

31/2006/019LB

VON ESSEN HOTELS ONE LTD

DEMOLITION OF COACH HOUSE AND SIDE ADDITION TO THE EAST ELEVATION, ERECTION OF A 2 STOREY EXTENSION TO PROVIDE FOR A MULTI PURPOSE FUNCTION ROOM AND 13 ADDITIONAL BEDROOMS AT THE MOUNT SOMERSET HOTEL, HENLADE

327282/123077

LISTED BUILDING CONSENT-WORKS

PROPOSAL

The application is for an alternative scheme to that approved in 2002 (ref.31/2002/016LB) 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 alterations to allow for the extension. To be viable as a country house hotel 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. 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

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. CONSERVATION OFFICER comments awaited.

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.

English Heritage consider the proposal to be an improvement over the previously approved scheme and whilst 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 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 the views of the Secretary of State the Development Control Manager in consultation with the Chair/Vice Chair be authorised to determine and consent be GRANTED subject to conditions of time limit, materials, recording of building before demolition, no demolition before contract let, timber windows, recessed windows to match, partitions, doors, linings and architraves, details of fire precautions/means of escape and landscape management plan.

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.

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

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NOTES: