

Who Is Who At The Metropole?

Former Metropole Hotel owners are: 1890 Frederick Gordon Hotels Ltd – 1959 AVP Industries Ltd – 1977 Lonhro PLC – 1996 Stakis Hotels ...

2000 Hilton – The UK company Stakis Hotels was bought by Hilton Group and remains a subsidiary today. The **Brighton Metropole Hotel** started to be operated as a Hilton hotel.

2001 Royal Bank of Scotland - Hotels operator Hilton struck a sale and leaseback agreement on 11 British hotels that raked in £312m for its planned international expansion. Royal Bank of Scotland took on the leases - the first time a bank had acted as the principal party in such a deal. The hotels included 10 provincial UK hotels such as the **Brighton Metropole Hotel**. Hilton began a 30 year lease from RBS.

2011 Topland Group - Hilton now leases **Brighton Metropole Hotel** from Topland Group, since Topland acquired the hotel freehold from the then struggling Royal Bank of Scotland. The leasehold proprietor is registered as Splendid Property Company Limited – in other words it is the tenant, not Hilton. **Splendid Property Company Ltd** in the UK is one of 388 subsidiaries of Hilton Worldwide Holdings Incorporated. Sussex Heights is within the Metropole site and its residents lease from Splendid Property Company Ltd. Metropole Court residents also lease via Splendid Property Company Ltd. So too does the Salt Room restaurant.

2021 – The renewal or break clause in Hilton’s lease with Topland Group comes into play. Hilton either renews for a further 10 years or ceases involvement in the Brighton Metropole. Topland hired developer First Base to explore development options to make the lease more attractive ...

