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Date: 19<sup>th</sup> August 2006

Our ref: FD/01/01

Your ref: APP/B1550/A/06/2018375/NWF

Mr M Joyce  
The Planning Inspectorate  
Room: 3/05  
Temple Quay House  
2 The Square  
Temple Quay  
Bristol  
BS1 6PN

**COPY**

Dear Michael,

**Re: Appeal made by Albon Engineering and Manufacturing PLC against the refusal of planning permission to erect 3 no. guest accommodation units linked to the business at Turret Farm, High Road, Hockley, Essex**

I refer to our telephone conversation today and as discussed enclose two copies of the informal hearing statement prepared on behalf of Albon Engineering and Manufacturing PLC in respect of the above appeal.

I trust the attached meets with your approval and I thank you for your time and assistance to date.

Yours sincerely,

  
**Philip Atkinson**

**INFORMAL HEARING STATEMENT**

**RELATING TO EXTENSION OF TURRET FARM, HIGH ROAD, HOCKLEY  
TO PROVIDE THREE GUEST ACCOMMODATION SUITES, SHARED  
DINING AND CONFERENCE ROOM AND LAUNDRY LINKED TO ALBON  
ENGINEERING AND MANUFACTURING PLC**

**LAND ADJACENT TURRET FARM, HIGH ROAD, HOCKLEY**

**APPEAL REFERENCE APP/B1550/A/06/2018375/NWF**

**PREPARED BY PHILIP ATKINSON MRTPI OF FORGE DEVELOPMENTS  
LTD ON BEHALF OF ALBON ENGINEERING AND MANUFACTURING PLC**

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This is an appeal against the refusal of planning permission by Rochford District Council to permit the minor extension of the existing dwelling house known as Turret Farm, Hockley, to enable the formation of 3 no. business guest suites at ground and first floor levels, a laundry facility to serve the units proposed, a conference room and a shared-use breakfast/dining room for use by guests visiting Albon Engineering and Manufacturing PLC. All the business guest units proposed have a dedicated office area and an en-suite containing a shower, toilet and basin. It is proposed under to serve the new wing containing the appeal proposals via a dedicated 24-hour guest entrance to enable the physical separation of the facility from the main dwelling house to protect residential amenity.
- 1.2 The refusal (appeal document J/3 already submitted) dated 11<sup>th</sup> May 2006 followed the submission of a full planning application (RDC reference 06/00230/FUL) dated 15<sup>th</sup> March 2006.
- 1.3 Planning permission for the appeal proposals were refused planning permission by Rochford District Council for the following reasons:
- The Council contend that the very special circumstances claimed by the appellant at the time of determination as outlined within the Supporting Statement are not sufficient to outweigh the harm resulting from the proposals upon overall Green Belt objectives in this instance;
  - The application proposal as a result of siting, design and scale would impair the appearance of the countryside in this location; and
  - The dwelling house known as Turret Farm has been extended previously and it is considered by the Council that any further extension regardless of use would result in a substantial change to the appearance and character of the property.
- 1.4 This statement deals with the following:
- Description of the site and surrounding area;
  - Background and the application under appeal;
  - National and local planning policy background;
  - Grounds of appeal; and

- Conclusions.

## **2.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA**

- 2.1 The application site is 94.7m<sup>2</sup> in area and is located immediately adjacent the main dwelling house known as Turret Farm that is within a complex of existing buildings and structures on land designated as Metropolitan Green Belt.
- 2.2 Turret Farm is located in close proximity to other existing residential dwellings to the north. To the east of the application site is land under institutional use, and to the south and west are located areas of open land under agricultural use.
- 2.3 Access to the application site is achieved via the existing private drive off High Road, Hockley that serves Turret Farm.
- 2.4 Turret Farm is a large detached dwelling house about which are located large landscaped garden areas also under residential use. Within the curtilage of Turret Farm are a number of out-buildings that now contain a private swimming pool, sauna and large bar all of which are used in association with the business.

