



Historic England

Sir/Madam Planning Inspectorate  
Planning Inspectorate  
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Direct Dial: 01223 582784

Our ref: P01564444

25 August 2023

Dear Sir/Madam Planning Inspectorate

**T&CP (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015  
& Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990**

**LAND AT LONDON STANSTED AIRPORT, BASSINGBOURN ROAD, ESSEX  
Application No. S62A/2023/0022**

Thank you for your letter of 8 August 2023 regarding the above application for planning permission. On the basis of the information available to date, we offer the following advice to assist your authority in determining the application.

**Historic England Advice**

*Significance of Stansted Airport Terminal*

Stansted Airport Terminal is an iconic piece of architecture, designed by the internationally renowned practice of Foster+Partners in collaboration with Arup Engineers. The project was appointed in 1981 and the terminal opened in 1991. In 1990, the building was awarded the European Union Prize for Contemporary Architecture/Mies Van der Rohe Award.

The building is recognised as a landmark work of high-tech architecture, and a seminal building. The concepts pioneered on Stansted Airport Terminal would be further developed in subsequent airports designed by the firm, such as the Hong Kong Chek Lap Kok International Airport (1997) and Beijing Capital International Airport (2008), two of the world's current largest and most advanced airports, as well as influencing other airport planners worldwide.

The terminal building operated in relation with two satellite terminals, linked by an automated Track Transit System (TTS). The principal building was conceived as a large rectangular ground plan divided in two longitudinal strips: a landing-reception area and a runway-embarkation area. Public access and airfield side are signified by open canopies running continuously along the elevations; the front for general access, the rear, for the TTS.



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The basement area is envisaged as a large machine room, comprising the train station and service infrastructures, while the access floor above is presented as a single, flexible, great open interaction area under an airy, continuous roof. Access by train to the main terminal and to the satellites by TTS shares similar characteristics, in that they are approached from basement level, ascending into airy upper spaces where planes come into view.

The result is a deceptively simple arrangement of a complex management of different transport networks; the main aim being to improve the traveller's experience, help them navigate and orientate through the building. The traveller's movements through different spaces is carefully crafted with the use of light and is an important component of the spatial design.

#### *Impact of the proposals on significance*

The application is for the extension of the passenger terminal on two bays towards the airfield site. The automated TTS which originally connected the passenger terminal with the two satellite buildings is to be decommissioned and replaced with a system of skylink walkways. The open canopy front to the airfield site is to be enclosed with a curtain wall.

The proposals will remove elements that were integral to the idea of how the buildings operated and were experienced. There will also be a substantial change on the appearance of the terminal building on the airfield side; this would also unbalance the transversal section of the building, with open canopies on either side. These interventions would have a strong impact on the architectural significance of this building, which we consider has great potential to be of national significance.

#### *Planning Policy Considerations*

The NPPF is of relevance on the assessment of this application. In particular, we wish to highlight the following paragraphs:

Paragraph 189. In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, included any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the asset's importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.

Paragraph 192. In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage



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assets, b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities and c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to character and distinctiveness.

Paragraph 197. The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the asset.

In turn paragraphs 199 and 200 ask to give great weight to the conservation of heritage assets, irrespective of the level of harm, with any harm to have clear and convincing justification.

### *Historic England Position*

Stansted Airport Terminal is an iconic referent on airport planning design. We acknowledge the passenger terminal has been subject to a number of alterations since it was completed in 1991 and that possibly, the departure areas have seen the most changes, increasing compartmentalisation and altering the way the main building related to the satellites, as is the case of the subsequent third terminal, connected via a walkway. These alterations have detracted from the clear principles in which the original design was based and originally functioned.

We do not have an issue with the principle of continue extending the terminal, which was in-built in the original concept. However, we are concerned about the loss of elements that were integral to the original design, such as the TTS, and how the proposed skylink replacements would alter the way the building originally functioned and our experience of moving through it. Further, we have concerns about the enclosing of the airfield side canopy, as we consider this would have a strong impact on the iconic image of this airport.

Given the high potential for this asset to merit listed status, we consider that a detailed assessment of the significance of the building needs to be undertaken, including how the proposals would interact with this significance; this is in order to appropriately assess the impacts resulting from the proposals. Ideally, a listing request should also be submitted, as this would provide certainty on the status of the building.

Without such further work Historic England cannot support these proposals because of the potential for harm and lack of justification. Once this additional information is received, we wish to comment again on the changes and provide final advice on the proposals.



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Historic England offers a Fast-Track Listing Service which may be of interest to the applicant, as it provides a guaranteed timeframe, which would provide sooner clarity and reduce possible delays in the planning process. More information about this service can be found on the following link: <https://historicengland.org.uk/services-skills/our-planning-services/enhanced-advisory-services/fast-track-listing/>

### **Recommendation**

Historic England has concerns regarding the application on heritage grounds. We consider the issues and safeguards outlined in our advice need to be addressed in order for the application to meet the requirements of paragraphs 189, 192, 197, 199 and 200.

In determining this application you should bear in mind the statutory duty of section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.

Your authority should take these representations into account in determining the application. If there are any material changes to the proposals, or you would like further advice, please contact us. Please advise us of the decision in due course.

Yours sincerely

**Rosa Teira Paz**

Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas

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