

<b>Planning Reference No:</b>	10/3861N
<b>Application Address:</b>	Crewe Hall, Weston Road, Weston, CW1 6UZ
<b>Proposal:</b>	Extension to existing building to provide 46 additional guest bedrooms and associated external works
<b>Applicant:</b>	Q Hotels
<b>Application Type:</b>	Listed Building Consent
<b>Grid Reference:</b>	373228 353784
<b>Ward:</b>	Doddington
<b>Earliest Determination Date:</b>	10 <sup>th</sup> November 2010
<b>Expiry Dated:</b>	6 <sup>th</sup> December 2010
<b>Date of Officer's Site Visit:</b>	23 <sup>rd</sup> November 2010
<b>Date Report Prepared:</b>	24 <sup>th</sup> November 2010
<b>Constraints:</b>	Open Countryside, Grade I Listed Building, Historic Park and Garden

### **SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION**

**The application should be referred to the Secretary of State with a recommendation to approve with conditions**

### **MAIN ISSUES**

- Impact upon the Historic Park and Garden
- Impact on character and setting of Crewe Hall

## **1. REASON FOR REFERRAL**

This application is referred to the Southern Planning Committee as it is considered that the full planning application and application for Listed Building Consent should be determined together.

## **2. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT**

Crewe Hall is a Grade I Jacobean Listed Building standing within an Historic Park and Garden in the open countryside about one mile from the settlement boundary of Crewe. There have been recent extensions on land to the west of the main building to form a restaurant, additional bedroom accommodation, and leisure (gym / spa etc.) facilities. The application relates to an extension to the modern part of the hotel on the north side of the existing complex. The site of the proposed extension is close to the recently constructed leisure centre and separated from the old hall by other modern development. The site of the extension is currently laid to lawns with some tree and shrub planting; and beyond that are trees, hedgerows and fields.

## **3. DETAILS OF PROPOSAL**

Listed Building Consent is sought for an extension to the existing modern bedroom building. The site is located to the north west of Crewe Hall. The proposed extension would have an L-shaped form and would consist of 2 bedroom wings. A single storey extension would link to southern part of the proposed extension which would be two

storeys in height. To the north-west would be a three storeys element to the proposed extension. A curved three storeys link element would link the two parts of the proposed extension. The extension would serve an additional 46 guest bedrooms with en-suite bathrooms.

#### **4. RELEVANT HISTORY**

10/1162N - Extension to Existing Spa Facility – Approved 17<sup>th</sup> June 2010

10/1161N – Listed Building Consent Extension to Existing Spa Facility - Approved 17<sup>th</sup> June 2010

P07/1353 - Listed Building Consent for Essential Repairs. Stone Repair or Partial Replacement Using Natural Stone Indent. Small Repairs to Masonry with Lime Restoration Mortar Limited Repointing With Lime Mortar - Approved 18<sup>th</sup> December 2007

P07/1267 - Listed Building Consent for Variation of Condition 6 on Permission P07/0630 to allow Lighting Columns 6m High - Approved 1<sup>st</sup> November 2007

P07/1266 - Variation of Condition 8 on Permission P07/0276 to allow Lighting Columns 6m High - Approved 1<sup>st</sup> November 2007

P07/0630 - LBC Two Storey Conference and Leisure Buildings and Associated Landscaping and Car parking - Approved 20<sup>th</sup> July 2007

P07/0619 - Listed Building application for pedestrian link and water tank - Approved 20<sup>th</sup> July 2007

P07/0618 - Listed Building Consent for bedroom accommodation - Approved 20<sup>th</sup> July 2007

P07/0293 - Planning permission for bedroom accommodation - Approved 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2007

P07/0289 - Planning permission for glazed link between bedroom accommodation and restaurant - Approved 20<sup>th</sup> April 2007

P07/0276 - Two storey conference and leisure building with landscaping and car parking - Approved 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2007

