

|                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Planning Reference No:</b>    | 09/1339N  |
| <b>Application Address:</b>      | Peckforton Castle   |
| <b>Proposal:</b>                 | Restoration of Peckforton Castle to Provide 11 Bedrooms and Additional Public Hotel Space |
| <b>Applicant:</b>                | Majorstage Holdings   |
| <b>Application Type:</b>         | Full Planning   |
| <b>Grid Reference:</b>           | 353324 358085   |
| <b>Ward:</b>                     | Cholmondeley  |
| <b>Consultation Expiry Date:</b> | 29 July 2009  |
| <b>Date for Determination:</b>   | 10 August 2009  |

**SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION: Approve subject to condition**

**MAIN ISSUES**

- Impact of character and appearance
- Policy considerations
- Amenity

## **1. REASON FOR REFERRAL**

This application was to be dealt with under the Council's delegation scheme. However, Councillor Bailey has requested it be referred to Committee on the grounds of importance of this building locally and understandable concerns that any extension should be considered carefully by officers and members alike.

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

The applicant's property is located wholly within the open countryside and within the ASCV. The property is an imposing building constructed out of sandstone and is accessed via a long twisting private drive, which is accessed via Stone House Lane. The castle is located on the top of a hill and is set within its own extensive curtilage and is surrounded by trees. The Castle is a Grade I listed building.

## **3. DETAILS OF PROPOSAL**

This is a full planning application for the conversion of the Bell Tower and West wing to form 11 en-suite bedrooms, a bistro with kitchen and a passenger lift at Peckforton Castle, Stone House Lane, Peckforton, Nantwich.

## **4. RELEVANT HISTORY**

There is a lengthy history of planning applications at Peckforton Castle the most recent of which are:-

7/08785 – Change of Use to Private Rec. Society for Prom. Playing and Enactment of Historical War Games with Staff Quarters and Refreshment Bar. Approved 18<sup>th</sup> March 1982  
7/11668 – Change of Use to Hotel. Approved 7<sup>th</sup> February 1985  
7/11669 – Alterations to Existing Access. Approved 7<sup>th</sup> February 1985  
7/12143 – Change of Use of Land to Jousting Area in Conjunction with Conversion of Castle to Hotel. Approved 27<sup>th</sup> June 1985  
7/12474 – Listed Building Consent to Convert Castle to Hotel. Approved 6<sup>th</sup> January 1986  
7/12475 – Conversion of Castle to Hotel. Approved 17<sup>th</sup> October 1985  
7/18921 – Listed Building Consent for New Door Openings and Internal Alterations. Withdrawn 28<sup>th</sup> June 1991  
P91/0019 – Listed Building Consent for Door Openings and Internal Alterations. Approved 24<sup>th</sup> December 1991  
P99/0844 – Change of Use and Alterations to form Hotel. Approved 6<sup>th</sup> January 2000  
P99/0845 – Listed Building Consent for Alterations to Form Hotel. Approved 6<sup>th</sup> January 2000  
P01/0159 – Phase Two Hotel Development (LBC). Withdrawn 25<sup>th</sup> October 2001  
P03/1075 – Flagpole Antenna. Withdrawn 15<sup>th</sup> October 2003  
P03/1092 – Listed Building Consent Flagpole Antenna. 5<sup>th</sup> October 2003  
P03/1309 – Telecommunications Equipment. Approved 10<sup>th</sup> February 2004  
P03/1357 – Listed Building Consent for Telecommunication Equipment. Approved 24<sup>th</sup> February 2004  
P09/0079 - Listed Building Consent for New Covering Over Existing Rooflights, Automatic Frameless Glass Doors to Foyer and Automatic Glazed Doors to Main Rear Corridor. Approved 12<sup>th</sup> May 2009

## **5. POLICIES**

### **National Policy**

The application should be determined in accordance with national guidance set out in:

PPS1 (Delivering Sustainable Development)  
PPS 7 (Sustainable Development in Rural Areas)  
PPS9 (Biodiversity and Geological Conservation)  
PPG15 (Planning and the Historic Environment)  
Good Practice Guide on Planning for Tourism

### **Local Policy**

The principle issue surrounding the determination of this application is whether the development is in accordance with the following policies within the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan 2011:

BE.1 (Amenity)  
BE.2 (Design Standards)  
BE.3 (Access and Parking)  
BE.4 (Drainage, Utilities and Resources)  
BE.5 (Infrastructure)

BE.9 (Listed Buildings: Alterations and Extensions)  
TRAN.9 (Car Parking Standards)  
NE.2 (Open Countryside)  
NE.3 (Areas of Special County Value)  
NE.5 (Nature Conservation and Habitats)  
NE.9 (Protected Species)

## **6. CONSIDERATIONS (External to Planning)**

**United Utilities:** No objection

**English Heritage:** The proposals are generally acceptable and according to principles discussed during the pre-application meetings. However, there is concern with the proposed widening of the door to the reception area. The wall to the corridor is plain and except for being part of the original layout of the building has no major significance in its own right. The original doorway is a historic feature and our view is that it would be preferable to keep this doorway untouched and instead open a new, possibly even two new, doorways with the same design as the existing further down the corridor. That way the corridor would still be read as a corridor and the original doorway would be kept. We would also like to make sure that the unused stairs leading to the Bistro mezzanine would be kept in situ.

We welcome most of the proposals as part of getting a derelict and today redundant part of the castle in good condition and accept that some alterations are necessary. With some minor amendments and subject to conditions in respect of materials and design the scheme would be acceptable.

**Archaeologist:** Peckforton Castle is recorded in the Cheshire Historic Environment Record (CHER 318/1) as a 19th-century castle and is a Grade I Listed Building. There is no record, however, of any earlier activity on the site and the present proposals will not involve significant below-ground disturbance. I advise, therefore, that archaeological mitigation will not be required in this instance.

**Ecologist:**

### Protected Species

The application is supported by a bat survey. Whilst, evidence of bats has been recorded the survey can only be regarded as preliminary and further survey work is required to determine the importance of the bat roosts present.

The results of further surveys and proposals to mitigate for the adverse impact of this development on bats are required prior to the determination of the application.

### *Important*

It should be noted that since a European Protected Species (Bats) has been recorded on site and is likely to be adversely affected the proposed development, the planning authority must consider two of the three tests in respect of the Habitat Regulations, i.e. (i) that there is no satisfactory alternative and (ii) that the development is of overriding public

interest. Evidence of how the LPA has considered these issues will be required by Natural England prior to them issuing a protected species license once permission has been granted and details of how the tests were considered must be recorded within the committee/delegated report.

### SSSI and SBI

Peckforton Castle is adjacent to the Peckforton Wood Site of Special scientific Interest (SSSI) and Peckforton Wood SBI. Whilst it does not appear that the proposed development will have a significant impact upon either the SBI or SSSI there is some minor encroachment into the SSSI in the form of the proposed new storage tanks to the rear of the property.

The positioning of the new storage tanks closer to the buildings and away from the adjacent woodland edge should be sufficient to avoid any impact upon the SSSI. Natural England should be consulted on this application as they may have a view on the potential impacts of this development on the SSSI.

### Potential Ecological Enhancement

Part of the adjacent Peckforton Woods SBI appears to be in the ownership of the applicant. In order to achieve an overall gain for biodiversity from this application in accordance with PPS9 the applicant should submit proposals for the enhancement of the SBI.

**Conservation Officer:** No objections subject to a number of conditions.

**Highways:** No objections

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

No comments received at the time of writing this report

## **8. OTHER REPRESENTATIONS**

No representations received.

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

### **Design and Access Statement**

- Peckforton Castle was built by Sir John Tollemache and completed in or around 1851;
- Since the Tollemache family moved out of the castle after world war 2, the building has had a chequered history being used for a number of different uses, during which time the upkeep of the Castle was allowed to deteriorate;
- The Castle became a Grade I listed building in 1952 but much of the building fell into a deteriorating state as each subsequent use failed and ceased;
- Eventually approval was granted by Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council in ref. P99/0844 for the conversion of this Grade I listed building into a hotel with 50 bedrooms;

- The previous owner converted part of the building into a hotel comprising 38 bedrooms, together with the necessary restaurant and banqueting facilities;
- Whilst this use brought new life to the hotel, the heavy burden of maintenance meant that the quality of the restoration could not be maintained;
- Approximately 3 years ago the hotel was acquired by Majorstage Limited who have spent a considerable sum of money upgrading the original part of the hotel, including complete refurbishment and correcting the defects identified by Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council as not complying with the planning approval and listed building consent approval;
- The success of the hotel over the last three years, particularly for weddings and other functions, has now made it possible for the new owners to consider extending the hotel to the stage of providing approximately 49 bedrooms;
- The application now submitted is to provide the additional 11 bedrooms, including a lift to comply D.D.A. standards and for additional ground floor reception accommodation and treatment rooms;
- The application seeks to preserve the existing character of this Grade I listed building and to work within the existing exterior envelope, making no physical changes to the exterior, whilst still providing a hotel with 4 star accommodation.

### **Protected Species Survey Report**

- As part of the a proposed planning application at Peckforton Castle Hotel an inspection and assessment was undertaken in relation to bats;
- The aim of the survey was to ascertain if potential existed for bats and if evidence of use was present;
- It is understood that the Bell Tower and West wing buildings that are now present are to be converted and used to provide additional accommodation as part of the hotels expansion programme and the external elevations are to remain unaffected;
- The Bell Tower and West wing buildings were surveyed on the 11<sup>th</sup> May 2009;
- Peckforton Castle was previously unoccupied but has been substantially refurbished for hotel use; however the Bell Tower and West wing, for which the survey has been undertaken, remains unoccupied and redundant from its former purpose;
- The immediate and surrounding habitat consists of extensive woodland, predominately mature oak with additional broadleaf and coniferous species that range from young to semi mature;
- There is a large water body present approximately 0.8 km east of the castle; all of these factors can be considered as being of high value for all bat species that are known to be present within Cheshire;
- The buildings are constructed in sandstone, typical to Cheshire and externally in good condition but loft spaces are absent. The area that is due to be refurbished contains four floors, the ground floor is a functional part of the hotel consisting of reception area, storage rooms and guest rooms. The first, second and third floors are in a run down and disused condition with many open or broken windows that provide access for bats throughout all floors;
- Given the high value of foraging habitat that surrounds the hotel it is not surprising that evidence of bats was found and the two species which were located rely upon good quality woodland for their specific foraging requirements;
- From the inspection and assessment of the Bell Tower and West wing of Peckforton Castle Hotel it can be concluded that high value bat roost potential is present on all three floors which is the area of the proposed refurbishment;

- The complexity of the building and location of the roosts require careful consideration when proposing a mitigation scheme. Following the results of nocturnal observations on site discussions will be necessary to formulate a method to conserve bat roosts and allow the refurbishment to take place;
- As there is positive evidence of bat roosts and potential exists for several roost purposes it is recommended that further surveys are undertaken by way of nocturnal observations to be conducted during May to September and more than one visit will be necessary to cover the active season of bats. The survey will aim to identify how bats are utilising the building, and in what numbers, this information will be required for any subsequent licence application.

### **Additional Protected Species Survey Report received on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2009**

- Following a daytime Inspection, dusk and dawn survey at Peckforton Castle Hotel a maternity roost of Natterers Bats was located in one room of the second floor on the west wing;
- In addition 3 Brown Long Eared bats were found to be occasionally using a separate room;
- The west wing building that are now present are to be converted and used to provide additional accommodation as part of the hotels expansion programme but external elevations are to remain unaffected;
- Natterers bats typically spend time flying around the rooms as they are a species that show a preference for ambient light levels to be very low before dispersing to foraging areas. the room in which they are to be located is used as the main flying space before leaving to the adjacent woodlands;
- In order to allow guest access to the bedrooms that will be formed on the second floor a corridor is to be constructed within the room where the roost is located and essentially follows the contours of three walls;
- To avoid bats entering the remainder of the future occupied hotel one partition wall of the corridor is to extend to the existing ceiling height. an access door will be incorporated into the corridor to allow monitoring of the roost but will be kept locked at all times;
- The total flying space that is now available in the roost room is approximately 36m sq and after construction of the corridor will be 27m sq, which is a reduction of 25%;
- Monitoring of the roost, including temperature and humidity, will be undertaken several times during the 2010 breeding season to ensure that the creation of the corridor has not caused an adverse impact upon the roost;
- As Brown Long Eared bats were found to be present on only 1 occasion, it is proposed to compensate for occasional crevice roosting by way of a bat box which is to be fixed to the external elevation of bedroom no. 4;
- Ultimately the owners of Peckforton Castle Hotel would prefer to restore this area of the Grade 1 Listed Building to use it for accommodation but acknowledge that unless an alternative and suitable roost is provided and that it can be demonstrated that Natterers Bats have located and are using it then the existing roost will need to be retained;
- Subject to planning approval being granted roost provision is to be created on the fourth floor in a room that is on the same elevation and access aspect as the current roost, which is adjacent to woodland. Natterers bats often use hollow beams in old barns, therefore it is proposed to mimic this feature and to some extent replicate the existing roost. The creation of this roost will be completed before the end of October 2009.

## **10. OFFICER APPRAISAL**

### **Site History**

Peckforton Castle was built in approximately 1851 by Sir John Tollemache and has since had a fairly chequered history. The castle has suffered a lot of deterioration over the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century but approximately ten years ago it was acquired and converted into a hotel. Planning Application P99/0844 was submitted to and approved by Crewe and Nantwich Council for change of use and a Listed Building Consent Application was approved in early 2002. The first phase of the works was commenced to form the hotel and 38 bedrooms. The building was acquired approximately 3 years ago by Majorstage Limited and they have made a tremendous success of the business and as such the owners wish to initiate phase 2 works, which in principle have already been approved by the Council, although they now wish to make some minor amendments to the original proposals and this is the reason for the submission.

When application P99/0844 was submitted, it included works to the current Phase 2 development, including the provision of a lift and the formation of two additional openings off the ground floor corridor. The remainder of the Phase 2 development involves the four storey Bell Tower containing the lift to the left of the main reception entrance corridor, together with the three storey north west wing beyond and as per the previous application involves the provision of an informal Bistro/Coffee lounge located on the ground floor and the eleven fully en-suited bedrooms on the remaining floors.

Here again, apart from minor changes, the relationship of the bedrooms and the secondary staircase beyond are very similar to the original approved application. The original Phase 2 proposal does differ in that it extended into the remaining single storey areas leading towards the Coach House. The single storey buildings are currently used as offices, but were proposed to be converted into further bedrooms and treatment rooms. The current applicant proposes an alternative use for this building and a separate application will follow at a later date. Nevertheless, the opportunity is being taken in Phase 2 to re-cover the roof of the single storey building and to insert roof lights into this part of the building. In both the approved scheme P99/0844 and this application, there are no proposals for any alterations to the exterior elevations of this part of the Castle.

### **Principal of Development**

The principle issues surrounding the determination of this application is whether the development is in accordance with Policies BE.1 (Amenity), BE.2 (Design Standards), BE.3 (Access and Parking), BE.9 (Listed Buildings: Alterations and Extensions), NE.2 (Open Countryside), NE.3 (Areas of Special County Value), NE.5 (Nature Conservation and Habitats), NE.9 (Protected Species) and TRAN.9 (Car Parking Standards) of the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan 2011. These seek to ensure alterations and extensions to listed buildings respect the scale, form and design of the surrounding built environment and the original building and are compatible with the surrounding units and to ensure they have no adverse effect upon neighbouring amenity or protected species and the proposal will not have a detrimental impact on highway safety.

The main thrust of the Local Plan policies is to achieve a high standard of design, respect the pattern, character and form of the surrounding area, not adversely affect the street scene by reason of scale, height, proportions or materials used.

The general thrust of the local plan policies is advocated within PPS 1, which places a greater emphasis upon Local Planning Authorities to deliver good designs and not to accept proposals that fail to provide opportunities to improve the character and quality of an area. It is the opinion of the case officer that this proposal does not detract from the character of the area and appearance of the property and is in accordance with advice stated within PPS 1.

PPG15 states that subsequent alterations to historic buildings do not necessarily detract from the quality of a building. They are often of interest in their own right as part of the building's organic history. Successful alterations require the application of an intimate knowledge of the building type that is being altered together with a sensitive handling of scale and detail. It is considered that the proposed alterations preserve the historic fabric of the building and the proposal is in accordance with advice stated in PPG 15 and policy BE.9 (Listed Buildings: Alterations and Extensions)

### **Open Countryside and Residential Extensions**

Policy NE.2 seeks to restrict new development within the open countryside. Policy NE.3 stipulates additional protection is required in Areas of Special County Value and any development will therefore need to be of a high standard consistent with the quality of the area, and wherever possible enhance this further.

