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Regulated by RICS

25 April 2008

Dear Louise

**Slough Town Hall, Bath Road, Slough (Ref: 165888)
Provision of Additional Information**

Drivers Jonas act on behalf of Slough Borough Council, providing property advice in relation to a range of matters linked to the Town Hall site and its potential future disposal.

Following receipt of your letter dated 4 April 2008, in respect of the above property, we write to provide further information and representations on behalf of your Client to assist in your consideration of the application for formal listing of the existing Town Hall building.

I set out our comments below.

Summary of History of Town Hall Building

We have previously provided a copy of the "Initial Assessment of Conservation Interest" report (prepared by Anthony Walker of DLG Architects) which provides a detailed history of the buildings on site. For ease of reference we set out below a brief summary of the history of the Town Hall building.

The existing original Town Hall building was built on land which was acquired for development in 1933. The building was designed following a design competition which was managed by the Royal Institute of British Architects, and subject to assessment by Professor Goodhart-Rendel.

The building was completed in 1937, although differed in a number of ways from the plans and design selected following the design competition. For example, the design is substantially incomplete as the eastern wing of the building and the separate hall envisaged by the architect's original plans were never built.

To respond to the Council's increasing space requirements over time, two extensions were added to the Town Hall core in the 1970s. These additions are of a more traditional 1970s style and detract from the integrity of the original core building. More recently a number of permanent porta kabins have also been located on the site to the rear of the Town Hall Core; further reducing the visual integrity of the building.

Current Protection of the Building

The Town Hall building is currently locally listed within the Slough Borough Council Local Plan under Policy EN17. This policy states: -

"Special consideration will be given, in the exercise of the development control function, to the retention, enhancements and appropriate refurbishment of locally listed buildings together with their setting"



As part of any proposals to re-develop the site, involving the removal of the locally listed Town Hall, any developer would be required to show that, in planning and conservation terms, the removal of the Town Hall could be justified.

We have previously (17 & 25 March 2008) provided a note which sets out the proposed format of a report addressing the loss of the Town Hall and which would form a key part of any forthcoming planning application to be brought forward by our Client. This note sets out that matters relating to planning, viability, urban design and feasibility would be considered in detail and subject to scrutiny from a range of statutory consultees, which we would expect to include English Heritage.

Information Provided to English Heritage to Date

On behalf of Slough Borough Council, Drivers Jonas have already provided information to English Heritage to assist in their consideration of the current listing application. This information has been provided in correspondence as follows: -

- Letter to Nigel Barker dated 15 January 2008;
- Letter to Nigel Barker dated 17 March 2008 (including copy of "Initial Assessment of Conservation Interest" report prepared by DLG Architects and a copy of a note setting out the structure and content of the Planning & Viability Assessment to be submitted in support of any forthcoming planning application);
- Email to Danielle Devilin dated 25 March 2008 (including copies of letters mentioned above, "Initial Assessment of Conservation Interest" report prepared by DLG Architects, and a copy of a note setting out the structure and content of the Planning & Viability Assessment to be submitted in support of any forthcoming planning application).

In addition, we understand that you have also received correspondence dated 2 April 2008 directly from our Client providing confirmation of the current position and programme relating to the continued occupation of the Town Hall buildings and its potential for future disposal.

Current Position

As set out in previously submitted correspondence, our Client is in the process of preparing an outline planning application for the re-development of the Town Hall site for residential development. The proposals to be put forward by the forthcoming planning application have considered the merits, in planning, viability and urban design terms, of retaining the Town Hall core as part of any proposals.

Submission of Additional Information

Architectural Merit

In addition to the information already provided, I enclose a copy of supplementary material which has been prepared by Anthony Walker (DLG Architects) to support the previously submitted "Initial Assessment of Conservation Interest".

The enclosed supplementary information considers the development of town halls within England during the 1930s, and the circumstances within which they were conceived. It is noted that the extensive decorative campaigns which were produced for most town halls of 1930s design and construction reflected the pride in civic grandeur. At Slough, however, such decoration was reduced on the basis of budgetary constraints.

The incomplete nature of the Town Hall is noted within the enclosed supplementary report. In particular, it is noted that the design is "*substantially incomplete*" and "*one where the balance required had not been achieved*".

The internal features of the building are also considered. It is noted that there is no major design campaign comparable to some of the listed town halls of this period. Indeed, even where some of the original internal

features have been retained, the alterations made (such as the change of the dais in the Council Chamber) have removed the most interesting features.

In conclusion, the supplemental report states:

"The Town Hall building is not of a standard comparable to listed town halls of grade II and II standard, that it did not fulfil its original master plan and composition objectives, and it did not have a positive influence on the development of the area. The interior has been altered and to a large extent what interest there is has been prejudiced."*

Potential to Retain Elements of the Town Hall as Part of any Emerging Proposals

As set out in our recent (17 March) letter to Nigel Barker, consideration has been given by our Client and their architectural team to the potential to employ measures to retain reference to the current use of the site for the Council's Town Hall. The possible measures discussed to date include: -

- Retention of the existing Town Hall clock tower – this could form a feature of the future detailed design proposals (for example within areas of open space/ landscaping);
- Re-use of the brickwork from the existing Town Hall building within the proposed areas of landscaping – this could take the form of, for example, stack bonded steel supported brickwork panel including the stone coat of arms and the main entrance 'Town Hall' stone signage;
- Creation of a photographic record of the internal and external features of the Town Hall – this could be donated to Slough Museum to allow for proper preservation; or
- Use of un-patinated copper panel as cladding – this would provide a contemporary reference to the green copper roof of the existing Town Hall building.

Our initial discussions with the Council's Planning Officers regarding these proposed measures have been positive, and we would be pleased to discuss this approach further with English Heritage as necessary and appropriate.

Timing of Redevelopment Proposals

As set out above, our Client is currently seeking to assess their options for the potential redevelopment and disposal of the Town Hall site, alongside their confirmed proposals to re-locate existing civic services to a more central Slough location.

Subject to the receipt of outline planning permission, the Council will be seeking to dispose of the Town Hall site. Following disposal of the site, (the contracts for which are expected to be completed by mid 2009) the current re-location programme is that the Council will remain in the current offices until such time as alternative office accommodation has been found, although a broad date of March 2009 has been identified by which Council functions will commence vacating of the older existing buildings on the Town Hall site.

Following purchase of the site, the future owner/ developer will be required to submit a detailed planning application before re-development of the site could commence. Our "best-guess estimate" is therefore that the demolition of the Town Hall site will not commence until all relevant approvals are in place for the redevelopment of the site, which is unlikely to be before mid to late 2009.

We trust that the above information is useful in your consideration of the listing application. If you wish to discuss further, or require any further information at this stage, please do not hesitate to contact Mathew Jones (0121 237 4409).



Louise Campbell

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25 April 2008

Yours sincerely

Drivers Jonas.

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Encs.