3.0 **BACKGROUND AND THE APPLICATION UNDER APPEAL**

*Background*

- 3.1 Since the initial occupation of Turret Farm by Mr and Mrs Albon the entire site has been used at regular intervals to entertain business guests visiting Albon Engineering and Manufacturing PLC.
- 3.2 The business guest accommodation proposed under this application is required to meet existing chronic deficiencies in high quality visitor accommodation about the local area.
- 3.3 The amount of business guest accommodation being applied for is considered to be the absolute minimum required to meet the needs of Albon Engineering and Manufacturing PLC.
- 3.4 It is the considered view of Albon Engineering and Manufacturing PLC that the lack of high quality bed spaces within a reasonable drive time of the business is affecting the perception of the business globally. It is further considered that if existing deficiencies locally in respect of the provision of high quality bed spaces are not met in the immediate future that the current situation will adversely affect the continued growth of the business.
- 3.5 Albon Engineering and Manufacturing PLC has noted an alarming trend in the past three years in that more frequent business guests are opting to stay in central London rather than within the local area. This trend has resulted in the business having to invest in a suitable vehicle and chauffeur to provide a dedicated shuttle service between the business, Turret Farm and central London. The current situation results in significant numbers of unnecessary vehicle trips about the local road network, adds to existing levels of congestion specifically along the A127, and is inherently unsustainable.
- 3.6 It is the considered view of Albon Engineering and Manufacturing PLC that the existing situation is costly to the business both in terms of time and resources and clearly places additional and unnecessary strain upon employees and business guests.

- 3.7 The current situation is unsatisfactory, is damaging to the local economy and requires urgent attention, hence the reason for the application to form guest accommodation units at Turret Farm as submitted.

*Application under Appeal*

- 3.8 The appeal proposals seek to physically extend the existing dwelling house known as Turret Farm by a modest amount to provide three business guest suites within a new wing. The business guest suites will operate separately from the main dwelling house about which the business entertainment facilities already under ancillary business use are located. The independent nature of the guest suites proposed is demonstrated through the provision of a separate 24 hour access point and the introduction of dedicated dining, conference and laundry facilities to serve the business use.
- 3.9 The Albon Engineering and Manufacturing PLC business has grown dramatically over the past 20 years from a small family run business to become the largest employer in Rochford District. It is the considered view of the applicant that this dramatic growth in the business is partly due to the degree to which senior management are accessible to business clients. This is most clearly demonstrated through the continued use of Turret Farm as a venue to entertain the majority of business guests visiting Albon Engineering and Manufacturing PLC. It is this family business ethos that Albon Engineering and Manufacturing PLC is keen to reinforce through the offer of high quality 'branded' business guest accommodation located at Turret Farm.
- 3.10 To clearly demonstrate need, the following list details those persons that visited the business over a 12 month period prior to the submission of the original application. The majority of those persons listed below were entertained at Turret Farm by representatives of Albon Engineering and Manufacturing PLC.
- Adrian Missen, Allianz Cornhill;
  - Agustin Ruiz Perez Cejeula, Nissan Motor Iberica S.A.;
  - Al Kubon, Krupp Hoesch Automotive of America;
  - Alain Haag, Renault;
  - Alan Kaufman, Finers Stephens Innocent;
  - Alejandro Blanco, Nissan Motor Iberica S.A.;

- Alessandro Androtti, Ferrari;
- Alessandro Caraglio, Fontana Luigi;
- Alessandro Pizzarelli, Teksid;
- Alice Fraser, Finers Stephens Innocent;
- Andrea Carri, Lombardini;
- Andrew C. Noble, ThyssenKrupp Gerlach;
- Armando Montero Serrano, Nissan;
- B.D. Gaikwad, Kirloskar Oil Engines Ltd;
- Brian Rawlings, Eversheds;
- Bruno Casale, GM-Fiat Worldwide;
- Christian Bignon, Renault;
- Christian Vendange, Iveco;
- Cristiano Pozzi, GM-Fiat Worldwide;
- Daniel Hyon, Ateliers Janves;
- Daniele Carletti, Ducati;
- David Smith, Yanmar;
- Detley Hallerberg, Krupp Gerlach;
- Domonique Rogez, Renault;
- Dr Mike Sporton, Grentek Ltd;
- Edwin Fogliatto, PSA Peugeot Citroen;
- Elizabeth Howard, Keans Solicitors;
- Emmanuel Guillet, Ateliers Janves;
- Enzo Antonozzi, Lombardini;
- Eric Fremeaux, Ateliers Janves;
- Ernst Weeland, Land Bank;
- Fabio Lipperini, Ducati;
- Fabio Salvati, GM-Fiat Worldwide;
- Fabrice Agnoli, Renault;
- Fernando Trapero, Nissan;
- Franco Belstram, Iveco;
- Gary J Fielding, Unipart Industries
- Gary Silcock, UEF;
- Georgeta Molosaga, Economic and Commercial Section, Embassy of Romania;