### **Tourism**

The principle of changing the use of the castle into a hotel has already been accepted under application P99/0844. It is noted in the Good Practice Guide on Planning for Tourism that the re-use of buildings that have become redundant further improves the overall sustainability of new developments. This also often has the advantage of maintaining important and historic buildings and providing continuity in the landscape and townscape. These sustainable attributes, which may be substantial, may offset certain planning objections to a proposal such as poor location or access.

### **STRATEGIC IMPACT OF THE DEVELOPMENT**

The proposal will provide additional hotel accommodation in Peckforton area where such accommodation is currently lacking. Furthermore, the Bell Tower and West wing are in a poor state of repair, the timber in these areas has been badly affected by dry rot and in many places there are no floors. The walls of the building have also been damaged by damp and in some places are in an extremely poor state of repair. There has to be a balance struck between the heritage value and the significance of the building contra the need for updating the property and making it financially viable in order to secure it for the future. It is considered that the proposals are acceptable with many of the historical features retained. The proposal will safeguard the derelict Bell Tower and West wing for future generations and the use of these extensions for hotel accommodation is acceptable in principle. Furthermore, the proposal will help the local economy and will



safeguard and provide additional jobs, which is also another important material consideration. It is concluded there will be no strategic impact from this development.

## **Design**

PPS1 states that design which fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area should not be accepted. Good design should contribute positively to making places better for people. Design which is inappropriate in its context, or which fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, should not be accepted.

PPG 15 stipulates that 'Many listed buildings can sustain some degree of sensitive alteration or extension to accommodate continuing or new uses. Indeed, cumulative changes reflecting the history of use and ownership are themselves an aspect of the special interest of some buildings, and the merit of some new alterations or additions, especially where they are generated within a secure and committed long-term ownership, should not be discounted'. (Paragraph 3.13 PPG 15)

## **External Works**

The proposal is to preserve the whole of the exterior of the building and, whilst the stonework is generally in good condition, it is proposed to repair the only significant crack to the Bell Tower. Other repairs are proposed to the existing windows that would be reinstated as closely as possible to their original condition, replacing all damaged glazing with single glazing and repairing the metal opening lights as required. In addition, the cast iron drain pipes and other rainwater goods will be checked and replaced, a condition relating to the replacements will be attached to the decision notice.

The main roof to the four storey tower and the remaining three storey building have already been repaired with a asphalt finish. However, further repairs are required to the stonework of the parapet walls, particularly where the original flues serving the original bedrooms have collapsed and require stonework repair, capping off and ventilating. The only other repairs to this external part of the building includes the bell in the bell tower. The bell is in a deteriorating state and requires refurbishment and repair. It will be necessary to completely replace the timber structure supporting the bell with a new structure matching the existing in every respect and this will be secured by condition. Furthermore, an existing deteriorating roof light is also located on the roof of the Bell Tower and is covered by felt and this will be completely removed and copied in timber to match the existing with a single glaze finish.

Other work to the external appearance of the building includes the complete recovering of the single storey building in the courtyard, which are currently being used for offices and storage. This would involve removing the existing clay plain tiles and setting them to one side for re-use. The sub structure would be checked, repaired and if necessary replaced. The clay tile will be replaced and several new roof lights will be installed into the roof planes. A condition will be attached to any approval stating the proposed roof lights must be conservation area style.

## **Internal Works**

The general principle of the design work to the interior of the building is to preserve the existing structure as much as possible but to create further public spaces and 11 en-suite bedrooms within the existing structure.

Alterations to the ground floor of the hotel will incorporate a new lift shaft, bistro/coffee lounge, porters lodge, warming kitchen, bistro/tv lounge, two treatments rooms, hair salon and nail bar with shower room, and stairwell. All the existing apertures are to be retained wherever possible. In the Bistro/ TV lounge the large existing fireplace will be retained. In the Bistro/Coffee lounge area there is a proposed mezzanine floor which will be accessed by a new spiral staircase. The new mezzanine floor will comprise of cantilevered steel floor beams supporting similar smaller steel joists with a floor finish of etched toughened glass. The mezzanine level has a large window opening which provides views over the castle ward. There are two ovens in the former kitchen which will form the Bistro/Coffee lounge if planning permission is approved for the proposed development. The applicant has stated that these two ovens will be retained with the warming oven abutting the west window will be completely refurbished. Conditions will be attached to the decision notice stating that these ovens shall be retained and a method statement for the refurbishment of warming oven shall be attached to the decision notice.

