

Delegated Report

Screening Opinion

Planning Application No: 20250932

Location: Former Tollgate Hotel, Watling Street, Gravesend

Description: Request for a screening opinion in accordance with The Town and Country Planning Act (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 in respect of an EIA Screening Opinion to determine whether a Full planning permission for the demolition of existing buildings to provide an EV charging hub and petrol filling station, including 24 charging bays and supporting electrical infrastructure (12 charging upstands, three substations and two network cabinets), six pump islands with canopy above, a forecourt shop/amenity building, customer parking, two air and water spaces and associated hardstanding and landscaping, accessed from the Wrotham Road/eastbound A2 roundabout junction constitutes EIA development.

Applicant: BP Oil UK Ltd

Site Visit Date: Not required for a screening opinion

Introduction

Proposal

The proposed development is for the demolition of existing buildings to provide an EV charging hub and petrol filling station, including 24 charging bays and supporting electrical infrastructure (12 charging upstands, three substations and two network cabinets), six pump islands with canopy above, a forecourt shop/amenity building, customer parking, two air and water spaces and associated hardstanding and landscaping, accessed from the Wrotham Road/eastbound A2 roundabout junction.

The site plan shows the existing layout of the former hotel buildings and hardstanding.

Location of Development

The application site is located to the north of the eastbound entry slip road to the A2. The site accommodates buildings associated with the former Tollgate Hotel, an area of approximately 1 hectare, including:

- A part two storey, part single storey pitched roof, mock-Tudor building, to the north west (which comprised a former public house, before the site was converted to a hotel and restaurant);
- A large two storey L shape building framing the northern and eastern boundaries (comprising hotel rooms);
- Two centrally located single storey buildings (including a function room), and
- Hardstanding to accommodate car parking, and areas of hard and soft landscaping.

A former hotel room building to the south of the site was demolished to enable the construction of the new slip road to the A2. The remaining buildings, on site, particularly the two storey L shaped building,

are prominent particularly when viewed from the west and the A2.

The property was previously in use as a hotel and restaurant, with conferencing and event facilities. The site has lain vacant since 2006, although the site was in use on a temporary basis during the construction of the realigned A2 trunk road in 2009. The site is cleared of shrubbery/vegetation, and the site has been made secure by robust boundary treatment and CCTV to discourage vandalism and antisocial behaviour.

The site is accessed off the adjacent roundabout junction of Wrotham Road and the A2, using an existing, dedicated turning from the roundabout.

The southern boundary of the site is shared with the eastbound entry slip road of the A2 dual carriageway.

The western boundary follows a generally curved line which is derived from the former road alignment and access arrangements which existed before the realignment of the A2.

To the east of the site lies a field, with the A2 eastbound slip road abutting the site to the south, which leads from the northern roundabout of the junction of the A2 with the A227 Wrotham Road.

The former A2 (Roman Road) abuts the site to the north and north east; the road is no longer a through road as it reaches a dead-end where the old road surface has largely been removed and replaced by a footpath and cycleway. Further to the north-east is the Cyclopark cycling and outdoor activity facility.

Also beyond the former A2, directly to the north of the site and served by a dead-end road, is a petrol filling station (Shell branded, but in independent ownership), comprising:

- A six pump island forecourt with a high-level canopy allowing for HGV fuelling
- An unusually large (for a petrol filling station) forecourt shop with a number of hot food counters (including Favourite Fried Chicken and Subway), and
- Jet-wash and parking facilities.

The adjacent petrol filling station was previously located alongside the A2, but is now located to the north of A2 on Wrotham Road, adjacent to its junction with The Tollgate, as a result of the A2 realignment.

Around the petrol filling station are a number of residential dwellings, the nearest of which is approximately 60m from the site.

EIA Regulations

In accordance with Part 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (As amended) ("the Regulations"), the development the subject of this screening request falls within Schedule 2 by reason of Part 10 (b) in Column 1 for 'Infrastructure projects' and exceeds the identified threshold for screening in Column 2.

Part 13 of Column 1 relates to Change and extensions as the proposed development does not already exist and therefore is neither a change or extension of an existing development.

Submitted Documents/Plans

Covering letter

Relevant Planning History

20180784	Demolition of former hotel/restaurant and construction of a petrol filling station and forecourts, sales building, ATM, underground fuel tanks, refuse/recycling, AC/refrigeration units, access, substation, parking and all associated works and services	Withdrawn	14.01.2020
20160215	Demolition of all former Tollgate hotel/restaurant buildings and construction of a petrol filling station and forecourts, sales building, ATM, underground fuel tanks, refuse/recycling, AC/refridgeration units, vehicular access, substation, parking and all associated works and services on part of site.	Appeal against non-determination, appeal withdrawn	13.01.2020
20150952	Request for a screening opinion in respect of development comprising demolition of former hotel/restaurant and erection of a petrol filling station and forecourts with underground fuel tanks, sales building with ATM, AC/refrigeration units, refuse/recycling, substation, vehicular access, parking provision and associated works.	Not required	12.10.2015
20140888	Request for a screening opinion in respect of development comprising demolition of former hotel/restaurant and erection of a petrol filling station and forecourts with underground fuel tanks, sales building with ATM, restaurant with drive-through facility, AC/refrigeration units, refuse/recycling, substation, vehicular access, parking provision and associated works and services.	Not required	07.10.2014

Schedule 3 Screening Criteria

Schedule 3 of the Regulations (2017) sets out the selection criteria for screening which are:

Characteristics of development

1. *The characteristics of development must be considered with particular regard to—*
 - (a) *the size and design of the whole development;*
 - (b) *cumulation with other existing development and/or approved development;*
 - (c) *the use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity;*
 - (d) *the production of waste;*
 - (e) *pollution and nuisances;*
 - (f) *the risk of major accidents and/or disasters relevant to the development concerned, including those caused by climate change, in accordance with scientific knowledge;*
 - (g) *the risks to human health (for example, due to water contamination or air pollution).*

Location of development

- 2.—(1) *The environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by development must be considered, with particular regard, to—*
 - (a) *the existing and approved land use;*
 - (b) *the relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground;*

- (c) *the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following*
- (d) *areas—*
- (i) *wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths;*
 - (ii) *coastal zones and the marine environment;*
 - (iii) *mountain and forest areas;*
 - (iv) *nature reserves and parks;*
 - (v) *European sites and other areas classified or protected under national legislation;*
 - (vi) *areas in which there has already been a failure to meet the environmental quality standards, laid down in Union legislation and relevant to the project, or in which it is considered that there is such a failure;*
 - (vii) *densely populated areas;*
 - (viii) *landscapes and sites of historical, cultural or archaeological significance.*

Types and characteristics of the potential impact

3. *The likely significant effects of the development on the environment must be considered in relation to criteria set out in paragraphs 1 and 2 above, with regard to the impact of the development on the factors specified in regulation 4(2), taking into account—*

- (a) *the magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (for example geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);*
- (b) *the nature of the impact;*
- (c) *the transboundary nature of the impact;*
- (d) *the intensity and complexity of the impact;*
- (e) *the probability of the impact;*
- (f) *the expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact;*
- (g) *the cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or approved development;*
- (h) *the possibility of effectively reducing the impact.*

Assessment

To ensure this is all carefully considered, where relevant, the Government provide an Environmental impact assessment screening checklist which they state can be used when screening for EIA, although there is no obligation. This has been included within the submitted Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening.

The proposed development is not expected to give rise to significant effects, as any anticipated effects can be dealt with through the planning application process.

Summary

Having assessed the available evidence it is the Local Planning Authority's opinion that the proposal is not EIA development and that accordingly an Environmental Statement is not required to accompany a planning application.

Given the nature of the development, the location and non-sensitivity of the area, it is considered that the proposal would be unlikely to have a significant impact on the environment. Gravesham Borough Council therefore concludes that the development is not EIA development and that an EIA is not required.

Conclusion

The proposed development has been assessed against the criteria in Schedules 2 and 3 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended). It is considered that an Environmental Statement is not required as the proposed development is unlikely to result in significant impacts on the environment.

Recommendation:

It is concluded that **EIA is not required and a negative screening opinion be issued as the development is not likely to have significant environmental effects on the environment.**

(For detailed conditions / reasons for refusal and informatives, see draft Decision)

Case Officer:	Mrs Alison Webster	Team Leader:	Richard Hart
Signed:		Signed:	<i>R Hart</i>
Dated:	23 September 2025	Dated:	8th October 2025