- Giullano Fazzini, Fontana Luigi;
- Graham J Smith, KPMG;
- Gregorio Gomez, Renault Nissan;
- Gunter Hartmann, Facil;
- Hans Peter Coenen, MAHLE;
- Hartmut Peipe, Krupp Gerlach;
- Henri Kogut, PSA Peugeot Citroen;
- Isabel Linares, Nissan;
- Jacques de Feydeau, Ateliers Janves;
- Javier Ruiz Morais, Nissan Motor Iberica S.A.;
- Jean Jacques Lemaire, Renault;
- Jean-Yves Morin, PSA Peugeot Citroen;
- Jim O'Connell, Glenny;
- Joachim Bossung, Krupp Gerlach;
- Joana Lucinella Viadi, First Secretary, Economic and Commercial Section, Embassy of Romania;
- John Harley, THB Clowes Ltd
- Jose M Melero Perez, Nissan Motor Iberica S.A.
- Jose M. Melero Perez, Nissan Motor Iberica S.A.
- Karen Luhning, UEF;
- Kathryn L Taylor, Secretary of Commerce and Tourism, Oklahoma City;
- Lars-Ola Carlstein, Volvo;
- Laura Trinchero, Teksid;
- Loic Mellinand, Volvo Powertrain;
- Luc Bertin, Renault;
- Manuel Mas, Nissan;
- Manuel Savazza, Lombardini;
- Marino Larice-Larlach, Fontana Luigi;
- Markus Britz, Krupp Gerlach;
- Martin Hofman, Mahle;
- Massimiliano Bonanni, Lombardini;
- Massimo Bilotta, GM-Fiat Worldwide;
- Maurizio Novelli, Lombardini;

- Mauro Bolognesi, Lombardini;
- Michel Mestre, Setforge Gauvin;
- Miguel A. de Frutos Arredondo, Nissan;
- Mohsen Taheri, Mack Trucks Inc.;
- Mohsen Taheri, Renault;
- M.S. Haig, DOE;
- Neil Clasper, Economic Development Officer, City of Sunderland;
- Neil Hodgson, R.P. Hodson Risk Services;
- Neville Reyner, EEDA;
- Nidal Sabbah, Burj Al Arab;
- Olivier Cadart, Setforge Lyon;
- Olivier Gaspard, Caterpillar Group Services;
- P.J. Khot, Kirloskar Oil Engines Ltd;
- Paul Birds, Fontana (GB) Ltd;
- Paul Dudley, T.L.Clowes (Warwick) Ltd;
- Paul Edwards, T.L. Clowes (Warwick) Ltd
- Paul J Dudiak, Caterpillar;
- Paul Toothill, Allianz Global Risk;
- Paul Zeelen, Huppert;
- Peter Edward Routley, Iveco;
- Peter R Rawson, Perkins Engines Company Ltd;
- Philippe Damour, Federal Mogul;
- Pierre Cottat, Renault;
- Pierre Louis Cueff, Renault;
- Pierre Tricnaux, Caterpillar Group Services;
- Quentin Remy, Slair Remy Corporation Architects;
- R.R. Deshpande, Kirloskar Oil Engines Ltd;
- Ray Ife, Lawton Imports;
- Renato Cuciniello, Iveco Global Purchasing;
- Ric Durrant, Perkins Engines Company Ltd;
- Rickard Lundberg, Volvo;
- Robb McLellan, Lancaster;
- Robert Lands, Finers Stephens Innocent;

- Robert Pionnier, Renault;
- Rolf Fyne, Business Development Consultant to Ontario Ministry of Enterprise;
- Russell Hazelhurst, KPMG;
- Sergio Corradini, Lombardini;
- Shelton Fowler, Slair Remy Corporation Architects;
- Simon Gilbert, KPMG;
- Steve Eastham, KPMG;
- Sudodh Tandale, Bharat Forge Ltd;
- Sylvie Foreau, Renault;
- Tom Hurst, Economic Development Officer, City of Sunderland;
- Tom Sawyer, AEEU;
- Tony Missen, Huppert;
- Trevor Ward, NSK Europe;
- Uwe Wittich, Facil;
- Vincent Ballandras, Renault;
- Wayne R Prankard, Iveco;

3.11 The implications of the above list both in terms of the obvious demand and the modest number and size of the spaces proposed under this application are clear.

#### 4.0 EXISTING GUEST ACCOMMODATION WITHIN ROCHFORD DISTRICT

4.1 As stated in the Supporting Statement accompanying the original planning submission application, and also confirmed within paragraph 6.13.3 of the recently superseded Rochford District Local Plan (1995), there is only a limited number of bed spaces available within Rochford District.