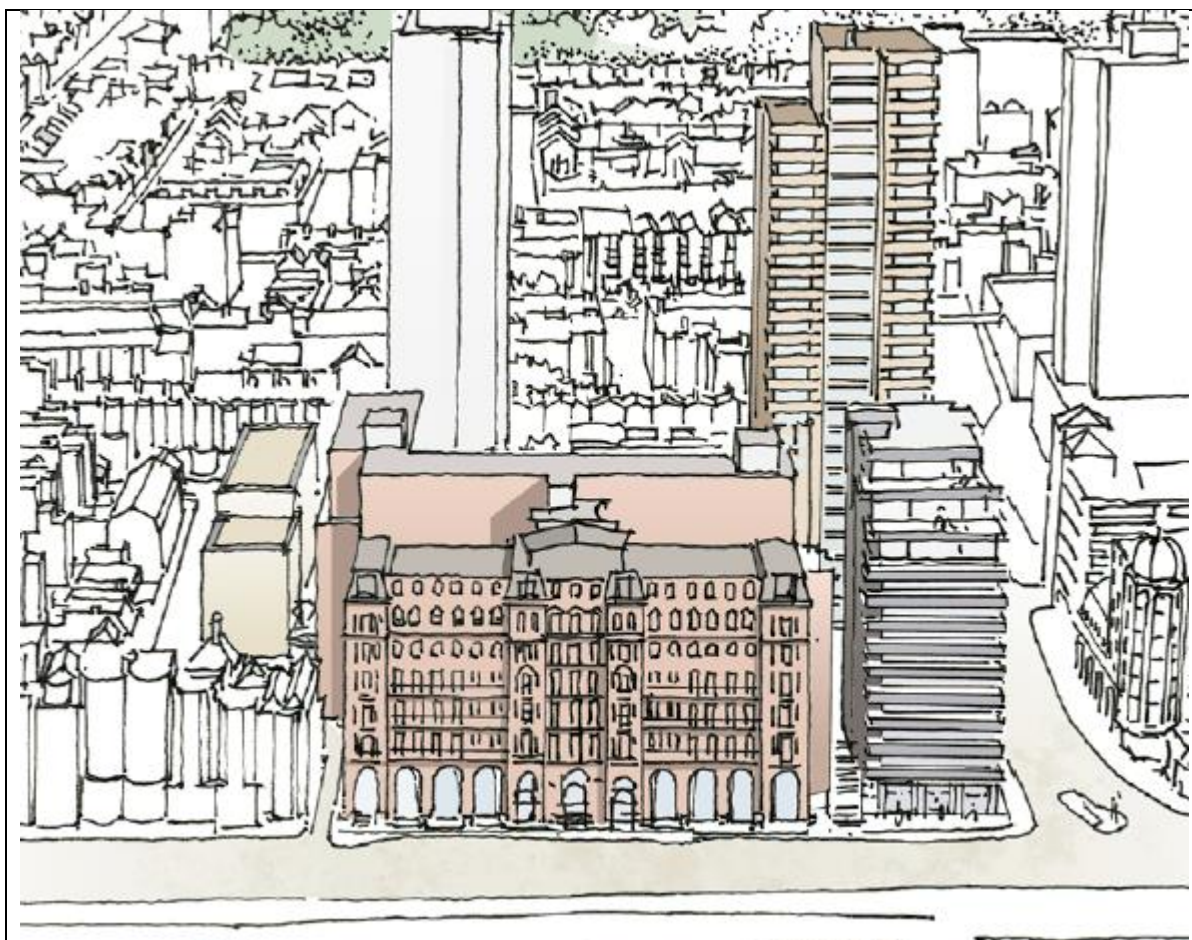
First Base Involvement

April 2019 - First Base was hired by Topland Group to explore various options for redeveloping the Metropole conference and exhibition halls, alongside refurbishment of the hotel.

June 2019 - came the joint press announcement from Topland Group and First Base. Many journals carried the announcement with vague reference to “extensive refurbishment of all the guest rooms and public areas of the hotel and in addition, plans also being developed to deliver much-needed new homes, improve local connectivity and provide a new open and accessible landscaped courtyard.”

Summer 2019 - First Base met with Brighton & Hove City Council to update the local authority on all of First Base’s projects in Brighton (Edward Street Quarter, Aston House and the Metropole Hotel).

October 2019 – RSAS attended the First Base residents meeting regarding another Brighton development at Edward Street Quarter. Introductions with First Base and the local residents’ group leader were established. At a later date, RSAS and the residents’ leader met up to share experience of the community interacting with First Base.



One 2019 Metropole Development Proposal

A number of proposal alternatives were considered between developer First Base and owners Topland last year. This one would have involved a considerable high rise development at the Kings Road site frontage and a tower as tall as Sussex Heights on the north east corner of the Metropole conference halls. This is where the Cannon Place Hotel is now proposed.

November 2019 – The mainly RSAS team met informally with First Base. A range of options for the conference and exhibition halls was still under review; Topland Group had not made a decision about the way forward. The options ranged from a mixed use development, including housing along Queensbury Mews, retail and catering outlets along Cannon Place; to a redeveloped conference venue; to leaving everything as it is.

April 2020 – First Base was invited to give an update prior to a Metropole Hotel representative attending the RSAS Society AGM. No Metropole development update was received and the AGM had to be postponed due to the coronavirus lockdown rules.

June 2020 - came confirmation that First Base is “no longer involved in this project”.

Lichfields Involvement

2020 – Topland decided that “our extensive work on a potential scheme concluded that it was not sufficiently viable and carried with it an enormous amount of complexity and the plan was dropped.” Developer First Base was also dropped. Planning permission specialists **Lichfields** was hired by Topland Group to lead development proposals for a Cannon Place Hotel through the local Planning process. The initial designs are by EPR Architects Limited.



2020 Proposed Cannon Place Hotel

June 2020 – Lichfields provided a website www.cannonplacehotel-consultation.com/ of Cannon Place Hotel information, through which it conducted a simple online public consultation. Only a small number of local residents were leafleted by Lichfields. RSAS along with other amenity groups, the ward councilor and residents associations spread the word and drove up the number of individual responses. RSAS has engaged Lichfields, to be told “there are no plans beyond what you see” and “there is an ambition for submission of an application in June.” At the time of going to press, a Planning Application has not yet been made.