

Meeting Notes re Hotel Planning Application at 67/75 The Broadway, West Ealing, W13 9BP (Ealing Planning Ref: PP/2012/5230)

Date of Meeting: 11 March 2013

Meeting Time: 12:00

Meeting Venue: Seraphine Hotel, Kings St, Hammersmith, W6 0QW

Present:

Eric Leach (Chair Interim West Ealing Centre Neighbourhood Forum / WECNF)

Dave Randles (WECNF member)

Mr Milan Babic, Milan Babic Architects, London, SE1

Mr Sunil Joginpally (Site Owner for 67-75 The Broadway)

Mr John Kajani (Hotel General Manager, Best Western Seraphine Hotel, Hammersmith)

The meeting was called to discuss recent concerns expressed by local residents regarding a planning application to redevelop the site at 67/75 The Broadway, West Ealing (PP/2012/5230). The meeting was called at the request of WECNF and the venue was chosen by the architect, Mr Babic, in order to illustrate the nature of a similar completed development designed by his company.

Proposals for the West Ealing site include a first floor conversion and the addition of a 2 storey extension to accommodate a 60 bed hotel. Mr Babic explained that one of the driving forces behind the application was the arrival of Crossrail in 2018 which helped to support a business plan for additional hotel rooms in the area. Mr Joginpally explained that he had received an expression of interest from the Ibis Hotel chain although no firm commitment had yet been agreed. However if Ibis Hotels declined to adopt the West Ealing hotel he would add the hotel to his small chain of four central London Seraphine Hotels.

The site has been owned by Mr Joginpally since 2008 and his recent application was submitted in December 2012. The owner stated that he had worked with Milan Babic (Architects) on previous projects including a London hotel he owned another one that was near to completion in central London. Mr Babic stated that he was familiar with the geography of West Ealing having worked on other applications, including the recently completed flats above Iceland. He felt that an additional hotel would do much to improve the run-down nature of West Ealing and would be welcomed by local traders.

Mr Leach introduced WECNF and explained the relevance of this new group following the 2011 Localism Act empowering local people to design a Neighbourhood Plan that could be

used to provide a framework for future planning. He went on to explain the high level of concern that had been raised at a recent WECNF meeting over the new hotel proposals.

Mr Babic apologised for not having previously shared information with members of the community and explained that the oversight had happened because he was unaware of WECNF's existence. Both sides agreed that the breakdown in communication was due to lack of information from Ealing Council during the pre-application stage and opted to draw a line under any previous misunderstanding.

Mr Leach then outlined concerns raised by local traders and residents:

- **Lack of public parking in West Ealing**

Mr Leach expressed concern that there was already a lack of public parking in the area and felt that the introduction of a new hotel would worsen this situation. He pointed out that the situation is likely to worsen considerably due to the large increase in residential homes proposed as part of the regenerated Green Man Estate and closure of the existing public car parks in Singapore Road. He also reminded the meeting that the West London Islamic Centre in Brownlow Road is already scheduled for redevelopment and is likely to result in an increase in worshippers attracting a total of anything up to 3,000 worshippers/visitors at any one time. Mr Leach went on to express his personal opinion that the existing car parking area at Maitland Yard/Dean Gardens car park should be extended and could be redeveloped and replaced with a new multi-storey car park.

Mr Joginpally responded stating that, although he understood the concerns, the proposed hotel would be marketed and rooms advertised on the basis that no parking was available. He anticipated that guests would rely on public transport in a similar way to those booked in to the Seraphine Hotel in Hammersmith.

- **Proposed Service Access**

Mr Leach outlined concerns over access arrangements to the proposed hotel – both for guests and taxis arriving and for service access. Mr Leach felt that it would be necessary to provide a service bay outside the hotel's main entrance in The Broadway and that the existing bus-stop might need to be relocated.

Mr Babic did not anticipate that access would be a problem. He stated that the number of service deliveries for a hotel of this size is comparatively small and would be limited to two main deliveries per week – each delivery would take considerably less than 30 minutes. The General Manager of the Seraphine Hotel confirmed that this was the case in his hotel with laundry deliveries & collections normally completed within about 10 minutes. He also said that the requirements of a budget hotel meant that there were no major food deliveries as all produce would be sourced from local shops in the area. All deliveries and collections would be via the main entrance in The Broadway. Receipts were produced to show that much of the hotel food was bought at the local Sainsbury's. Drinks for the bar were bought at the local cash and carry.

A short discussion took place as to the possibility of rear access to the hotel from Canberra Road and the impact of this on the pedestrian area in Melbourne Avenue. Would it be possible to gain rear access to the hotel from Leeland Terrace? No conclusion was reached.

- **Market Stalls**

Mr Leach explained the high level of concern expressed by many residents & traders over any potential loss of existing market pitches in Melbourne Avenue and the discussion focussed heavily on the activities of the flower stall. Mr Leach explained that these were apparently permanent pitches of long standing and that the existing traders operated on an annually renewable licence.

Mr Joginpally and Mr Babic were very supportive of retention of existing market stalls and stated that they were very happy to take the views of traders into account. It was not their intention or desire to remove these facilities and readily agreed that they were a positive asset to the area. Mr Babic said that he didn't see why it would be necessary to relocate the flower stall at all and saw no problem with the stall being positioned in front of the proposed glass hotel wall in Melbourne Avenue as shown in his revised plans. They stated that they would be happy to work with the existing stall holders during the construction phase and saw no reason for them to have to move very far from their current position once the protective safety hoardings had been positioned.

- **O'Grady Court Residents**

Mr Leach explained that many elderly and disabled residents in O'Grady Court were opposed to the hotel proposals as they feared that it would block their view and reduce light levels to their apartments.

Mr Babic explained that he did not believe that the new proposals would impact on existing apartments. He stressed that the height of the new building would be restricted to three storeys which is unlikely to cause a problem. Nevertheless, they are happy to seek further independent professional advice to assess the impact on sun & daylight if required.

- **Building Height**

Mr Leach asked whether there was any truth in rumours that the application might be amended to offer a significantly larger hotel with more floors.

Mr Babic said that this was not a possibility as the height of the proposed building was structurally limited to a maximum of three storeys by the extent of the foundations on the ground floor. Mr Joginpally stated that, in any event, the business plan did not support a larger hotel with more than about 60 bedrooms.

- **Relocation of butcher's shop, A K Luckhurst & Sons**

Mr Leach asked about the future of the existing butcher's shop.

Mr Babic stated that they had no intention of removing the business which was well respected and a positive asset to the area. Mr Joginpally said that Mr Luckhurst was already one of his tenants and had been for several years. He stated that Mr Luckhurst was a model tenant and he hoped to maintain the relationship for many years to come. On more than one occasion, he had offered Mr Luckhurst the freehold but so far this had been declined. They stated that arrangements had already been agreed for the retail shop to be temporarily relocated during the build.

- **Site access**

There was a brief discussion about access to the site during the build period. It was acknowledged that this could be problematic although Mr Babic said that he would work closely with the Council in order to minimise any inconvenience.

- **Timescale**

Mr Leach asked about the possible timescale for the project if planning permission was granted.

Mr Babic stated that they were currently undertaking a similar development in central London which they hoped to complete within a few months. After this date they would be free to commence work in Ealing. They anticipated the construction work to take around 9-10 months.

- **Guest Profile / Hotel Standards**

Mr Joginpally stated that the proposed West Ealing hotel would be similar in size and profile to that of the Seraphine Hotel. The target market was for a reasonably priced hotel offering standard double rooms at around £90 per night. There would be no elaborate restaurant facilities although there would be a small bar and a café serving continental style breakfasts only. At the time of the meeting the hotel was deserted as all the residents were out of their rooms. However talking to the Receptionist and looking at the reservation booking system the hotel had over 90% occupancy. In fact 90% occupancy is the average occupancy rate throughout the year.

He anticipated that guests would comprise a balanced mixture of business travellers, tourists and families. They had no plans to offer rooms to disadvantaged or homeless families.

The meeting concluded with a brief tour of the Seraphine Hotel so that the WECNF members could take a more informed view of the style and profile of similar facilities. The en-suite rooms were small, clean and well appointed with murals of local places that contributed to an overall welcoming atmosphere.

- **Conclusions**

The meeting welcomed the fact that, if the hotel plans were to go ahead, then an earlier proposal for a Betting Shop would fall.

The meeting ended in reasonable harmony and Mr Babic stated that he would happily make a presentation to any future Neighbourhood Forum meeting if required. Mr Leach stated that he would report back to the Neighbourhood Forum. The meeting concluded at approx 12.40 pm.

Dave Randles/Eric Leach 11/03/13