P06/1220 - Diversion of Existing Brook, Excavations to reinstate part of historic lake landscaping, planting and other works - Approved 7<sup>th</sup> April 2008

P06/1221 - Listed Building Consent for Alterations to Boat House - Approved 20<sup>th</sup> December 2006

P00/0191 - Listed Building Consent for extension for 101 bedrooms, facilities for health fitness and multi activities, restaurant, car parking and landscaping - Approved 27<sup>th</sup> July 2000

P00/0190 - Planning permission for extension for 101 bedrooms, facilities for health fitness and multi activities, restaurant, car parking and landscaping - Approved 27<sup>th</sup> July 2000

#### **5. POLICIES**

##### **Development Plan policies**

##### **Local Plan policy**

BE.9 - Listed Buildings: Alterations and Extensions

BE.14 - Development Affecting Historic Parks and Gardens

##### **National policy**

PPS5: Planning and the Historic Environment

## 6. CONSULTATIONS (External to Planning)

**English Heritage:** English Heritage considers that given the scale and impact of earlier development on the site and the relative scale and form of these proposals, the additional impact upon the historic landscape will be limited. English Heritage however makes strong recommendations that the landscape works should be clearly conditioned and that the implementation of the landscape conditions be closely monitored prior to any discharge

**Victorian Society:** Objects to the application on the following grounds;

- Crewe Hall is one of only ten Grade I-listed secular buildings in the former Crewe and Nantwich district. It is also on the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of special historic interest. Essentially it is a complete Victorian mansion by EM Barry within a Jacobean shell. It is complemented by a Grade II\* Listed stable block containing a tower by Edward Blore. The gardens north of the main house were laid out circa 1860 by WA Nesfield with a complicated series of terraces, parterres and balustrades; while the planting has become degraded since then most of this scheme survives. Therefore it is deeply unfortunate that an industrial estate has been permitted to develop immediately to the east of the hall. It is even more unfortunate that a large series of hotel buildings which do not relate to the hall architecturally have been permitted in recent years immediately to the west of Crewe Hall. The cumulative result of these piecemeal developments is a landscape and setting that has been degraded, and the historic character of which has been eroded. As a result English Heritage has placed the park and garden on its Heritage at Risk Register

- The Victorian Society deeply regret any further degradation of the setting of this building. Any future developments should be of commensurate quality to that of the Grade I listed building, and should both respond to its character and respect its setting. The Victorian Society feels that the proposed development falls short of this standard. The vigorous articulation and massing of Crewe Hall is not reflected in the standardised blocks of the proposed extension. Crewe Hall's high quality materials - brick, stone, lead and slate - are not reflected in the palette of acrylic render, stainless steel and unspecified architectural masonry chosen for the proposed extension. Above all, the proposed development would impinge further on views from the Nesfield Garden, and would further degrade the historic character of the grounds. Planting screens of trees is not effective mitigation for this. Policy HE10 of PPS5 is clear on the importance that should be given to the effect of proposed developments on the setting of designated heritage assets. There are no benefits to the heritage elements of the estate proposed in these plans; instead there is further erosion of the architectural character of the estate.

- The owners of the hotel should be required to produce a long term Conservation Management Plan for the Hall and grounds in order to safeguard the future of the heritage assets. The Victorian Society feels that the current application would cause significant harm to the setting of one of the major historic buildings of Cheshire.

**Garden History Society:** No comments received

**Cheshire Gardens Trust:** Object in the strongest possible terms to the proposed development for the following reasons;

- Over a period of time planning permission has been granted for various developments of poor quality design that have filled the site and degraded this historic asset. The application follows this pattern and offers nothing to the historic landscape

- The historic landscape assessment is limited in scope to the immediate vicinity of the proposed extension and the Nesfield Garden. This does not allow the full significance of

the designated historic landscape and the impact of the development to be fully considered

- If permitted the proposed bedroom wing is unlikely to be effectively screened by the trees and will result in the Nesfield Garden feeling quite enclosed, totally at variance with the hall which was set in spacious well designed surroundings reflecting the grandeur of the building
- The landscape proposals are inadequate, limited in scope and do nothing to address the much larger impact issues
- Notwithstanding the success of the hotel and its investment in new facilities as described in the planning statement there has been no such investment in the historic landscape
- The proposals conflict with the adopted local policies and are in direct contravention with PPS5
- Unfortunate past permissions should not be a justification for future accretions and the further degradation of the historic landscape

## **7. OTHER REPRESENTATIONS**

No representations received

## **8. PARISH COUNCIL**

**Crewe Green Parish Council:** The Parish Council had the benefit of a presentation from the Applicant at the meeting in September and was very impressed with the proposals. The resultant Planning Application and Listed Building Consent Application were discussed at the November meeting and it was unanimously agreed that we should support the Application. The Parish Council welcomes this type of development, as it will provide a facility that will potentially benefit both the local and sub-regional economy.

**Weston & Basford Parish Council:** Raises no objection in principle to this proposal and has no comment to make on the application for Listed Building Consent. Notwithstanding this, the addition of 46 bedrooms represents a 39% increase in the number of guest rooms. Although the application states that there will be no increase in the numbers of parking spaces, it is logical to assume that the amount of traffic generated will increase as a result of the proposal. In this context the Local Planning Authority is requested to satisfy itself that the existing access onto Weston Road is adequate, given the fact that this is already difficult to negotiate, particularly for right turning traffic leaving the Hall, on account of the high volume of traffic travelling to and from Crewe linking to the A500 / Junction 16 on M6. The Weston and Basford Parish Plan which is about to be published identifies traffic related issues as the number 1 priority for Weston & Basford. The Parish Council needs to be satisfied that this proposal will not exacerbate the problem particularly in relation to Weston Road and Main Road Weston.

## **9. APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

**Design and Access Statement (Produced by Brocklehurst Architects and dated august 2010)**

- Developable space is limited but a vacant area was identified to the north of the existing bedroom wings on a slice of land previously occupied by a temporary building. The site would have very little impact on the historic parts of the site and is naturally screened by existing mature tree growth
- The design and appearance of the buildings are informed by previous developments on the site and their relationship to the site and Listed Buildings

- In pre-application discussions with the LPA and English Heritage it was felt that to avoid the new developments becoming over dominant any further building works should not be a straight replication of previous schemes
- The scale of the building seeks to respect the setting of the formal garden. The proposal presents a low profile to the historic garden that will be well screened by trees
- The overall form of the building is similar to previous developments, being simple rectangular bedroom blocks but shorter in length and therefore avoiding repetition of those previously
- The new building connects to the existing at ground floor only so there is a clear visual break between the new and existing, and avoiding a large scale building at the point where it is most visually prominent from the historic building
- The junction of the two wings forms the access core for the new bedrooms in the form of a curved rendered corner tower
- The proposed north wing bedroom extension is located to the west of one of the notable features in the Hall's grounds, the Nesfield Garden which dates to the mid-nineteenth century. Although the garden has sustained some subsequent alterations, consultations with English Heritage established that consideration needs to be given to preserving the integrity of the surviving features of the garden and minimising any potential changes to its immediate setting from the presence of the proposed extension to the west
- Extensive new parking was added to the hotel previously under the 2007 proposals in the form of the new main car park to the north-west corner of the site. The hotel and sublet tenants have in excess of 400 parking spaces
- Use of the hotel subsequently has indicated that there is spare capacity within the car park for the additional proposals.

#### **Planning Statement (Produced by Rollinson Planning Consultancy Limited)**

- The applicant has already made significant investment in the site but the proposed development is a necessary one to allow the hotel to achieve its potential in economic and employment generation terms
- Implementation of these proposals will ensure the future prosperity of the business and the continued stewardship of an existing commercial site which is an important one within the district and is one of national significance as a heritage asset
- The site is clearly a sensitive one hence the significant degree of pre-application dialogue with both the LPA and English Heritage to explore various options for the provision of the additional bedroom accommodation
- The scheme has been designed and is now designed in such a way as to provide the accommodation needed for the hotel to properly function whilst having acceptable impacts on the Listed Building and its setting within the Historic Park and Garden
- There is a wide range of relevant planning policy applicable to this site and the proposal. It is reasonable to suggest that some of these are not wholly complementary to each other. There is in many such cases, a judgement to be made on a balance of issues
- The policy basis has been explored and whilst recognising that there are some elements of some policies that are not met by the proposed scheme the balance of issues is considered to be strongly in favour of the granting of planning permission and Listed Building Consent

#### **Business Case for the Proposed Extension (Produced by the HIA Hotel Investment Advisors dated April 2010)**

- Crewe Hall Hotel is a well located quality hotel that has benefitted from considerable investment in recent years which has taken the hotel from its former use through a phase with 62 bedrooms to its current facility mix which includes 117 bedrooms and meeting facilities for over 350 people

- The surrounding area supports a limited range of hotels from its corporate base but Crewe Hall offers an environment, quality and range of facilities
- Crewe Hall benefits from its imposing exterior, large grounds and facilities and forms part of a limited number of other hotels both regionally and nationally that offer very substantial conference and banqueting facilities
- There is an established demand for hotels of a certain type from the conference and events market for which access, location, price and the scale of facilities are the key determinants in choice of venue. Its one drawback is the scale of bedroom and leisure facilities when compared to its conference capacity and its competitive set
- Crewe Hall is constrained by an imbalance between the number of bedrooms and the scale of the conference, meeting and leisure facilities
- There is clear evidence from the hotels sales records and from research undertaken at competitive properties that substantial levels of demand for large conferences are being turned away as the hotel is not able to provide the number of bedrooms required by the conference organisers
- The displaced conferences then seek alternative venues elsewhere in the country and are therefore lost to the local economy
- A sympathetic development of an additional 46 bedrooms together with the expansion of the currently limited spa facility both to the rear of the main imposing hotel building would enable Crewe Hall to absorb additional demand from large residential conferences and will have little if any negative effect on the trading of other hotels in this tightly defined hotel market place

### **Historic Landscape Appraisal (Produced by Simon Atkinson and dated August 2010)**

This report recommends that the design of the proposed landscape works around the bedroom extension include the provision of the following:

- Improved screening in western views from the Nesfield Garden. This could involve tree planting to the west of the Yew tree hedge using species reflecting the current mix and the species used by Nesfield in his garden design. A proportion of these trees should be heavy or heavy standards in order to have an immediate visual effect
- Exposed areas of made ground should be turfed or otherwise vegetated in order to ensure that demolition rubble and other material are not visible
- Removal of the poor quality brick steps
- Re-surfacing of the path to provide a higher quality surface to the track between the north terrace and the modern gravel track

Consideration may also be given to the eventual replacement of the veteran Horse Chestnut tree in order to maintain screening in this area

### **Arboricultural Report; Impact Assessment & Method Statement (produced by Crown Consultants Ltd and dated September 2010)**

- This report gives the following assessment of the trees which are located within close proximity to the proposed bedroom extension. 1 tree is of high amenity value, 14 trees are of moderate amenity value, 11 trees are of low amenity value and 3 trees are identified for removal

## **9. OFFICER APPRAISAL**

### **Principle of Development**

Listed buildings are protected by law both internally and externally. They are important because they show how methods of construction and detailing change over the centuries.

The Local Planning Authority seeks to control alterations and extensions to Listed Buildings to ensure the preservation of these irreplaceable assets.

Policy BE.9 states that development proposals for the alteration or extension of a listed building or any feature of special or architectural or historic interest will not be permitted unless the proposal respects the scale, materials, colour, detailing and other significant features of the building; and that the proposals do not detract from the character or setting of the building concerned, especially with regard to its surrounding gardens, landscape, or relationship with adjoining buildings and significant views.