4.2 As also referred to within the Supporting Statement prepared in support of the original application the quality of the bed spaces available within Rochford District and Southend-on-Sea Borough Council areas is not adequate to meet the needs of the business.

##### *Rochford District*

4.3 In Rochford District the following hotels were available to accommodate guests visiting Albon Engineering and Manufacturing PLC:

- Essex County Hotel, Aviation Way, Southend-on-Sea;
- Hotel Renouf, Bradley Way, Rochford (now closed);
- The Chichester Hotel, Old London Rd, Rawreth;
- Holiday Inn Rayleigh, Arterial Road, Raleigh Weir, Rayleigh

4.4 As referred to above, Hotel Renouf has recently ceased trading and it is understood that the hotel will not re-open. The remaining hotels listed above are considered by the applicant to not be of a sufficiently high standard to accommodate business guests.

##### *Southend-on-Sea Borough*

4.5 The only realistic alternative to accommodating business guests in Rochford District is to accommodate business guests in Southend-on-Sea Borough Council area. There are a number of hotels located in Southend-on-Sea within a reasonable drive time of Albon Engineering and Manufacturing PLC and Turret Farm, as follows:

- Premier Travel Inn, Thanet Grange, Southend-on-Sea;
- The Westcliff Hotel, 18-20 Westcliff Parade, Southend-on-Sea;

- The Gleneagles Hotel, 5-6 Clifftown Parade, Southend-On-Sea;
- The Welbeck Hotel, 27 Palmerston Road, Westcliff-On-Sea;
- The Balmoral, 32-36 Valkyrie Road, Westcliff-On-Sea;
- Ilfracombe House Hotel, 9-13 Wilson Rd, Southend-On-Sea;
- Erlsmere Hotel, 24-32 Pembury Rd, Southend-On-Sea;
- Camelia Hotel, 178 Eastern Esplanade, Southend-On-Sea;
- Darnly Hotel, 103-107 York Rd, Southend-On-Sea;
- Mayflower Hotel, 6 Royal Terrace, Southend-On-Sea;
- Rivington Hotel, 8 Chancellor Rd, Southend-On-Sea;
- Roslin Hotel, 10-11 Thorpe Esplanade, Southend-On-Sea;
- The Anchor Hotel, 23 High St Great Wakering, Southend-On-Sea;
- The Hope Hotel, 34 Marine Parade, Southend-On-Sea;
- The Palace Hotel, Pier Hill, Southend-On-Sea;
- The Sutton Arms, 79 Southchurch Rd, Southend-On-Sea

4.6 Albon Engineering and Manufacturing PLC consider that there are no hotels within the Southend-on-Sea area that offer bed spaces that are of a sufficiently high standard to accommodate guests visiting the business.

### *The Alternatives*

4.7 As stated in paragraph 2.5 of this statement the appellant has noticed in recent years an alarming trend in that more frequent visitors to Albon Engineering and Manufacturing are opting to stay in central London rather than locally in lower quality accommodation. This trend has resulted in the business having to invest in a suitable vehicle and chauffeur to provide a dedicated shuttle service between the business, Turret Farm and central London. The current situation results in significant numbers of unnecessary vehicle trips about the local road network, adds to existing levels of congestion specifically along the A127, and is inherently unsustainable.

4.8 Clearly the current situation is unsatisfactory, costly to the business and requires urgent attention to ensure the continued growth of the business remains unaffected. The existing situation in terms of the lack of quality accommodation locally and the

additional costs placed upon the business through the chauffer service now being provided are material considerations in determining this appeal. It is the considered view of the appellant that the needs of the largest employer in Rochford District are indeed very special circumstances.

## 5.0 NATIONAL AND LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

### *Government Guidance*

#### **Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 – Green Belts**

##### 5.1 **Paragraph 3.1** states:

**“The general policies controlling development in the countryside apply with equal force in Green Belts but there is, in addition, a general presumption against inappropriate development within them. Such development should not be approved, except in very special circumstances. See paragraphs 3.4, 3.8, 3.11 and 3.12 below as to development which is inappropriate.”**

##### 5.2 **Paragraph 3.2** states:

**“Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt. It is for the applicant to show why permission should be granted. Very special circumstances to justify inappropriate development will not exist unless the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. In view of the presumption against inappropriate development, the Secretary of State will attach substantial weight to the harm to the Green Belt when considering any planning application or appeal concerning such development.”**

### *Local Planning Policy*

- 5.3 The Development Plan for the application site comprises the approved Essex and Southend-on-Sea Replacement Structure Plan (4/01) and the recently adopted Rochford District Replacement Local Plan (16/06). The appeal proposals were prepared having regard to the previously adopted and now superseded Rochford District Local Plan First Review (4/95). This document is also considered relevant to this appeal.

- 5.4 In addition to adopted and emerging Policy contained within the Development Plan the Economic Development Strategy for Rochford District (10/04) is also considered relevant.

#### **Essex and Southend-on-Sea Replacement Structure Plan**

- 5.5 As a result of the limited scale and extent of the appeal proposals the appellant has not had detailed regard to the policies contained within this document.

#### **Adopted Rochford District Replacement Local Plan**

- 5.6 This Plan is recently adopted and now comprises the Development Plan for the District. The following policies and other extracts are considered relevant to the appeal proposals.

- 5.7 **Policy CS3 (Reducing the Need to Travel)**

The Policy states:

**“It is the Council’s aim to ensure that development reduces the length, number and duration of motorised journeys, particularly at peak hours and encourages the use of alternative modes of transport to help protect the quality of the built environment.”**

- 5.8 **Policy CS5 (Encouraging Economic Regeneration)**

The Policy states:

**“It is the Council’s aim to:**

- a. Work with partners to consolidate the local economy and attract new investment; and**
- b. Allocate land for industrial and commercial uses, whilst striving to maintain and enhance the viability of town and village centres as attractive places to visit and shop.”**

- 5.9 **Policy CS6 (Promoting Good Design and Design Statements)**

The Policy states:

**“It is the Council’s aim to encourage good quality design which:**

- a. Takes into account the existing form and character of the site and its surroundings;**
- b. Relates to the locality in terms of scale, layout, proportion, materials and detailing;**
- c. Includes landscaping arrangements which reduce the visual impact of and positively enhance the proposal and its surroundings;**
- d. Minimises the risk of crime; and**
- e. Provides adequate space for the storage, recycling and collection of waste.**

**Development proposals will need to be supported by design statements in the circumstances set out in LPSPD7.”**

**5.10 Policy R1 (Development in the Green Belt)**

The Policy states:

**“Within the Metropolitan Green Belt there is a general presumption against inappropriate development. Except in very special circumstances, planning permission will not normally be granted unless for:**

- (i) development required for agriculture and forestry in accordance with policies R3, R4, R8 and R9;**
- (ii) the extension, alteration or replacement of existing dwellings in accordance with the criteria defined in policies R2, R5 and R6;**
- (iii) limited affordable housing for local community needs within or immediately adjoining existing villages, in accordance with the criteria defined in Policy HP9;**
- (iv) essential small scale facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation in accordance with PPG2;**
- (v) the re-use or adaptation of existing buildings in accordance with the criteria defined in Policy R9;**
- (vi) mineral extraction and related restoration;**
- (vii) cemeteries, or other uses of land which fulfil the objectives of the Green Belt; or,**
- (viii) The provision of agricultural or forestry dwellings in accordance with the criteria defined in Policy R3.**

Development which may be permitted under this Policy should preserve the openness of the Green Belt and should not conflict with the main purposes of including land within it. Any development which is permitted should be of a scale, design and siting such that the character of the countryside is not harmed and nature conservation interests are protected.”

**5.11 Policy R2 (Rural Settlement Areas within the Green Belt)**

**“Within the following rural settlement areas:**

- i. Central Avenue/Pevensey Gardens, Hullbridge;**
- ii. Pooles Lane, Hullbridge;**
- iii. Windsor Gardens, Hawkwell;**
- iv. Rectory Road/Hall Road, Hawkwell;**
- v. Barling Road/Rebels Lane, Great Wakering;**
- vi. Stonebridge, Barling;**
- vii. Hall Road, Rochford;**
- viii. Kingsman Farm Road, Hullbridge; and**
- ix. Bullwood Hall Lane and High Road, Hockley,**

**Proposals for extensions to dwellings in these areas as defined on the Proposals Map and in LPSPD8 will be permitted if the following criteria are met:**

- a. The appearance of the extension is in keeping with the scale and character of the dwelling and with its setting;**
- b. The dwelling will not be visually intrusive in the open character of the surrounding countryside; [and]**
- c. The extension will not harm the amenity of nearby residents,” (PA underline)**

**5.11 Box 4.1 (Employment – The Seven Key Objectives)**

Box 1 defines the aims of the Council’s Economic Development Strategy and states:

