local Plan relates to tourism, noting its importance to the local economy, particularly in Windsor, Ascot and 'in association with the River Thames'. One of the key objectives identified is to

***“Identify opportunities for additional tourism related development throughout the Borough and to encourage new investment which will help to maintain the contribution of the tourism industry to the local economy, manage the concentration of visitors in certain parts of the Borough and provide benefits to the community”.***

3.20 The present proposal directly accords with this through investing in the refurbishment of existing tourist accommodation beside the River Thames. In doing so, it would make the most of an important river-side and conservation area location, and would increase the provision of high-quality accommodation in the Borough. Through this development it is hoped that the contribution of the Hotel to the economy will be increased as its occupancy is increased and its 'high season' prolonged. It should be noted that in carrying this out the actual use of the site would not be intensified.

3.21 Chapter 6 of the Plan relates to transportation and movement. As the use of the site would not be intensified as a result of the development, these policies are of minimal relevance to the present proposal. Policy P4 sets out the car parking requirements for different types of development, with reference to the RBWM Parking Strategy (May 2004). This sets out the maximum parking standards for different site uses. For sites such as this, a maximum one car parking space is required per bedroom. Thirty-three car parking spaces would continue to be provided for a hotel with a maintained total of 48 bedrooms. However, given the close proximity of the hotel to a good bus service into Maidenhead, and its sensitive location in a conservation area, this is considered adequate.

- 3.22 One accessible car parking space is required for every disabled employee (Thames Hotel currently has none), and 1 space or 5% of the total car parking capacity, whichever is greater. It is proposed to provide 3 accessible spaces, twice the level required by this guidance. We therefore consider the proposal is in accordance with policy P4.
- 3.23 The proposal would actually be of benefit to the flow of traffic in the vicinity as it would provide a pick-up/drop-off point within the site, where at present the hotel's entrance is directly from Ray Park Road. This would reduce any congestion at this point, and improve the flow of traffic (pedestrian and vehicular) along this road.
- 3.24 Finally, the proposed development would not be detrimental to the neighbouring residential properties at Lockbridge Court to the north and west. Although windows at first and second floor level would be brought forward some 3m at the rear, a gap of at least 17m would be retained, and views would be at obscure angles, due to the orientation of the neighbouring residential block on the site. We do not, therefore, consider that the proposed development would be detrimental to the amenity of these residents. Views to the west are even more distant at some 30m. Although more windows would be created at upper levels, these would be set back even further from the main elevation so would have minimal if any additional impact.

#### **Regional Guidance - The South East Plan**

- 3.25 The new South East Plan was only adopted in 2008, so is one of the most up to date development plan documents.
- 3.26 Maidenhead's role as an 'important business location' is noted, as is the intention to regenerate the town centre within the plan period. Maidenhead is identified as one of the major Berkshire towns which are to be the principal focus for new developments.
- 3.27 Like its predecessor plans, the new plan seeks to 'conserve and where possible enhance' historic features and areas of historic importance. As acknowledged in the extant permission, the present proposal accords with this through conserving existing features and enhancing the conservation area through demolishing an incongruous extension and replacing it with one which continues the existing form and appearance.
- 3.28 The South East Plan supports development which does not add to flood risk, and encourages the provision of a Flood Risk Assessment for the assessment of development proposals. The present proposal accords with this approach; having submitted a Flood Risk Assessment to accompany the application, which demonstrates that development would not add to flood risk either within or beyond the site.



- 3.29 The present proposal accords with all of these aims. It has been carefully designed to improve the appearance of the area, bringing renewal to both Ray Mead Road and Ray Park Road. The form and design of the refurbished hotel would greatly improve the appearance of the area, and would maximise the use of the site through its redevelopment. Development would not increase the risk of flooding locally.
- 3.30 Policy RE11 notes that tourism, arts and culture 'should be encouraged', and that facilities should be accessible. As already noted, the site is in an accessible location, and would provide vastly improved visitor accommodation and associated facilities.
- 3.31 Policy CC1 states that the principal objective of the Plan is to achieve and maintain sustainable development. Policy BE1 relates to 'management for an urban renaissance', seeking to concentrate development in urban areas, and 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"**. We consider this is particularly relevant to the present proposal which seeks to make the best use of an existing hotel site through its sensitive refurbishment and extension.
- 3.32 Similarly, policy BE7 supports development which would conserve, and where appropriate enhance the historic environment, as is proposed in this instance.
- 3.33 Policy TSR5 of the Plan relating to tourist accommodation specifically notes that in making decisions Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) should...**"encourage the extension of hotels where this is required to upgrade the quality of the existing stock to meet changing consumer demands"**. This policy clearly and directly supports the present proposal.
- 3.34 The proposal thereby accords with regional guidance, as set out in the South East Plan.

