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Private and Confidential

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SENT BY E-MAIL ONLY;
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30th November 2023

Dear Matthew

Re: 220409FUL/220410LBC – Caversham Park House

Further to your e-mail of 17th November 2023, my reply of 21st November 2023 and our meeting of 24th November regarding your Conservation Officer's request for additional information, I thought it would be useful to formally respond and provide the additional information, where agreed.

I would like to start by highlighting the lengthy discussions that were had with the previous Conservation Officer (Bruce Edgar). The latest plans specifically address some of the concerns that Bruce had raised and at no point did he request additional supporting information. Since Mr Edgar left, the Council has stated that the advice he had previously provided would not be disregarded. We appreciate that the current Conservation Officer has to reach their own view on the proposals, but as the application has been submitted for such a significant period of time and our discussions have been so detailed, we do fail to see why the request for additional information has only just been received and also why it is required.

Beechcroft has a significant amount of experience in dealing with the redevelopment of listed buildings and is therefore well placed to consider what needs to be provided as part of any planning application. It is our position that much of the requested information can be dealt with by a condition attached to any planning permission. Further details on these points are provided below.

Structural Impact Assessment

The Conservation Officer has requested that a structural impact assessment is undertaken by a structural/mechanical engineer to consider the additional load of the development on the structure of the building.

Our position on this is that this could be a condition attached to any planning permission that prior to commencement of development a full structural impact assessment is undertaken, the details of which are to be submitted to the Local Authority. However, we have had a structural engineer attend site and attached is a statement they have prepared to support the application.

The building and associated land has been owned by the BBC for over 75 years. During this time, its level of use has varied. By the end of the war, over 1,000 people worked within the building, but towards the end of its use by the BBC in 2018, the number of people working for the BBC within the building was over 600.

The proposed conversion of the building to accommodate 65 assisted living units, which will provide for (at its full capacity) 214 residents plus employed staff, will realistically hold less than half of the people that utilised the building when the BBC were occupying and using the building. It should also be noted that the occupation level of 214 residents is based upon any 2 bed apartment being occupied by 4 people and any 1 bed apartment being occupied by 2 people, but in our experience, occupation rates are much lower than their full capacity, due to the nature of the type of accommodation being provided.

The main fabric of the building is not changing. We have provided detailed demolition plans that clearly indicated (highlighted in red) what is proposed to be demolished. I draw your attention to drawing numbers 3251.186 – 3251.192. Please also consider the detail provided in the 'General Notes' section of the drawings.

At our meeting, we agreed to provide some further information on the methodology to be adopted for how the 6 proposed mezzanines would be attached to the building. This is contained within the information supplied by the structural engineer.

Existing and Proposed Sections

We agreed to provide 5 sections through the building which show the existing and proposed plans. These are attached for information.

Details of how all Mezzanine Floors will be affixed to the Building

Sections for 2 of the mezzanines are provided. Please refer to drawing number 3251.193 and 3251.194. As agreed, we also attach a methodology for how we propose to fix the mezzanines to the building. Should this information be acceptable, this can be an approved methodology as part of any planning permission.

Condition Survey

The Conservation Officer has requested a full condition survey of the building to set out existing problems/issues within the building. This can be a condition attached to any planning permission and is not required at this stage. We would need to undertake this prior to any works commencing on site, whether there was a condition attached to the permission or not as we need to ensure that the building will be fit for its purpose, once complete.

Any works required to ensure the building is fit for its intended purpose can also be conditioned which would allow the Local Authority to approve any works prior to commencement of any works to the Main House.

Window Schedules

On the demolition plans (drawing numbers 3251.186 – 3251.192) there are further details in the notes section which confirms our methodology to the 349 windows across the building. Any further details required can be a condition attached to any planning permission, such that any additional works required are to be approved by the Local Authority prior to commencement of any works to the Main House.

Schedule of Works to each Plot

This work requires a significant amount of detail and should only be required once permission has been received. We have already provided detailed demolition plans which we have highlighted above. It's disappointing that although the Conservation Officer confirmed she had reviewed the full application material, that the demolition plans had not formed part of this

review. These are very important when assessing the impact of the proposed development on the Listed Building.

At our meeting on 24th November, I did confirm that a methodology statement could be supplied to indicate how services to the plots would be treated and this is attached for information.

It is our hope that the above and attached information is sufficient to allow the Conservation Officer to come to her view on the applications in respect of the Listed Building at Caversham Park. We agreed that this would be done prior to 14th December 2023. This will then allow you to undertake the planning balance that is needed at this stage of the application.

As we have already said, we believe that there are significant benefits that outweigh any harm to the Listed Buildings and Registered Park and Garden but do appreciate that you need to undertake your own assessment in order to reach a recommendation. Therefore, if you do require anything further to allow you to undertake this assessment, then please do not hesitate to contact either myself or John Gale at Savills.

Your sincerely



Ruth Bailey
Strategic Land Director

Cc: John Gale – Savills
Mary-Jane O'Neill – Lambert Smith Hampton

Enc: Structural Impact Assessment Summary
Services Methodology
Sections through Building;

- 3251.400 – Main House Proposed Plans 1
- 3251.401 – Main House Proposed Plans 2
- 3251.402 – Main House Existing Plans 1
- 3251.403 – Main House Existing Plans 2
- 3251.404 – Main House Sections A-A
- 3251.405 – Main House Sections B-B
- 3251.406 – Main House Section C-C
- 3251.407 – Main House Section D-D
- 3251.408 – Main House Section E-E