**“The seven key objectives of the Council’s Economic Development Strategy are to:**

1. **Work in partnership to support the needs of the business community in the area, to enable it to develop and grow and thus contribute to the economic prosperity of the District.**
2. **Working with partners, develop the skills of the local workforce to meet the needs of businesses now and in the future, to maintain low levels of unemployment in the District and encourage jobs that add value to the local economy;**
3. **Support town centre and industrial estate enhancement initiatives aimed at improving the environment ensuring the area is economically prosperous and competitive.**
4. **Work with partners to ensure that businesses, including rural businesses have access to quality and effective business support initiatives locally.**
5. **Facilitate appropriate local transport and infrastructure developments which balance business needs whilst respecting local environmental constraints.**
6. **Develop tourism and heritage initiatives which provide new local employment and wealth generation opportunities, and visitor attractions aimed at improving access to recreation facilities and preserving the District's heritage for future generations.**
7. **Taking advantage of inward investment opportunities to secure the future economic prosperity of the District."**

**5.12 Policy TP1 (Sustainable Transport)**

The Policy states:

**"The local planning authority will develop and implement a sustainable approach to transport planning based on managing the demand for travel and distribution, which is integrated with land use planning, and which aims to:**

1. **Reduce the need to travel;**
2. **Reduce the growth in length, duration and number of motorised journeys;**
3. **Encourage alternative means of travel which have less environmental impact; and**
4. **Reduce reliance on the private car and road haulage."**

**5.13 Policy LT19 (New Hotel and Guest House Accommodation)**

The Policy states:

- “A. Proposals for hotel or guesthouse accommodation (with six or more bedrooms), within residential areas, as defined on the Proposals Maps, will only be permitted where the following criteria are met:**
- i. Suitable means of access, car parking and servicing arrangements will be provided;**
  - ii. The location is well related to the road hierarchy and public transport is available nearby; and**
  - iii. The proposal has no adverse affect on the amenity of residential areas, Conservation Areas, listed buildings or the character of the landscape.**
- B. Proposals for hotel or guesthouse accommodation (with six or more bedrooms) outside residential areas, as defined on Proposals Maps, will be permitted if all of the following criteria are met:**
- i. A need for the development has been demonstrated;**
  - ii. Demonstration that there is no site available within existing residential areas;**
  - iii. The site should be located close to the edge of existing residential areas;**
  - iv. The scale and appearance of the development will not have an adverse impact on the historic environment, character of the landscape or nature conservation interests;**
  - v. There will be no adverse impact on designated wildlife sites or on the Metropolitan Green Belt;**
  - vi. The site is accessible by a choice of types of transport.”**

#### **Rochford District Local Plan First Review (now superseded)**

- 5.14 This Plan is now superseded although at the time of submission of the planning application to which this appeal relates formed part of the Development Plan against which planning decisions are made. As such the following policies remain relevant to the appeal proposals.

5.15 **Policy GB1 (Development within the Green Belt)**

The Policy states:

**“Within the Green Belt permission will not be given, except in very special circumstances, for the construction of new buildings or for the change of use or extension of existing buildings (other than reasonable extensions to existing dwellings as defined in policies GB2 and GB7), for purposes other than agriculture, mineral extraction or forestry, small-scale facilities for outdoor participatory sport and recreation, institutions requiring large grounds, cemeteries or similar uses which are open in character.”**

5.16 **Policy EB1 (Economic Strategy)**

The Policy states:

**“The council will seek to maintain and increase appropriate levels of employment and economic activity in the District commensurate with environmental considerations and the capacity of the infrastructure. This will be achieved by the other provisions of this local plan and the activities of other relevant agencies, and when considered necessary ad hoc initiatives by the Council related to the resources that may be available from time to time. Special consideration will be given to the needs and encouragement of small businesses and the Council will seek to ensure that there is an adequate supply of starter units for new enterprises.”**

5.17 **Policy LT15 (Tourism)**

The Policy states:

**“The local planning authority will promote tourism and will improve and encourage the development of facilities for visitors to the District.”**

- 5.18 It is the applicant's considered view that there are no bed spaces of a sufficiently high standard available within a reasonable drive-time of Turrett Farm. This view is confirmed by the Council within paragraph 6.13.3 of the adopted Plan, as follows. **Paragraph 6.13.3** states:

**"At the present time there are only a limited number of bed spaces for permanent holiday accommodation within the District. The only hotels are the airport motel in Aviation Way, Renoufs Hotel in Rochford and The Chichester at Rawreth. The Local Planning Authority will continue to promote the development of facilities as far as compatible with other policies."**

#### **Economic Development Strategy for Rochford District**

- 5.19 Although not forming part of the Development Plan for Rochford District this document is a material consideration on the determination of the appeal proposals.