#### **National Policy & Guidance**

- 3.35 Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development (PPS1) seeks to ensure that the principles of sustainable development are taken into account in the preparation of development plans and determination of planning applications. Among other things the Statement supports development which would promote urban regeneration, enhance the historic environment, and supports LPAs actively working to bring underused previously developed land and buildings back into beneficial use. The present proposal is in accordance with all of these goals, particularly the latter as it seeks to improve the quality of the hotel accommodation to enable a more efficient use of the site. In paragraph 34, PPS1 supports development high quality and inclusive design, as with the present proposal.

- 3.36 Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment seeks to identify and protect, among other things, conservation areas.
- 3.37 Paragraph 4.26 notes that in exercising conservation area controls, LPAs are required to ***“pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area in question; and, as with listed building controls, this should be the prime consideration in determining a consent application.”*** This is of particular relevance to this application. We consider the existing western extension to be an incongruous feature, the retention or preservation of which is not desirable. Further, we consider the proposed extension would enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 3.38 Paragraph 57 of PPG25: Development and Flood Risk notes that the susceptibility of land to flooding is a material consideration in determining planning applications, so applicants should assess the risk posed by the development. Paragraph 30 states that local planning authorities should apply a ‘risk-based approach’ to decisions on development control through a sequential test, and (paragraph 31) paying particular regard to design and mitigation issues. As set out in the accompanying Flood Risk Assessment, it is proposed to add only slightly to the footprint of the existing building, while raising the finished floor levels in the western wing of the building so they are above a in 100 year flood risk levels. The Flood Risk Assessment concludes that the risk posed by the development is not considered to be significant, so the development proposal accords with national and local planning guidance, including PPG25.
- 3.39 Planning Policy Guidance note 21: Tourism was replaced from 1 September 2006 with a ‘Good Practice Guide on Planning for Tourism’. It notes the value of tourism to the UK economy, contributing £74billion to GDP, and employing 2.2 million people (paragraph 2.2-2.3). Paragraph 2.7 notes the role of the planning system in “facilitating and promoting the implementation of good quality development” as crucial to ensuring the tourism industry can survive and thrive - while taking into account the principles of sustainable development. Paragraph 3.22 notes that hotels, among other things, bring particular advantages to urban locations, including helping to underpin regeneration, increase urban vitality and support important facilities and services.
- 3.40 Paragraph 5.8 identifies two important aspects of design, namely layout and accessibility. Developments should be easy to reach, easy to get around and easy to use. In order to be accessible, it notes that developments should be:
- ***“physically accessible, including to people with impaired mobility and to people with other disabilities such as impaired sight or hearing;***
  - ***socially inclusive, facilitating use by all sectors of the community;***

- ***a positive contribution to the host community;***
- ***safe and healthy; and***
- ***attractive.”***

3.41 We consider the present proposal accords with these requirements. The improvements to the hotel undertaken as part of the development would make it more physically accessible and inclusive. Lifts access to all floors would be created, and the entrance made accessible by those with mobility impairments. Some of the smaller rooms in the hotel would be enlarged, enabling those with mobility impairments to access them. In doing so, the hotel would be socially inclusive, and would facilitate use by all sectors of the community. The existence of and improvement to the existing bar/restaurant area would result in a more appealing social area for local individuals. The refurbishments proposed would bring the hotel up-to-date with the latest health and safety standards, while making it externally and internally more attractive.

3.42 The proposal would accord with the guidance set out in paragraph 5.10 which notes the value of reusing buildings. While the hotel is not 'redundant' it is currently in a run-down state, having not been refurbished for at least ten years. The development would maintain an important historic building, providing continuity in landscape and townscape by maintaining and extending existing historic features. This is a sustainable approach to development, reusing and improving existing tourist accommodation.

3.43 Finally, paragraph 12 of Annex A to the guidance notes:

***“Similarly, moderate-sized extensions to an existing hotel or public house, including the addition of bedroom accommodation, can help to ensure the future viability of such businesses. This may satisfy a local need as well as a tourism one, by fully utilising the potential of the site but without any disproportionate increase in scale. In all cases, careful consideration should be given to ensure that the size of the extension proposed is not disproportionate for the location concerned.”***

3.44 This application seeks to carry out the development supported in this paragraph - adding a small/moderate-sized extension to an existing hotel to ensure the future viability of the business, and fully utilise the potential of the site. The extension proposed would not be 'disproportionate'.

