

31/2006/018

VON ESSEN HOTELS ONE LIMITED

ERECTION OF 2 STOREY EXTENSION TO PROVIDE FOR FUNCTION ROOM AND ADDITIONAL 13 BEDROOMS TO EXISTING HOTEL, TOGETHER WITH LANDSCAPING WORK AND NEW SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANT AT THE MOUNT SOMERSET HOTEL, HENLADE

327282/123077

FULL

PROPOSAL

The application is for an alternative scheme to that approved in 2002 (ref.31/2002/015) and proposes 13 additional bedrooms and a function room to the side and rear of the existing listed hotel building. The works involve the demolition of the existing Coach House building and a separate listed building application for these works accompanies this proposal. To be viable as a country house hotel, it is suggested that 25 -30 bedrooms are required together with facilities for guests, including an independently accessed function suite. The setting has been looked at from various views and the most appropriate location to minimise the impact has been concluded to be the south east. In addition to the bedrooms and function suite a suitable lounge, small spa, manager's flat and second informal dining area with associated back of house facilities are proposed. In terms of the built form the single storey additions on the east side and the coach house would be demolished. The character of the east wing would be improved with reinstatement of windows and two ground floor rooms. The new extension to the south east would be largely ground floor and the first floor would be set back and cut into the treed slope to the south with a green roof. A central courtyard with glazed roof would be reinstated by removing 1980's ground floor infill. The proposals seek to preserve and enhance the setting and the parking areas are to be re-organised to be better screened. A 5 year plan is proposed to improve the landscape setting with various works to remove trees, improve views and replant.

CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

COUNTY HIGHWAY AUTHORITY I would refer to my letter of 13th June, 2006 and consider the comments apply equally to this application i.e. the proposal is to add an additional 13 bedrooms to the Hotel together with the addition of a function room. The application would superseded the previous permission (No 31/2001/006) for an extra 10 bedrooms and function room. The net affect of this application is therefore for an additional 3 bedrooms. The traffic generation of this small increase would not be significant. There is no objection to the current proposal provided the conditions contained in my colleagues letter dated 25th September are included in the granting of any permission. Condition recommended re visibility. WESSEX WATER the proposal is not in a sewered area and the developer has indicated the disposal of foul drainage will be to a packaged treatment plant. There are no existing public service water sewers in the vicinity and the developer should investigate alternative methods for the disposal of surface water. Your Council should be satisfied with the

suitable arrangement for the disposal of surface water. There is a water main in the vicinity and the developer will need to agree a point of connection at detail design stage. ENGLISH HERITAGE is pleased to see that more extensive historic landscape restoration proposals have now been put forward by the applicant in order to recreate more fully the parkland setting to the grade II* listed Mount Somerset Hotel. The use of the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map is a reasonable precedent to take in this case and although the proposals do not reinstate the full extent of the parkland planting they should be sufficient to create a meaningful historic setting for the house. However, there is no indication of how the trees will be managed after they have been planted and we consider that some form of undertaking is required from the applicant to ensure that the planting scheme will be sustained. We trust that the Council's Landscape Officer will be able to advise on a suitable management scheme for the planting to include such things as replacement of tree failures, protection from stock and rabbits etc. There still, however, appear to be some omissions from the landscape restoration scheme - for example we had understood that the existing hedge alongside the drive was to be removed for its full length after passing the walled garden and not just in front of the house and it seems that the ornamental cherry in front of the house is still to be retained. Turning to the design proposals in the immediate vicinity of the house considerably more detail will be required on matters such as the surfacing of the drive and car park when altered, the 'improved' treatment between the drive and the bank to the west garden and the area surrounding the pool in front of the house - all important in relation to the overall character of the landscaping. There is also still an absence of detail for the new area of garden to be laid out to the east of the house. In summary, therefore, the indications are that a meaningful historic landscape scheme is being proposed which could considerably improve the setting of the listed building. If the detailed design and implementation of this scheme fulfil the commitment being made by the applicant then the overall result could be weighed favourably in the balance against the loss of the former coach house. This will, however, require a considerable amount of further detailed design work, and the submission of a detailed planting and maintenance specification in order to ensure that the benefits to the setting of the house are actually delivered and maintained for the future

