

Application No: 13/1806M

Location: COTTONS HOTEL, MANCHESTER ROAD, KNUTSFORD, CHESHIRE, WA16 0ED

Proposal: Extension to time limit for application 09/1485M- Three storey extension to provide a net addition of 27no. bedrooms and associated additional on site parking (resubmission of 08/2233P)

Applicant: Shire Hotels Limited

Expiry Date: 25-Jul-2013

**Date Report Prepared:** 3 July 2013

#### **SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION**

Approve subject to conditions

#### **MAIN ISSUES**

- Whether there have been any material changes in policy or circumstances since the previous application

#### **REASON FOR REPORT**

The application is a major application that is a significant departure from the Local Plan. As such under the terms of the Council's constitution the proposal needs to be determined by the Strategic Planning Committee.

#### **DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT**

The application site comprises a two / three-storey hotel and spa facility that has been substantially extended over the past 40 years with external car parking for 188 cars. By way of background the following provides an indication of the timing and scale of previous permissions for bedroom extensions:

1961 – 6 bedrooms  
1982 – 53 bedrooms  
1986 – 27 bedrooms  
1994 – 17 bedrooms  
2000 – 8 bedrooms

This has resulted in 109 existing bedrooms

The site is located within the Green Belt as identified in the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan.

## **DETAILS OF PROPOSAL**

This application seeks to extend the time limit on application 09/1485M granted permission in 2010 for the erection of a three-storey bedroom block extension to the side (providing an additional 27 bedrooms) and a first floor rear meeting room extension; plus the provision of additional car parking in the area of the site currently occupied by two tennis courts. Internal alterations to improve the hotel reception, function room and meeting / conference areas were also proposed.

## **RELEVANT HISTORY**

There is an extensive planning history on the site which predominantly relate to significant extensions to the original building. The most relevant to the current proposal is:

09/1485M - THREE STOREY EXTENSION TO PROVIDE A NET ADDITION OF 27 NO. BEDROOMS AND ASSOCIATED ADDITIONAL ON-SITE PARKING (RE-SUBMISSION OF 08/2233P) – Approved 21.05.2010

## **POLICIES**

### **Local Plan Policy**

NE11 (Nature Conservation)  
BE1 (Design Guidance)  
GC1 (Green Belt – New Buildings)  
RT13 (Tourism)  
DC1 (Design – New Build)  
DC2 (Extensions and Alterations)  
DC3 (Amenity)  
DC6 (Circulation and Access)  
DC8 (Landscaping)  
DC9 (Tree Protection)

### **Other Material Considerations**

National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework)  
Good Practice Guide on Planning for Tourism

## **CONSULTATIONS (External to Planning)**

Strategic Highways Manager – No objections subject to the same highways conditions and requirements as 09/1485M.

Environmental Health – No objections subject to advice note regarding contaminated land.

Visitor Economy Manager - The applicant is looking to develop the accommodation in line with the stated objectives of Cheshire East's Visitor Economy Strategy. The accommodation is of a high standard and this extension will add to its attractiveness to visitors and business users. There is also potential for local traders in Knutsford to benefit from the development.

Finally it is a stated aim of turning day visitors into overnight visitors; this will increase the value of the visitor economy of Cheshire East.

## **VIEWS OF THE PARISH / TOWN COUNCIL**

Knutsford Town Council – Comments not received at time of report preparation. No objections were raised with regard to the original permission.

## **OTHER REPRESENTATIONS**

None received

## **OFFICER APPRAISAL**

### **Principle of development**

For an extension to time limit application such as this, the Government's advice for Local Planning Authorities is to take a positive and constructive approach towards applications that improve the prospects of sustainable development being brought forward quickly. The development proposed will, by definition, have been judged acceptable in principle at an earlier date. It is the Government's advice that Local Planning Authorities should only look at issues that may have changed significantly since that planning permission was previously considered to be acceptable in principle.

The development was previously approved in 2010 and was extant at the time the application was submitted to the Local Planning Authority.

The proposal is inappropriate development in the Green Belt, which reduces openness. However, very special circumstances were previously considered to exist to outweigh the identified harm to the Green Belt. The very special circumstances can be summarised as:

- Identified requirement for additional hotel accommodation in Knutsford.
- Value and potential of Knutsford area to the visitor economy with its many attractions, major events and business tourism.
- Lack of alternative sites to provide such facilities.
- Located near other commercial properties.
- National planning policies advise LPAs to adopt a positive approach towards extensions to existing tourism accommodation where the scale of the extension is appropriate to its location and where the extension may help to ensure the future viability of such businesses.
- Secures the long-term viability of the business that supports the local economy.

In addition, the previous scheme was considered to have an acceptable impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area, neighbouring amenity, nature conservation interests and highway safety.

No changes have occurred to Local Plan policy since the application was previously approved. Changes have occurred to regional planning policy. However, this is not considered to have any implications for this application. Similarly, the Framework has been introduced, which outlines the Government's commitment to secure economic growth. The

proposed development is consistent with this objective. It should also be noted that the Good Practice Guide on Planning for Tourism remains extant. As such there has been no change to national policies relating to tourism.

The previous permission was also subject to a s106 planning agreement requiring:

- Submission, operation and monitoring of a site travel plan

In order to comply with the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations 2010 it is now necessary for planning applications with legal agreements to consider the issue of whether the requirements within the S106 satisfy the following:

- (a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
- (b) directly related to the development; and
- (c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

The provision of a travel plan is necessary, fair and reasonable to help to provide a sustainable form of development and is directly related to the development proposed.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND REASON(S) FOR THE DECISION**

The previously approved application was considered to comply with relevant local, national and regional planning policy. Whilst the Framework has been introduced since the previous approval, no changes have occurred to relevant planning policies that would result in a different decision now being made. The previous 106 agreement will need a straightforward amendment to link the obligation to the new permission. Therefore, the application is recommended for approval subject to consultation with the Secretary of State (due to the scale of the proposal in the Green Belt), the conditions listed below and a s106 planning agreement which secures the following heads of terms.

### **Heads of Terms**

- Submission, operation and monitoring of a site travel plan

Application for Extension to Time Limit

**RECOMMENDATION:** Approve subject to a Section 106 Agreement and the following conditions

1. A03FP - Commencement of development (3 years)
2. A01AP - Development in accord with approved plans
3. A06EX - Materials as application
4. A01HP - Provision of car parking prior to occupation
5. A04HP - Provision of cycle parking prior to occupation

6. A07HP - Details of drainage and surfacing of hardstanding areas to be submitted
7. A01LS - Landscaping - submission of details
8. A04LS - Landscaping (implementation)
9. Surface water drainage system - details to be submitted
10. Provision for roosting bats and breeding birds
11. Development to be carried out in accordance with arboricultural statement

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