

Application No: 15/0283M

Location: LODGE HILL, ALTRINCHAM ROAD, STYAL, SK9 4LH

Proposal: Proposed Erection of Hotel Comprising 35 Bedrooms and associated facilities including 37 Car Parking Spaces, Landscaped gardens, Driveway, Boundary Enhancement Measures and Gated Access

Applicant: Mr Lee Brown

Expiry Date: 27-Apr-2015

## REASON FOR REPORT

The application is a major development that requires a committee decision.

### SUMMARY

The proposal is inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Additional harm would be caused to the Green Belt due to the adverse impact on openness.

Whilst it is acknowledged that there would be some economic benefits associated with the proposal, these together with the other considerations put forward by the applicant are not considered to clearly outweigh the harm identified. Very special circumstances do not exist to justify the grant of planning permission.

Accordingly, the proposal is not considered to be a sustainable form of development and the application is recommended for refusal.

### RECOMMENDATION

**Refuse**

## PROPOSAL

Full planning permission is being sought for a 35 bedroom hotel and associated facilities, including a restaurant and leisure suite. The hotel building is of a contemporary design, is flat roofed and comprises two rectangular elements, positioned at an angle to each other, with a glazed link and enclosed courtyard between. The eastern element is three storey, with the western element being three storey to the south and two storey to the north. A single storey restaurant is proposed to the west of the main hotel building. The three storey elements are 11.2m high, the two storey element is 8.3m high and the single storey element is 5m high. The building is to be constructed from a mixture of natural stone, glass and brick.

The existing vehicular access point off Altrincham Road is to be retained and altered slightly. 37 parking spaces are proposed, 11 for staff and 26 for guests.

## **SITE DESCRIPTION**

The application site measures 1.72 hectares and comprises an existing residential property and associated outbuildings. The dwelling is located to the north of the site, with vehicular access off Altrincham Road. The dwelling is a relatively modern, single storey flat roofed building (maximum height of 4.8m) constructed from brick. It is linked to the remnants of the original building that stood on the site, including an entrance arch containing the crest of the Greg family coat of arms. The site also contains a number of areas of hardstanding, with a large area located to the west of the dwelling. These areas are used for airport car parking in connection with the sites lawful use as a mixed use for residential purposes and commercial parking.

Two residential properties, The Stables and Styal House are located to the north of the site. These properties historically formed the servants quarters buildings to the original 15 bed mansion house which sat on the site.

The site is located within the Green Belt, within an Area of Special County Value (ASCV) and within Styal Conservation Area as identified in the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan. A public footpath is located to the east of the site.

## **RELEVANT HISTORY**

15/0028M – CONSERVATION AREA CONSENT – not considered to be required as demolition covered by this application. Applicant advised to withdraw.

10/1524M - CERTIFICATE OF LAWFULNESS FOR THE EXISTING HARDSTANDING – Positive certificate February 2011.

10/1509M - APPLICATION FOR A CERTIFICATE OF LAWFUL DEVELOPMENT HARDSTANDING (F & G) – Negative certificate February 2011.

09/0484M - PROPOSED RETENTION OF HARDSTANDING WITHIN AREAS D, E, F AND G – Refused August 2009. Appeal dismissed.

06/00495E – Enforcement Notice served relating to an unauthorised material change of use of land to a mixed use for residential purposes and commercial parking – January 2008. Notice appealed and varied.

06/3016P - ERECTION OF FENCING TO SOUTH & WEST BOUNDARY (RETROSPECTIVE) – Refused April 2007.

58557P - SINGLE STOREY DWELLING HOUSE TWO FLATS SWIMMING POOL AND TWO CAR GARAGES – Refused June 1989.

## **NATIONAL & LOCAL POLICY**

## **National Policy**

The National Planning Policy Framework establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Of particular relevance are paragraphs:

- 14. Presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 17. Core planning principles
- 28. Supporting a prosperous rural economy
- 56-68. Requiring good design
- 79-92. Green Belt
- 109 – 125. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- 126-141. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

## **Development Plan**

The Development Plan for this area is the 2004 Macclesfield Borough Local Plan, which allocates the site as Green Belt, an Area of Special County Value (ASCV) and a Conservation Area.