LANDSCAPE OFFICER the proposals will require the felling of some mature trees but given the overall enhancements to the landscape setting of the building the losses are more than compensated for by the enhancements. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UNIT the Economic Development Unit wishes to express its support for the proposed extensions to the Mount Somerset Hotel. In what is becoming a congested market place, those establishments that expand the range of services and their quality will not only improve their own trading position, but also take advantage of the increasing demand for 'business' hotel space and meetings facilities. We therefore support proposals from hotels that can invest to increase the capacity of business meetings space within the Deane. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OFFICER I have reviewed the report and find the proposed system satisfactory as long as it meets the Environment Agency's specifications and discharge consent. DRAINAGE OFFICER I note that surface water is to be discharged to an existing system. The applicant should ensure that this system can accommodate the additional flows generated by the proposal. I also note that foul drainage is to be connected to a new package sewage treatment works. The Environment Agency

should be contacted as their approval will be required for any disposal system utilised to deal with the treated effluent generated.

PARISH COUNCIL support the proposal and welcome the new sewerage system and tree planting.

POLICY CONTEXT

RPG10 – Regional Planning Guidance for the South West, Policy EN4 – Quality in the Built Environment, Policy HO5 – Previously Developed Land and Buildings.

Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review Policies STR1 – Sustainable Development, STR6 – Development Outside Towns, POLICY 9 – The Built Historic Environment, POLICY 23 – Tourism Development in the Countryside, POLICY 48 – Access and Parking, POLICY 49 – Transport Requirements of New Developments.

Taunton Deane Local Plan Policies S1 – General Requirements, S2 – Design, M1 & M2 – Parking Requirements, EN6 – Protection of Trees, Woodlands, Orchards and Hedgerows, EN8 – Trees in and Around Settlements, EN16 – Setting of Listed Buildings, EN17 – Extension of Listed Buildings, EN18 – Demolition of Listed Buildings.

ASSESSMENT

The main consideration with the application is the future viability of the country house hotel and the impact on the setting and historic fabric of the listed building.

A previous permission has been granted for an extension to this listed building at the rear, southern side in 2002 and is still extant. The current proposal is an alternative to this and is considered to have an improved impact on the fabric and setting of the listed building, other than the coach house removal. It is accepted that for the future benefit of the business here improvements and alterations have to be made to the existing building. It is the extent of these alterations and their impact on the listed building that are at issue.

The Highway Authority considers the provision of the additional bedrooms and facilities is not significant given the extent of the existing approval. A condition is recommended concerning visibility at the access point.

The drainage of the existing building has been identified as causing a problem and the Environmental Health Officer considers that this should be addressed as part of the scheme. In response to this issue a new treatment plant is being installed and a condition requiring installation prior to occupation of the new extension can be imposed.

English Heritage consider the proposal to be an improvement over the previously approved scheme and while the application involves the demolition of the Coach House (which is regretted) the improvements to the listed building and its surroundings are considered sufficient mitigation to allow the scheme to progress

and to secure the future viability of this listed hotel building. Additional information in terms of the landscaping is considered necessary and the provision of this detailing can be conditioned.

In summary the highway and drainage issues can be addressed by condition. The main issue is the loss of historic fabric with the demolition of the Coach House. In light of expert advice and the need to provide a landscaping scheme which entails land outside the applicant's ownership it is considered that a Section 106 to secure the necessary compensatory works is achievable to offset the demolition proposed and the application is recommended for permission subject to this.

RECOMMENDATION

Subject to a Section 106 Agreement to secure the off site landscape improvements the Development Control Manager in consultation with the Chair/Vice Chair be authorised to determine and permission be GRANTED subject to conditions of time limit, materials, landscaping, identification of trees retained and protection during construction, hard surfacing, parking, visibility and provision of treatment plant before occupation.

REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION:- The proposal is considered to secure the future viability of the listed building and the proposed extension and landscape works are considered to be acceptable and in compliance with Taunton Deane Local Plan Policies S1, S2, EN6, EN16, EN17 and EN18 and material considerations do not indicate otherwise.

If the Section 106 is not signed by the 3rd November, 2006 the Development Control Manager in consultation with the Chair/Vice Chair be authorised to REFUSE permission on grounds of loss of historic fabric and insufficient benefits to offset the loss contrary to Taunton Deane Local Plan Policies EN17(A) and EN18 and Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review Policy 9 or to impose a suitable condition if appropriate.

In preparing this report the Planning Officer has considered fully the implications and requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998.

CONTACT OFFICER: 356398 MR G CLIFFORD

NOTES: