

Brentford Draft Local Plan Preferred Site Allocation

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Response on behalf of The Holiday Inn, Brook Street, Brentwood

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Objection: The hotel site should be removed from the Green Belt or recognised as a development site.

1. The Holiday Inn site (see attached location and site plans) has been allocated as Green Belt wherein new development has been strictly limited for many years.
2. Whilst some modestly scaled development might be possible under Green Belt policy the hotel is constrained from a more wide reaching review of its operation by the restrictive nature of policy.
3. The site makes little, if any, positive contribution to the propose of Green Belt:
 - i) It does not contribute to the limitation of urban sprawl as there is significant built development in the form of the garden centre and services to the west with the town lying to the east.
 - ii) It does not contribute toward preventing the merging of any towns.
 - iii) It does not safeguard the countryside from encroachment as neither the site nor adjoining land can be regarded as “countryside”.
 - iv) It does not preserve the setting or special character of an historic town.
 - v) The refreshment of the existing hotel use would not impede urban regeneration as this is already a very well established hotel site.
4. It is worthy of note that in the 2000 appeal which allowed an extension to the hotel the Inspector found “there is, in my judgement, limited awareness of the usual characteristics of the Green Belt on the Brook Street side of the hotel”. The Inspector acknowledged the Council’s then concerns that the site is on the south western edge of the town with green fields on the opposite side of Brook Street, but took the view “..The developed character of the appeal site is quite different. ” The Inspector went on to find that the then proposal would not have “... an unacceptable adverse effect on any important visual or rural amenity associated



with the openness that The Green Belt is intended to preserve". The Secretary of State supported the Inspectors recommendation and allowed the appeal.

5. The hotel site is in a narrow area of land between Brook Street and A12 dual carriageway. It is noted that the Council has identified similarly located parcels of land as preferred options to be removed from The Green Belt: 079A, 079C, 106 and 128 between the edge of Ingatestone and the A12 and 034, 158, 263, 276 on the north eastern side of Brentwood adjacent to the A12. All of those sites seem to have a greater likelihood of contributing toward the merging of towns and take up land that is more in the nature of "countryside" than The Holiday Inn Hotel Site.
6. Whilst it is acknowledged that those similar sites identified to be deleted from the Green Belt all make specific contributions to housing and employment land requirements, the Council should also seek to provide a Green Belt boundary that recognises the realities of the current position. The hotel site contributes very little, if anything, of positive benefit to the Green Belt and the future operation and development of the hotel should not be hindered by imposition of inappropriate policy restrictions.
7. Hotels are not usually recognised as "employment uses" but they are significant employers, usually of local people, usually offering a variety of employment in terms of training, skills and shift patterns. Furthermore, other business is reliant upon the availability of good quality accommodation for their own visiting staff, guests and customers. Hotels also "capture" the spending of overnight and daytime guests in the town providing secondary economic benefits and employment.

Conclusions

8. The site should be removed from The Green Belt or should be specifically identified as a developed site where the full rigour of restrictive policies will not be applied.

