

JL

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Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Gravesend - Former Tollgate Hotel, Land at the junction of the A2 with Wrotham Road

By way of introduction, I work on behalf of BP Oil (UK) Ltd in respect of the above site (Site). As you will be aware, the site has a lengthy planning history (reviewed in summary later in this letter) relating to proposals for a petrol filling station and, initially a separate drive-thru restaurant unit. However, my client's intentions for the Site have now evolved to reflect the changing road vehicle market and to underscore the importance of according with and helping deliver the government's net zero policy agenda.

More specifically my client's current aspirations are to provide an electric vehicle (EV) charging hub at the site, together with a petrol offer to meet current customer requirements. However, it should be noted that it is BP's intention to remove the Petrol Filling Station offer in the future (once emerging trends in the personal motor vehicle market allow) and to replace it with additional EV charging spaces - the scheme is to be specifically designed to allow for this. This future revision is outlined in detail in the "Proposal" section of this letter.

In this context, I write to you to by way of initial engagement to the planning application, and to request a meeting to discuss my client's aspirations in further detail.

The Site

The Site extends to approximately 1.01 hectares and is located to the north of, and alongside, the eastbound slip road on to the A2 dual carriageway. As previously confirmed, it lies adjacent to the A2's junction with Wrotham Road, and benefits from an existing access onto the northern roundabout serving the junction. It is therefore easily accessible to traffic travelling in both directions on the A2, and north and southbound traffic entering and leaving Gravesend on Wrotham Road.

Though in the Green Belt within the current Development Plan, the site accommodates a number of vacant but maintained buildings which remain capable of being brought back into use, including:

- A single and two storey building of a mock-tudor style in the north-west corner of the appeal site;
- A two storey "L" shaped flat roofed block, accommodating the former hotel rooms, adjoining the northern and eastern boundaries of the site, and

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- Two single storey buildings centrally located within the site.

The rest of the site accommodates maintained hardstanding, other paved areas and amenity landscaping, all in the curtilage of the above buildings, and largely enclosed by them.

The current layout of the Site is illustrated on the Existing Site Plan appended to this letter.

Planning history

The site has a lengthy planning history relating to its previous use as a hotel, with various new buildings and extensions in the 1960's and 1970's. Further planning applications were made in 1990 and 2001 for two storey and three storey extensions, but not implemented at the Site.

The use of the site as temporary site offices for the A2 widening scheme was granted permission in 2006 and the Site was used for that purpose until the opening of the new A2 route in 2009.

Over the last 10 years the following applications have been submitted to the council in relation to the Site:

- A planning application (reference number 20131018) for a petrol filling station and a drive thru, originally submitted in November 2013, granted planning permission twice, but twice quashed and finally withdrawn in November 2017.
- A second planning application (reference number 20160215) for a petrol filling station only, originally submitted in March 2016, granted in February 2018 but subsequently quashed, and then subject to an appeal against non-determination in March 2019 (with the appeal being withdrawn in January 2020).

In light of this extensive planning history, my client is keen to engage with the local authority in pre-application discussion to inform the local authority of its changing aspirations (detailed below) and agree the scope and content of a future planning application.

The Proposal

On 12 February 2020 BP announced its ambition to become a net zero company by 2050 which covers BP's greenhouse gas emissions from its retail operations worldwide, as well as the carbon in the oil and gas that it produces and sells. In this context, BP's aspirations have moved away from a petrol filling station at the site, towards an EV Charging Hub, with an initial but temporary fuel offer.

In this context, please find attached drawings and elevations of the proposed scheme which provide further preliminary details and visuals of the proposal:

- Drawing ref: 13979/20 - Existing Site Plan
- Drawing ref: 13979/22 - Proposed Site Plan
- Drawing ref: 13979/23 - Proposed Site Elevations
- Drawing ref: 13979/23-1 - Proposed Shop Elevations
- Drawing ref: 13979/24 - Equipment Elevations
- Drawing ref: 13979/OS - Site Location Plan
- Drawing ref: 13979/OS – Block Plan
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However, when reviewing the plans, it should be noted that the final design and/or location of the individual elements of the proposed scheme may be subject to change as a result of specialist consultancy and local authority feedback.

The main elements of the proposal can be summarised as follows:

- Demolition of all existing buildings on the Site, in favour of an EV Hub (albeit with an initial petrol offer);
- Provision of 24 Electric Vehicle Charging points;
- Erection of a single storey building that is likely to be used as a forecourt shop and café area (similar to a petrol filling station) with wraparound canopy;
- Erection of six petrol/diesel fuel pump islands in a “domino six” layout, with a canopy above and fuel storage tanks below to the rear of the amenity building,;
- Provision of three jet wash bays, a car wash and two air/water bays;
- Provision of customer parking to the front on the retail building;
- Construction of vehicle access and circulation areas, with access to the site via the existing (albeit improved) crossover;
- Provision of supporting infrastructure such as a sub-station and plant room; and
- Perimeter landscaped areas, including new trees, to provide a soft interface between the development proposal and its wider context.

Planning Context

The Development Plan for the Site consists of the:

- Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014);
- Remaining Saved Policies of the Local Plan First Review (1994), and
- Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013-2030 (July 2016)

Within the Development Plan, the site is confirmed as lying within the Green Belt.

In 2020, the Local Authority undertook a consultation to review the Development Plan, referred to as the Emerging Local Plan Partial Review, Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (Regulation 18 - Stage 2) consultation. Within this document, the site is proposed to be allocated for commercial development (reference GB07).

Purpose of high-level pre-application approach

In the context of the above, I would like to request a meeting with officers to:

- Allow the plans to be tabled, and any initial local authority feedback secured; and

- Discuss the scope and content of the supporting information necessary for the local authority to properly consider a planning application.

Following the meeting, BP and its consultancy team will take the feedback received into account, and at this stage we would envisage submitting a more detailed pre-application package (for which it is accepted a fee would be applied) to secure more detailed views in advance of the formal submission of a planning application.

I would be grateful if an appropriate officer could contact me at the earliest possible juncture to confirm that they are dealing with this request and advise availability for a meeting.

Yours faithfully



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