5.20 **Paragraph 2.4**

The paragraph states:

**"The aim of this particular strategy is to:**

***'Work with partners to maximise the economic well being of businesses in the area, making the District a better place to live and work'***

## 6.0 **GROUND OFS OF APPEAL**

### *Very Special Circumstances*

- 6.1 The appellant considers that the material circumstances that exist in this case are demonstrated having regard Government guidance contained within PPG2 and are sufficient to offset any harm upon overall Green Belt objectives that may result from the proposal. It is the appellant's considered view that the specific circumstances that exist in this instance are unique and as such in allowing the appeal proposals no adverse precedent would result.

### *The Need for the Facility*

- 6.3 It is demonstrated both in the original submission documents and this statement that there is no real alternative guest accommodation proposed within a reasonable drive time of the company's premises at Rochford and Turret Farm. It is further demonstrated in the original submission documents that the company has had to invest in a suitable vehicle and chauffeur to move business guests between the company's premises and central London where suitable bed spaces are available. It is clear that the current situation is costly to the business, represents a 'logistical nightmare' and is beginning to affect the way the business is perceived globally. As such, and in the absence of any viable alternative there is a demonstrable need for the appeal proposals.

### *The Modest Size of the Facility Proposed*

- 6.4 The number of guest accommodation units proposed represents the absolute minimum number of units required to serve the business. The modest nature of the extension proposed has been designed by the company's architect having regard to the sites context and location within the Metropolitan Green Belt. The

fact that the appeal proposals represent the absolute minimum number of bed spaces required is demonstrated through the extensive list of visitors to the business over the 12 month period between July 2003 and July 2004, as detailed previously within this statement. It is further my understanding that if Turret Farm had been located outside the Green Belt the appellant would have applied for planning permission to erect a greater number of guest accommodation units within the site to serve the business.

#### ***The Locational Requirement - Turret Farm***

- 6.5 Since the occupation of Turret Farm by Mr and Mrs Albon it has always been used by Albon Engineering and Manufacturing PLC as a venue to entertain business guests. Albon Engineering and Manufacturing PLC is keen to reinforce and develop further this family business ethos that has served it well over the previous 20 years. The facilities that already exist at Turret Farm have developed over time to meet the needs of business guests.
- 6.6 It is the considered view of the appellant that the ability to discuss business matters in familiar, easy and comfortable surroundings is always appreciated by business guests. It should also be noted that frequent visitors to the business expect to be entertained at Turret Farm and as such the company is tied to Turret Farm as an entertainment venue. It is for this reason above all others that the appeal proposals should be allowed.

#### ***The Green Belt***

- 6.7 The appeal site is located within the Green Belt and as such Government guidance contained within PPG2 is relevant. It is accepted by the appellant that the Green Belt designation by definition is no indication of landscape quality and is merely designed to preserve openness.

- 6.8 The appeal proposals are to be erected in the form of an extension to the existing dwelling house that is located at the centre of a complex of buildings that form Turret Farm. It is the considered view of the appellant that when viewed from any publicly accessible area the extent of any additional visual impact experienced would be minimal.

### *The Economic Welfare of the District*

- 6.9 It is the considered view of Albon Engineering and Manufacturing PLC that the current situation in respect of the constant movement of business guests between the company's premises in Rochford District, premises within the adjoining Southend-on-Sea Borough, Turret Farm within Rochford District and central London via private motor car is beginning to affect the perception of the business globally.
- 6.10 The internal memorandum issued to the Officer determining a similar application to that ultimately refused by Susan Rom Economic Development Officer at Rochford District Council confirms that Albon Engineering and Manufacturing PLC **"...are the largest employer in Rochford District."** This memorandum outlines the Council's adopted Economic Development Strategy and states that the Council's Policy is to **"Identify companies with growth potential and ensuring they are given the most appropriate advice and support is essential to ensuring their potential is realized."**
- 6.11 It is the considered view of the appellant that Rochford District Council are not currently providing the correct levels of support to Albon Engineering and Manufacturing PLC as required under adopted Policy.

### *The Alternatives*

6.12 There are currently no alternatives to the appeal proposals within a reasonable drive time of the appeal site. The only hotel that existed locally within which the company were prepared to accommodate business guests in times of emergency was Hotel Renouf in Rochford, however, since the time of submission of the original application the hotel has ceased trading. It should be noted that although Hotel Renouf provided an alternative to the appeal proposals it was never considered by the business to be of a sufficiently high standard to meet the expectations of business guests.