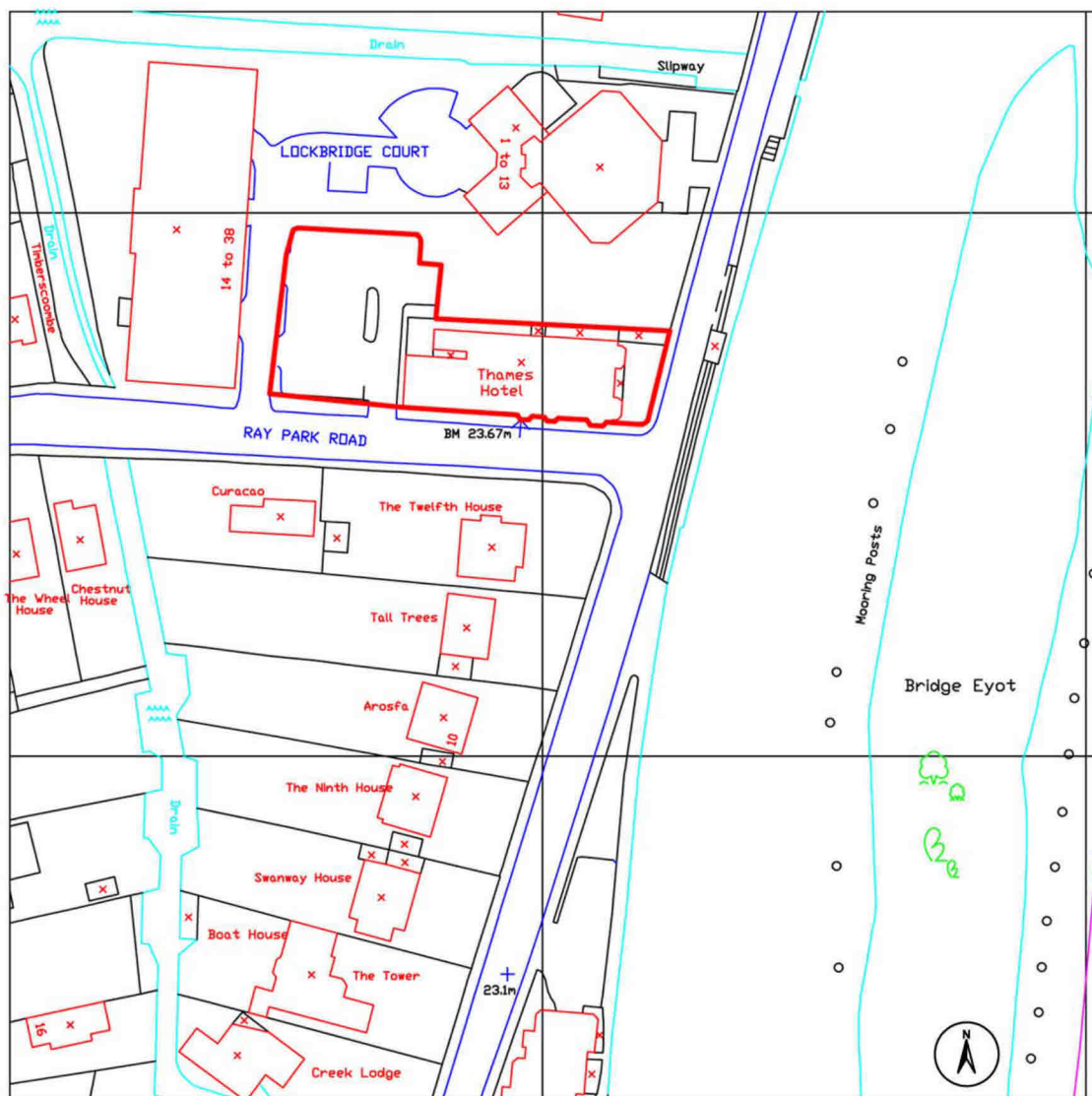
## 4 Summary and Conclusions

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- 4.1 As set out above, the development proposed in the present applications, which already have an extant consent would accord with planning policy and guidance set out at local, regional and national level. The applicant is seeking to expand the hotel, but within the existing footprint and through the demolition of existing, incongruous extensions. In doing so, we consider the appearance of the building from all directions, and the surrounding conservation area would be greatly enhanced. The accessibility of the hotel would be improved, enabling those with mobility impairments accessibility to all areas. The development would be beneficial to the flow of traffic on Ray Park Road by relocating the main hotel entrance to an area at the western end of the building, within the adjacent car park.
- 4.2 The hotel would be completely refurbished, with important benefits to the tourism industry in Maidenhead. The impact on the floodplain would be minimal, particularly given the negligible increase in the footprint of the hotel. There would be no impacts on neighbouring properties through loss of privacy or outlook, or increased overlooking.
- 4.3 Taking all of the above into account, along with the enclosed information, we consider that the proposal is in accordance with the development plan and other material considerations, so planning permission can be granted.

Figure 1

Site Location Plan



Photographs of Site



Site From West



Along rear bdy of site to north sml



Along Ray Mead Rd to nth



Elevated view twds neighbours to north



River frontage from north