### **Design and impact upon the setting of Crewe Hall and the Historic Park and Garden**

Two of the consultees, the Victorian Society and the Cheshire Gardens Trust, have strongly objected to the application in relation to the impact of the development upon the Historic Park and Garden and the Grade I Listed Building whilst English Heritage has not objected on these grounds.

Crewe Hall is noted for its Grade II registered landscape featuring mid C19 formal gardens by William Andrews Nesfield which are associated with the Grade I listed country house and the remains of a landscaped park on which Lancelot Brown, William Emes, John Webb and Humphry Repton are all said to have worked.

The proposed extensions would be attached to the rear of the recent modern extensions which are themselves located to the rear of the Crewe Hall. The location of the proposed extensions will serve to minimise their immediate visual impact upon Crewe Hall.

It should also be noted that there are changes in land level between Crewe Hall and the modern extensions (the extensions are constructed at a lower level). The proposed removal of the current made ground/demolition rubble will enable the overall bulk, massing and height of the extension to be constructed at a lower level and to be less prominent in relation to Crewe Hall as a result.

Although some trees would be removed to facilitate the proposed development the proposed landscaping scheme together with the remaining trees would form a screen from the Nesfield Garden.

It is therefore considered that the visual impact of the proposed extension would not readily impact upon the hall, the existing complex of extensions, the historic park and garden and the Nesfield Garden. It will however be important to fully ensure that the landscape works are conditioned and their implementation monitored, together with the recommendations in the management issues section of their landscape appraisal.

The proposal to follow the established architectural style, materials and colours of the current extensions is the most appropriate approach in this context, given the location of the proposed buildings in relation to the recent modern extensions.

The footprint of the new extension has been staggered back, to retain more of the open setting between the new development and the Listed Building, which was requested as part of the pre application negotiations.

The proposed extension would be set down at the same level as the existing extensions, to ensure that they would be visually integrated and less prominent. The window design

would also be visually integrated, with the design of the new extensions having less glazing than some of the existing recent extensions. This will serve to present a more sympathetic face to these rear elevations.

The existing ancillary pipes and vents (plant) to the current extension closest to the proposed new extension (east elevation) will be integrated visually by close board screening in order to improve the overall presence of the new extensions.

## **10. CONCLUSIONS**

In summary, the proposal involves the redevelopment and expansion of an existing tourist/leisure and recreational facility in the open countryside. The proposed development will not have a detrimental impact upon the character and setting of the Grade I Listed Crewe Hall and will not detract from the character and appearance the open countryside or the Historic Park and Garden. The proposed development therefore complies with Local Plan Policy BE.9 Listed Buildings: Alterations and Extensions and the provisions of PPS5.

If the Council is minded to approve an application where there is an objection from English Heritage or any of the national amenity societies then the application for Listed Building Consent should be referred to the Secretary of State. In this case an objection has been received from the Victorian Society, a national amenity society, and as a result the application will need to be referred to the Secretary of State (This applies to the application for Listed Building Consent only and not the Planning Application).

