21st December 2019

The Society response to planning application 19/05627/F - 5-11 West Street St Philips

The proposal
Partial demolition of existing buildings, retention of Swift and Co. facade and erection of new building up to a maximum height of ground plus 3 storeys to provide 134-bedroom hotel.

Massing height and design
The Society supports the current proposal. This is an important scheme that could enhance a broken part of West Street and could deliver a retail unit large enough for the convenience store that the area lacks. We make these suggestions and comments :

The West Street elevation
We support the proportional structure of the elevation. However, we suggest that the inclusion of some modest architectural elements could enhance the plain appearance without creating a pastiche of a historical form or with significant additional cost. For example, the window openings could include stone window cills which would add interest. A horizontal string line could define the window or floor division and a large string at cornice level could cast an interesting shadow. The windows appear to have no internal divisions would appear cheerless. The inclusion of internal glazing details would enhance not just the window but the whole façade. We assume that 'PC windows' means plastic coating. If this is so, plastic windows have no place in a conservation area. We would support powder coated metal frames. We believe that the Old Market Community Association will have additional positive suggestions to improve the design.

The Braggs Lane elevation
We are not convinced by the railings to fence off this open yard. If the railings are introduced for security reasons, we could accept them. If not, this aspect should be reconsidered.

Hotel access
Access for guests and deliveries is problematic on the site. We have read the Transport Management Development report dated the 25th June 2019 filed in the planning enquiry - 19/00728/PREAPP - to which we have nothing to add.