The relevant Saved Policies are:

- NE1 Landscape protection and enhancement
- NE11 Nature Conservation
- BE1 Design Guidance
- BE3 Conservation Areas
- BE4 Demolition in Conservation Areas
- GC1 New buildings in the Green Belt
- RT13 Tourism
- T2 Public Transport
- DC1 New build
- DC3 Amenity
- DC6 Circulation and Access
- DC38 Space Light and Privacy

The saved Local Plan policies are consistent with the NPPF and should be given full weight.

## **Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy – Submission Version (CELP)**

The following are considered relevant material considerations as indications of the emerging strategy:

- MP1 Presumption in favour of sustainable development
- PG1 Overall Development Strategy
- PG2 Settlement hierarchy
- PG3 Green Belt
- PG6 Spatial Distribution of Development
- SD1 Sustainable Development in Cheshire East
- SD2 Sustainable Development Principles
- IN1 Infrastructure

IN2 Developer contributions  
EG1 Economic Prosperity  
EG2 Rural Economy  
EG4 Tourism  
SE1 Design  
SE2 Efficient use of land  
SE3 Biodiversity and Geodiversity  
SE4 The Landscape  
SE5 Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland  
SE6 Green Infrastructure  
SE7 The Historic Environment  
SE9 Energy Efficient Development  
SE13 Flood risk and water management  
CO1 Sustainable Travel and Transport  
CO2 Enabling Business Growth Through Transport Infrastructure

## **CONSULTATIONS**

**Highways** – no objections subject to the imposition of conditions controlling the use of the hotel, gym and restaurant, travel plan and cycle stands.

**Environmental Health** – no objections subject to conditions.

**Manchester Airport** – no objections. Comments made in relation to the choice of landscaping so as to avoid the use of pine which attract rooks.

**National Trust (Styal)** – no objections.

**Cheshire East Visitor Economy Development Manager** – supportive of the proposal.

**United Utilities** - No objections.

## **TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL**

**Styal Parish Council** – object on grounds of inadequate parking for the proposed number of bedrooms, the number of staff given that the location has poor transport links and the size of restaurant and leisure facilities - and the likely impact that all this will have on Altrincham Road in terms of roadside parking which could not safely be accommodated around the entrance to the property.

The application has some strong merit in terms of the demand for such a hotel near to the airport, the employment benefit, and the benefit of the ceasing of airport parking.

Some strong views against it have been expressed in terms of it being inappropriate in green belt, in a conservation area, in terms of light pollution, and it not being in keeping with the locality and its surroundings.

## **REPRESENTATIONS**

Neighbour notification letters were sent to all adjoining occupants, a site notice erected and a press advert was placed in the local paper.

To date, 61 representations have been received in relation to the application, 26 in support and 35 objecting. The main points raised are summarised below:

### **Support**

- Benefit to businesses
- Removal of busy car park
- Reduction in traffic
- Employment opportunities
- Visual improvement
- Beautiful addition to the village
- Less impact on the Green Belt
- Improved landscaping and wildlife
- Facility for local residents
- Eco friendly

### **Object**

- Size, height and light of new building
- Noise pollution
- Design
- Insufficient parking
- Traffic
- Inappropriate in the Green Belt
- Adverse impact on Conservation Area
- Detrimental impact on neighbours
- Congestion
- Lack of public transport
- Airport parking for guests?
- Too big for Styal
- No need for it
- Not all of the existing parking spaces are utilised throughout the year
- Concern about it being a park and stay hotel
- Not appropriate in ASCV
- Smells
- Would set precedent
- Adverse impact of construction traffic
- Loss of privacy to neighbours
- Concern about proposed materials
- Impact on wildlife
- Increased carbon footprint
- Adverse impact on nearby properties
- Affect on cycleways and bridleways
- Query where air conditioning units would be located
- Contrary to the emerging plan

Additionally a petition in support of the proposal with 16 signatories has been submitted.

Further neighbour consultation has been carried out due to the receipt of revised plans and additional information. Any additional representations received in response to the additional consultation will be reported in an update report or directly to committee.

## **APPRAISAL**

The key issues are considered to be:

- Whether the proposal is acceptable in the Green Belt
- Impact upon the Conservation Area
- Impact upon character of the area, including on the ASCV
- Impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties
- Parking
- Impact upon nature conservation interests

## **ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

### **Green Belt**

#### Inappropriate Development

Local Plan policy GC1 and paragraph 89 of the NPPF state that the construction of new buildings within the Green Belt is inappropriate unless it is for one of the listed exceptions. The proposed development is not for one of the identified exceptions. Paragraph 89 of the NPPF also allows for limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development.

In this case, as stated above, the site contains a number of existing buildings, together with a number of areas of hardstanding, used in connection with the sites mixed use as a residential dwelling and for commercial parking. In order to assess whether the proposal constitutes inappropriate development it is therefore necessary to assess the relative impact of the proposal against the existing development on site including its lawful use for commercial parking.

Figures submitted with the application state that the total floor area of the proposed hotel is 4405 sq metres compared to a floor area of 855.6 sq metres for the existing dwelling and outbuildings. The maximum height of the proposed building is 11.2m, albeit with lower sections as outlined above, with the height of the existing dwelling being 4.8m. It is stated that the lawful areas of hardstanding on the site measure 4255 sq metres and can accommodate up to 393 vehicles at any one time.

It is acknowledged that the existing buildings and large areas of hardstanding on site have an impact on the openness of the Green Belt and involve conflict with Green Belt purposes, particularly when the areas of hardstanding are being used for parking. This involves both the physical development on site and the comings and goings associated with the existing use.

With regard to Green Belt purposes, and specifically encroachment in the countryside, it is considered that any reduction in hardstanding would be offset by the increased footprint of the proposed building. As such it is considered that the proposal would have no greater conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt than the existing land use.

However, when compared with existing development on site, it is considered that the proposal would have a significantly greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt. The proposed hotel building is significantly larger and higher than existing buildings on the site and whilst some existing areas of hardstanding are to be removed, this is not considered to outweigh the additional impact resulting from the proposed building. When reaching this conclusion regard has also been had to the likely comings and goings associated with both the existing and proposed uses. The proposal is contrary to paragraph 89 of the NPPF and constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

Very special circumstances are therefore required to justify permitted the development. Very special circumstance will only exist if the harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

Substantial weight must be given to the harm to the Green Belt, both through inappropriateness and loss of openness. Any other harm resulting from the proposed development must be added to the substantial weight against the proposal before considering whether other considerations exist that clearly outweigh this harm.

### Very Special Circumstances

The applicant considers that the proposal is not inappropriate development in the Green Belt. However, they state that if the Council does not accept this view they consider that there are very special circumstances which outweigh any harm to the Green Belt. These mainly revolve around the issues associated with the fall back position and are summarised below:

- Removal of an airport parking business and the potential to park up to 393 vehicles at the busiest time of the year
- Opportunity to introduce controls over the development on site through conditions
- Introduction of a high quality development including enhanced landscaping and boundary treatment resulting in enhancement of the Conservation Area and ASCV
- Removal of existing boundary treatment which detracts from its surroundings e.g. razor wire
- Creation of a scheme which has been designed to take account of the amenities of the residents of surrounding residential properties
- Creation of a scheme that removes the likelihood of domestic clutter
- Protection and enhancement of existing trees on site which are not dead or dying
- Preservation and opportunity to relocate the Greg Crest for the benefit of the community of Styal
- The opportunity for a hotel facility within walking distance of Quarry Bank Mill. There is no such facility at present.
- Employment opportunities arising from the proposed hotel for the benefit of local people who could walk or cycle to the site

These matters are considered below in the Planning Balance section of this report.

### **Impact on the Conservation Area**

The site is located within Styal Conservation Area where policies seek to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of Conservation Areas (Local Plan Policy BE3). The proposal involves the demolition of existing buildings and structures on the site including historic buildings and structures previously associated with the original dwelling on the site. A Heritage, Design & Access Statement has been submitted with the application and concludes that the proposal would enhance the site.

There is no objection to the demolition of the existing buildings on the site. The loss of the buildings would not affect the character or historic integrity of the Conservation Area, subject to the reclamation of the Greg Crest. It would also have been preferable for a scheme to retain the archway at the rear of the site, however the Conservation Officer has not raised an objection to its demolition. Notwithstanding this, should permission be granted for the proposal, it is considered that a condition should be attached requiring a scheme to be submitted for the re-use/retention of the archway.

The Council's Conservation Officer has been consulted on the application and is satisfied with the proposal in respect of impact on the Styal Conservation Area. The Conservation Officer considers that the principle of a new single building on this site could make a positive contribution and has no objection.

However, notwithstanding the view of the Conservation Officer, it is considered that the scale and design of this proposal, and its position relative to adjoining property, is not reflective of the character of the Styal Conservation Area. As such, it is considered that the proposal, at best, has a neutral impact on the character of the Conservation Area.

Should permission be granted for the proposal, a number of other conditions regarding materials, windows and rooflights are proposed.

### **Visual impact**

A Landscape and Visual Assessment and a Landscape Design Strategy have been submitted with the application. The Council's Landscape Officer has been consulted on the proposal and has provided the following comments:

*The site is approximately 1.7 Ha and is located on the northern side of Altrincham Road in Style village. It's a sensitive location within the Green Belt, the Bollin Valley ASCV and the Styal Conservation Area.*

*There are mature tree and shrub belts around the eastern, western and southern site boundaries which generally provide good screening. The lawn area and the top of the bungalow are however visible from a stretch of Altrincham Road (about 50 metres in length), just west of the site entrance where there are large gaps between trees and few understorey shrubs. There's also a glimpsed view of the site and the bungalow through a gap in the boundary vegetation from public footpath Styal FP14 located about 160 metres to the east of the site.*

*The proposed hotel would have a much larger footprint than the existing buildings and the two storey elements would be higher than the bungalow with a height of about 11 metres. The hotel would also extend closer to Altrincham Road (55 metres at the closest point) and would be more prominent in views from the road than the existing bungalow. These views would be partially screened or filtered by a group of pine trees in the lawn.*

*The proposed landscape scheme would replace a large area of hardstanding with soft landscaping and would provide an attractive setting for the proposed hotel. The scheme also proposes additional planting around the site boundaries and if the application were approved a planting scheme could be agreed that would, when established, screen the proposed development from Altrincham Road and also from public footpath FP16. A higher fence or wall plus screen planting could also be secured along the northern boundary to improve screening for Styal House.*

Noting the comments outlined above, it is considered that, notwithstanding the comments made in the Green Belt section of this report regarding openness, the visual impact of the proposal is acceptable subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions regarding landscaping, boundary treatments and a 10 year landscape management plan.

## **Residential Amenity**

Local Plan policies DC3 and DC38 seek to protect the amenity of residential occupiers. Policy DC3 states that development should not significantly injure the amenities of adjoining or nearby residential property and sensitive uses due to matters such as loss of privacy, overbearing effect, loss of sunlight and daylight and traffic generation and car parking. Policy DC38 sets out guidelines for space between buildings.

Two residential properties are located to the rear of the site and have habitable windows facing towards it. The existing boundary between the site and these properties is marked by a combination of a 3m high brick wall, timber panelled fencing and planting. Commercial parking currently takes place on some areas of land immediately adjacent to the boundary with these residential properties. There is evidence that this has resulted in noise and disturbance being experienced by these properties.

The nearest point of the proposed hotel building to these properties would be 4m further away than the existing dwelling but would be significantly higher (8.4m high compared with 4m). Whilst there would be no windows in these elevations facing towards the properties to the rear, as originally submitted the ground floor would have contained delivery doors and doors to a plant room, linen and stores and the staff entrance. Revised plans have recently been received which have amended the floor plans and elevations to mean that all deliveries and staff movements are to be via the east elevation i.e. not directly facing residential property. Whilst two doors have been retained on the north elevation, these are for emergency use only. Further information has also been submitted regarding the frequency and nature of deliveries. This states that it is expected that not more than 12 vehicles would serve the site on a weekly basis.

Additionally staff parking areas are proposed to the rear of the site, though the proposed site layout has been amended slightly during the course of the application in an attempt to address neighbour concerns. This has resulted in 5 spaces that were located adjacent to the garden of The Old Stables being relocated elsewhere, albeit still towards the rear of the site.

A number of amenity concerns have been raised by the occupiers of the properties located to the rear including: noise and light pollution, disturbance from operation of the

hotel/restaurant/spa facility, noise from staff arriving, leaving and parking, smells, plant rooms, service vehicles, overbearing, increased traffic flow and loss of privacy.

As initially submitted there was concern regarding the noise and disturbance associated with the proposed hotel and the impact of this on residents located to the rear of the site/hotel. However, subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions, it is considered that the revised plans together with the additional information received has overcome these concerns. It is not now considered that the impact of the proposed use on the amenity of nearby occupiers would be significantly adverse, particularly when compared with the existing lawful use of the site.

The comments made in objection regarding the overbearing nature of the building are noted. However whilst the building will increase significantly in scale, given the position of the higher elements of the building relative to nearby property, it is not considered that it would be significantly overbearing.

No objections have been raised to the application by the Council's Environmental Health department.

### **Trees**

An arboricultural assessment has been submitted with the application and the Council's forestry officer has been consulted and has provided the following comments:

*In terms of any impact upon the amenity and character of the Conservation Area only the loss of the mature Lime, a moderate category tree merits consideration. The tree is visible as a filtered view from the road, but visibility is restricted to fleeting views through the existing group of trees along Altrincham Road. The tree is not visible from any wider public vantage points and whilst it presents some contribution to the sylvan character of the Conservation Area, I consider that given the opportunities for restorative landscaping within the site, the tree and other low category losses can be adequately mitigated by suitable planting scheme that would form part of a larger more comprehensive landscape proposals.*

He concludes that there are no significant objections from an arboricultural perspective and recommends a number of conditions should permission be granted.

### **Ecology**

An extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey together with a Great Crested Newt Impact Assessment and Mitigation Proposals report has been submitted with the application. The Council's Nature Conservation Officer has been consulted and has provided the following comments:

#### Great Crested Newts

*Satisfied that on balance great crested newts are unlikely to be affected by the proposed development.*

#### Nesting Birds

*If planning consent is granted conditions would be required to safeguard nesting birds:*

#### Pond

*A small ornamental pond would be lost as a result of the proposed development. The applicant is proposing to compensate for the loss of the pond through the provision of a wetland scape. I advise that the loss of the pond should instead be compensated for by the*

*provision of an open water pond which provides similar habitat to that lost. I recommend that the submitted plans be amended to reflect this.*

## **Highways**

Access to the site would be via the existing access off Altrincham Road, with the entrance gate moved further north to allow space for vehicles to pull off the highway before approaching the access gate which would be controlled by an entry system. The existing driveway would be retained and provide access to the rear of the hotel for servicing and staff parking. 11 staff spaces are proposed. Guests of the hotel would follow a new driveway to a courtyard adjoining the entrance to the hotel where they would drop their vehicle off to be parked in the 26 space guest parking area located to the side of the proposed restaurant. It is stated that the number of car parking spaces has been kept to a minimum given the highly sustainable location of the site.

The Strategic Highways Manager (SHM) has been consulted on the application and raises no objections to the proposal subject to the imposition of conditions controlling the use of the hotel, gym and restaurant, submission of a travel plan and provision of cycle stands. The SHM comments as follows:

*The Transport Statement has assessed the accessibility, parking and traffic impacts of the proposed site, the main highway concern is the parking availability on the site for residents and staff. It has been confirmed by the applicant that the on-site facilities will not be open to the general public.*

*A travel plan has been offered to promote sustainable access to the site and also to provide a taxi service for staff and for residents if required.*

*In regards to parking provision on the site the use of the hotel purely for the use of residents will help reduce the parking demand on the site and also if there is a specific peak demand in parking requirement then there are areas within the site where vehicles could park and this would have to be managed internally but there be would no overspill on the public highway.*

*Therefore, I would not raise objections to the application subject to a number of conditions to control the usage of the site.*

Whilst it is noted that the initial concerns of the SHM regarding parking have been overcome, given the sites location in the Green Belt, it would not be acceptable for overspill parking to take place other than under exceptional circumstances.

## **Flood Risk**

As the application site area is greater than 1 hectare, the application should be supported by a Flood Risk Assessment. An FRA has been submitted during the course of the application and is currently being considered by the Council's Flood Risk Team. Any update in relation to this issue will be provided either by way of an update report or at committee.

## **Contaminated land/Environmental Impacts**

The contaminated land officer notes that the existing use of the site for commercial parking means that it could be affected by any contamination present. Should permission be granted a condition requiring a phase 1 contaminated land survey is therefore recommended.

Additional conditions regarding pile foundations, dust control, floor floating, fixed plant and equipment, construction hours and air quality are also recommended by the Environmental Health department having regard to the nature of the proposal and the site location.

## **SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY**

### **Open Space**

The Council's SPG on Planning Obligations generally requires Public Open Space and Recreation/Outdoor Sports Facilities on hotel developments with a floorspace of over 1000 sq metres. In the absence of on site facilities a contribution of £600 per bedroom is required for POS/ROS. In this case that equates to a financial contribution of £600 x 35 i.e. £21,000.

Comments on the application are being sought from the Council's Greenspace Officer. Any received prior to committee will be provided in an update report.

## **ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY**

With regard to the economic role of sustainable development, the proposed development will help to enhance visitor accommodation facilities as well as bringing direct and indirect economic benefits to Styal and the surrounding area including additional trade for local shops and businesses, jobs in construction and economic benefits to the construction industry supply chain.

## **PLANNING BALANCE**

The proposal is an inappropriate form of development in the Green Belt, which reduces openness. Substantial weight should be given to this harm to the Green Belt.

With regard to the applicant's suggested very special circumstances, whilst these are noted, it is not considered that either individually or cumulatively, they clearly outweigh the harm identified. It is accepted that the proposal may bring economic benefits and provide additional tourism accommodation. However, these benefits are not considered to outweigh the harm resulting from the proposal.

The proposal is therefore contrary to policy GC1 of the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

## **SUBJECT TO**

No further issues being raised in representation that have not already been considered within the report:

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**The application is recommended for refusal for the following reason:**

1. The proposal is an inappropriate form of development within the Green Belt which would also impact on openness. The development is therefore contrary to policy GC1

of the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan and would cause harm to the objectives of that policy. The development is similarly contrary to national policy guidance relating to development within the Green Belt. It is not considered that very special circumstances exist to justify the approval of inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

In order to give proper effect to the Committee's intentions and without changing the substance of the decision, authority is delegated to the Planning and Enforcement Manager, in consultation with the Chairman (or in his absence the Vice Chair) of Northern Planning Committee to correct any technical slip or omission in the wording of the resolution, between approval of the minutes and issue of the decision notice.

Application for Full Planning

RECOMMENDATION: Refuse for the following reasons

1. Inappropriate development in the Green Belt and adverse impact on the openness of the Green Belt contrary to Local Plan policy GC1 and the NPPF

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