6.13 It is demonstrated that no viable alternative to the appeal proposals exists locally in terms of high quality business guest accommodation. As such the extent to which very special circumstances exist in this instance is demonstrated.

***The Financial and Logistical Burden currently being Borne by the Business***

6.14 Although the current situation is not quantified in financial and logistical terms as part of this appeal there is clearly an obvious financial and logistical burden being borne by Albon Engineering and Manufacturing PLC as a result of having to operate the business guest chauffer service.

6.15 What is of greater concern to Albon Engineering and Manufacturing PLC is the global perception of the business, the impact of the current situation upon future orders and the continued growth of the business.

***The Perception of the Business Globally***

6.16 It is this issue, as referred to above that is of greatest concern to Albon Engineering and Manufacturing PLC. The company considers that as a result of its size, global standing in the machine part manufacturing sector and the need to create a shop window that befits its status that very special circumstances exist in this instance sufficient to allow the appeal.

### ***Very Special Circumstances***

- 6.17 Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 requires under paragraphs 3.1 and 3.2 specifically that **“...It is for the applicant to show why permission should be granted. Very special circumstances to justify inappropriate development will not exist unless the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.”**
- 6.18 It is the considered view of the appellant that the fact that very special circumstances exist in this instance is already clearly demonstrated within the text of the supporting statement submitted with the original application and this appeal statement.

### ***The Appearance of the Countryside***

- 6.19 It is the considered view of the appellant that the appeal proposal when viewed from public areas would detract from the character and appearance of the countryside in this location. The appeal proposal is to extend an existing building that is located within a complex of buildings within an area that is characterized by built development. This view is confirmed by Policy R2 of the recently adopted Local Plan.

## 7.0 CONCLUSIONS

7.1 The following facts are relevant to the determination of the appeal:

- Albon Engineering and Manufacturing PLC is the largest employer in Rocford District;
- Albon Engineering and Manufacturing PLC is a specialist manufacturer of engine components and as such operates with a global market place;
- Business guests arriving from all parts of the world visit Albon Engineering and Manufacturing PLC on a regular basis to commission new business, inspect the manufacturing process and techniques and to discuss joint working initiatives;
- The majority of business guests visiting the business to commission new business are entertained at Turret Farm as the Albon's family home;
- Turret Farm has been used to entertain business guests since its acquisition by Albon Engineering and Manufacturing PLC;
- Frequent visitors to the business appreciate the informal surroundings and entertainment facilities on offer at Turret Farm;
- Albon Engineering and Manufacturing PLC is keen to foster and develop further the family business ethos that has served it well over the previous 20 years;
- There is an acknowledged shortfall in high quality bed spaces of a sufficient standard to accommodate visiting business guests within a reasonable drive

time of the company's sites in Rochford District and Southend-on-Sea Borough Council areas;

- This shortfall in high quality bed spaces locally is acknowledged by EEDA and Rochford District Council;
- The company's clients have chosen over recent years to stay in high quality bed spaces located in central London rather than stay in poorer quality more conveniently located guest accommodation locally;
- The current situation is resulting in an increased financial and logistical burden currently being borne by Albon Engineering and Manufacturing PLC;
- The guest suites proposed that are the subject of this appeal represent the absolute minimum necessary in terms of number and size to accommodate guests visiting Albon Engineering and Manufacturing PLC;
- The proposal will take from the already congested local highway network a significant number of unnecessary vehicle trips thus further overall Government objectives in terms of sustainability;
- The appeal site is located within an existing complex of buildings and as such will not affect to any great extent openness when viewed from all publicly accessible locations about the site;
- The unique set of circumstances that exist in this instance will ensure that no adverse precedent is set in respect of Green Belt objectives as a result of allowing the appeal proposals;

- It is demonstrated that very special circumstances do indeed exist in this instance sufficient to outweigh any harm upon Green Belt objectives that may exist in this instance; and
- Given the wording of the recently adopted Policy R2, the type of development proposed, and the direct link between the delivery of the guest suites proposed and the continued growth of the business it is the considered view of the appellant that the appeal proposals should be allowed.

7.2 To finally conclude, it is clearly demonstrated that very special circumstances sufficient to outweigh harm exist in this instance. As such I would respectfully request on behalf of Albon Engineering and Manufacturing PLC that the appeal be upheld.