

Sent: 01 September 2019 16:15
To: Alison.Amoah@reading.gov.uk
Subject: 191088 - Crowne Plaza Richfield Ave 132 room hotel
Attachments: 181056 - Crowne Plaza Richfield Ave 132 room hotel.docx

Planning Application 191088 - Crowne Plaza Richfield Ave 132 Room Hotel
Objections on behalf of Caversham and District Residents Association (CADRA)

Dear Alison Amoah

CADRA previously objected to application 181056 on the same site, on grounds relating to the visual impact of a building of this bulk in this location and its effect on parking and air pollution. This previous objection is attached for reference and I have also posted the following comments to the Council's Planning Website.

The present application 191088 slightly reduces the height of the building and adjusts its location, but these changes do not ameliorate our previous concerns, which focussed on the principle of an hotel of this size in this location rather than its detail. We therefore reiterate our previous objection, for the same reasons: overall height; dominance in the local landscape, especially in views from Caversham Bridge, the Thames Promenade and the recently extended Conservation Area; traffic impact; the risk of parking congestion; and pollution arising from additional traffic.

Notwithstanding those fundamental objections, we recognise the slight reduction in overall height and the simplification of rooftop plant, but suggest careful checking of the lift overrun structure: the Design & Access Statement says this will be 850mm above the predominant roof height but the elevational drawings show the roof height at 16.1m FFL and the lift overrun at 18.1 FFL, a 2m difference. We also feel that the new elevations feel contrived, especially through the addition of a mansard roof and, contrary to the applicants' statement, they do not improve the proposals.

Our key concern is the impact on views from the recently extended Conservation Area, which are referred to in the Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment by Allen Pyke which accompanies the application

Para 3.7 quotes the St Peter's Conservation Area Statement as saying that 'Only the churchyard and Caversham Court Gardens have significant views out of the area' and continues by quoting its comments on the attractiveness of the riverside walk, the poor quality of recent building alongside it, and the need for tree planting to ameliorate these. Para 3.20 quotes further from the Conservation Area Statement, while Para 3.9 quotes Local Plan Policy EN2 (Protection of Significant Views of Heritage Interest), which asserts that the view upstream from Caversham Bridge merits special protection.

Para 3.46, in discussing the impact on views from Caversham Court Gardens and the Church, concludes: "Value of the view: High. The view is of good scenic value, from the Conservation Area across the Major Landscape Feature " (i.e. the river).

We feel this Assessment reflects the importance of these views. However, its conclusions are not carried forward to the Design and Access Statement. Page 9 of that Statement contrasts sharply, stating that "the Conservation Area Appraisal indicates that the development... would have no impact on views into the Conservation Area, with the only potential views toward the site provided from Caversham Court Gardens and Caversham Bridge".

This summary is not only at odds with the applicants' own Assessment but with the Conservation Area

Appraisal's meaning. As CADRA drafted the Appraisal on behalf of the CAAC and the Borough Council, we feel equipped to interpret it. The Assessment's quoting of the word 'only' to imply unimportance is a calculated misinterpretation: in fact the views across the river from these vantage points (and from the Churchyard, which is not mentioned on P 9) are by far the most important in the Conservation Area, were a key factor in its designation, and are reflected in Policy EN2. The proposals would particularly impact on these views in winter, as the trees around the site are deciduous.

On behalf of
Caversham and District Residents Association
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