The proposed first floor plan will comprise of 3 no. bedrooms all with en-suite facilities, a house keepers room and linen store, whilst located at the end of the wing is staircase. Where appropriate sandstone walls have been retained in corridors and in the bedrooms although the majority of the bedroom accommodation has been dry lined. The proposal in this application is to modify the dry lining system, much of which has been stripped out because of dry rot. Wherever possible all the existing bedroom fireplaces will be retained as sandstone features within the rooms, although they will no longer comply with current building regulations and the flues will be capped off and ventilated. Furthermore, a number of existing door openings will have to either blocked up or new ones constructed. According to the plans in the proposed stairwell the existing fireplace will need to be removed as well as the existing partition, which will be rebuilt and then realigned in order to accommodate the new stairwell.

The proposed second floor will comprise of a linen store, 5 no. bedrooms, lift shaft, and stair well at the end of the wing. In order to accommodate the bedrooms a number of new partitions will have to be erected and all the existing window openings will be retained. However, a number of fireplaces will need to be removed and existing door openings will be removed and new ones formed. The lift shaft will have an opening which is in line with the proposed corridor and a new partition wall will be constructed.

The proposed third floor will comprise of bedrooms no's 9, 10 and 11, each bedroom will have its own en-suite bathroom, in bedrooms 10 and 11 the existing fireplaces will be retained in situ. In order to facilitate the new bedrooms a number of solid walls, stud partitions and existing door openings will need to be removed. A number of new door openings will be formed. Located at the front of the three bedrooms is a large lobby which also contains an existing fire place which will be retained. The fourth floor will comprise a plant room.

## **Lift**

The passenger lift will be DDA compliant and will be provided to accommodate 8 to 10 persons. The lift is proposed to be a machine roomless traction lift with through-car having a pit which will be excavated inside the porters lodge room to a depth of 1300mm. the headroom at the top of the lift can be catered for within the overall height of the third floor and no requirement for a lift room above the existing roof covering is needed. The lift shaft will need to be formed within the Porters Lodge and the existing entrance to the room will be blocked up with sandstone. The opening to the lift on the ground floor will be formed in accordance with drawing shown in the attached schedule. At the second and third floors the doors to the lift will be on opposite side of the lift and lead directly into a lobby. These openings will be formed through new walls. The whole of the lift will be installed within the lift shaft with the motor and controls located on the side of the lift. The lift will be created with minimum intervention into the main structure of the castle and is considered to comply with policies BE.2 (Design Standards) and BE.9 (Listed Buildings: Alterations and Extensions)

## **Other Internal Works**

Enlarged opening to Reception, in order to maintain control of visitors entering/leaving the Castle it is proposed to widen the current opening from the Bailey Corridor into reception. A simple opening is proposed incorporating the existing door opening of approximately 900mm and enlarging to a width of 2.4m. A new 3m sandstone lintel is proposed to sit approximately 100mm below the existing suspended ceiling in the Bailey Corridor. For fire separation purposes the enlarged opening will have to be glazed. However, English Heritage and the Conservation Officer have concerns regarding this new opening. 'It is considered that the wall to the corridor is plain and except for being part of the original layout of the building has no major significance in its own right. The original doorway is a historic feature and our view is that it would be to prefer to keep this doorway untouched' it is considered that this aspect of the proposal does not comply with policies BE.2 (Design Standards) and BE.9 (Listed Buildings: Alterations and Extensions). However, amended plans have been requested showing two new door openings with the same design as the existing aperture to be located further down the corridor. This will enable the corridor to be read as a corridor and the original door way retained.

## **Internal Courtyard**

The courtyard separating the wing of the castle from the single storey extension will be re-laid and will be retained as an open courtyard.

## **Amenity**

Given the distance from residential properties in the vicinity, being in excess of 400m, the proposal would not have an adverse impact on neighbouring amenity in terms of loss of light, over-domination or disturbance. Furthermore, the intensified use of the site due to additional 11 bedrooms and ancillary hotel facilities would not result in undue disturbance to nearby residential amenity due to the isolated position of the site.