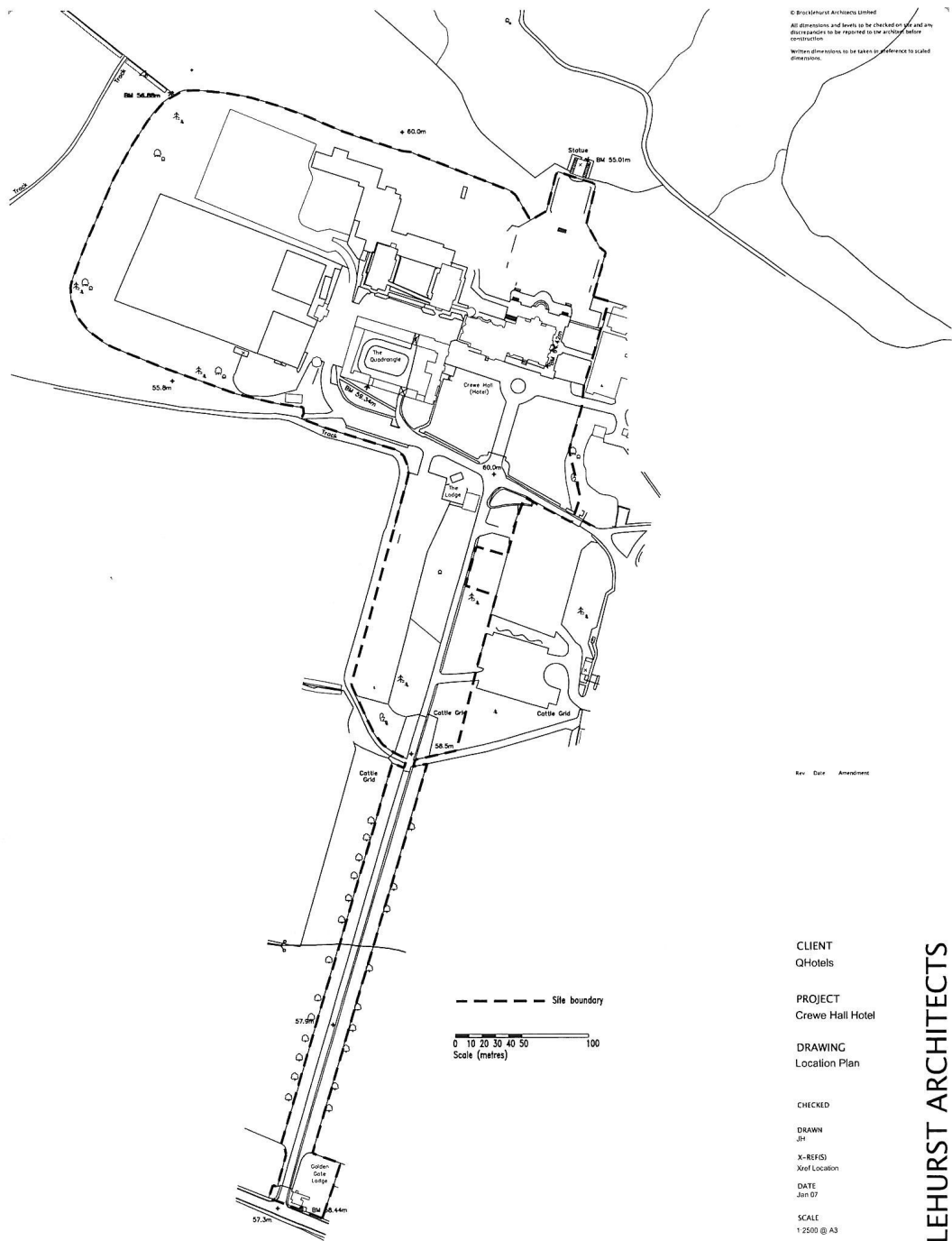
## **11. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The application be referred to the Secretary of State with a recommendation to APPROVE subject to the following conditions**

- 1. Standard time 3 years**
- 2. Materials to be submitted to the Local Planning Authority and approved in writing**
- 3. Tree protection measures to be carried out in accordance with the submitted Arboricultural Report; Impact Assessment & Method Statement**
- 4. Details of improvements to the surface of the paths around the site to be submitted to the Local Planning Authority and approved in writing**
- 5. Details of landscaping to be submitted prior to the commencement of development. The landscaping scheme shall include additional shrub beds with large ornamental shrubs to replace those being removed as part of the building works and a proposed beech hedge to separate the proposed extension and Nesfield Garden which shall be supplied as a 'ready grown' hedge**
- 6. Implementation and maintenance of the approved landscaping scheme**
- 7. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans only**



# Location Plan



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