## **Impact on the SSSI**

According to the proposed site location plan a new diesel back up generator and additional LPG Fuel storage tank are proposed to be sited within the curtilage of the castle. The generator and storage tanks will be enclosed by a closed boarded timber fence. The proposed siting of the apparatus is adjacent to the Peckforton Wood Site of Special scientific Interest (SSSI) and Peckforton Wood SBI. The Councils ecologist is concerned about the impact that the proposal will have on the SSSI. The applicant has submitted a revised plan showing that the back up generators and fuel storage tanks to be omitted. In this case the proposal will not have a detrimental affect on the SSSI and complies with policies NE.7 (Sites of National Importance for Nature Conservation)

## **Access and Parking**

According the to the planning application forms there are currently 132 car parking spaces and there will be no difference in the amount of spaces as a result of this application. Colleagues in Highways have been consulted and they do not have any objections to the proposal. It is considered that the proposed development complies with policies BE.3 (Access and Parking) and TRAN.9 (Car Parking Standards).

## **Ecology**

According to the Protected Species Survey the Bell Tower and West wing of Peckforton Castle is a high value bat roost. A number of Brown Long Eared bats and Natterer's Bats were discovered. These animals are listed as a protected species under schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Whilst this planning consent cannot implement other legislation, protected species are considered to be a material consideration in the determination of a planning application, and therefore any impact must be considered and mitigated accordingly.

Circular 06/2005 paragraph; 99 states that 'it is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted, otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision.'

The author of the protected species survey report concludes that the complexity of the building and location of the roosts requires careful consideration when proposing a mitigation scheme. It is recommended that a number of further surveys is required to ascertain how the bats are utilising the hotel and in what numbers. Once this information has been collected a suitable mitigation package can be formulated. This information is imperative for Natural England to issue a bat licence. The case officer has consulted the Council's ecologist and he has stipulated 'That the results of the further surveys and proposals to mitigate for the adverse impact of this development on bats are required prior to the determination of the application'. There is insufficient information for the Council to approve the application as it is not possible to ascertain what impact the proposal will have on a protected species, the proposal is contrary to guidance advocated within policy NE.9 (Protected Species) and PPS 9 (Biodiversity and Geological Conservation).

Following on going consultation with the applicants and Councils Ecologists, a proposed mitigation package has been formulated. The proposed mitigation package has not yet

been assessed by the Council's ecologist and his conclusions will be reported to members for consideration.

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

The proposed development would sympathetically respect the traditional character of this Grade I listed building and would not be harmful to the character and appearance of the surrounding open countryside or the ASCV. The proposal therefore complies with NE.2 (Open Countryside), NE.3 (Areas of Special County Value), BE.2 (Design Standards) and BE.9 (Listed Buildings: Alterations and Extensions) of the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan 2011 and advice advocated within PPG 15: Planning and the Historic Environment.

### **Approve:**

- 1. Standard**
- 2. Plans**
- 3. Materials**
- 4. Conservation area style roof lights**
- 5. Drainage**
- 6. Materials**
- 7. Mortar Mix**
- 8. Hinges to proposed stair glazed screen Painted Black**
- 9. Stainless Steel Patches to Proposed Stair Glazed Screen**
- 10. Metal frame to rooflights to be painted black**
- 11. Colour of doors to lift**
- 12. Finished colour of doors**
- 13. Door hinges painted black**
- 14. Stone steps in Bistro to be retained**
- 15. All existing Fireplaces and their grates to be restored and retained**
- 16. All air vents and grills should be painted black**
- 17. All external windows to be single glazed**
- 18. Cleaning Mechanism of stonework**
- 19. Details of approach to blown sandstone**
- 20. All plaster to be lime based**
- 21. Retain existing oven ranges**
- 22. Restore/replace windows and their openings like for like**
- 23. Details of lack of DPM**
- 24. Details of dealing with rotten timber**
- 25. Describe and illustrate all replacement doors**
- 26. Describe and illustrate proposed replacement radiators**
- 27. To be constructed in accordance with the structural engineers report**
- 28. Rainwater goods to be cast iron and painted black**
- 29. Bat boxes**
- 30. To be constructed in accordance with the mitigation package.**

Location Plan : Cheshire East Council Licence no. 100049045

