

Application No: 18/1509M

Location: The Wilmslow Lodge, 69-71, ALDERLEY ROAD, WILMSLOW, CHESHIRE, SK9 1PA

Proposal: Extension to existing hotel building

Applicant: Mr Darren Simpkin, Hydes Brewery Limited

Expiry Date: 21-May-2018

SUMMARY

It is considered that the proposal is environmentally, socially and economically sustainable. The site is located in a sustainable location within the settlement of Wilmslow and the proposal is considered to represent an efficient use of land.

The proposed development does conflict with development plan policies relating to open space. However the economic, social and environmental benefits arising from the proposal, including off site tree planting, management of the remaining woodland, increased expenditure in Wilmslow town centre, job opportunities, and an increase to the availability of hotel rooms within a very sustainable town centre location, are considered to outweigh the identified loss of open space.

Given the sustainable location of the site, parking standards can be relaxed in accordance with the CELPS. The application raises no significant issues relating to the living conditions of neighbours, ecology, design and heritage or trees that cannot be mitigated.

The proposals are also supported by relevant policies of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy and crucially the recently adopted Wilmslow Neighbourhood Plan Policy TC1 that states the following:-

“Applications for new overnight accommodation (Hotels, Bed and Breakfasts) within the Town Core boundary, along key bus routes, or within close proximity to the railway station, will be strongly supported.”

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION:
Approve subject to conditions

REASON FOR REPORT

The application has been referred to Northern Planning Committee for a decision as the proposals have been advertised as a departure from the development plan, specifically policies related to open space, and as such a committee decision is required.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT

The site is accessed from the B5086, Alderley Road Wilmslow. The lodge is a separate building from the Coach and Four and is located to the rear of the site. In between the two buildings is the car park. Behind the lodge are a cluster of fairly mature trees which are covered by Tree Preservation Orders. These trees have been surveyed and have been maintained in agreement with the Council's tree officer. The entrance elevation to the lodge faces west and the majority of the bedroom windows face north, east or west. The site is bordered by the main road to the west; and Sainsbury's delivery yard and car park access road to the north. The southern edge of the site is bordered with residential properties, with a protected open space and woodland to the east and residential properties to the south.

Originally called the New Inn, it was built circa 1753 following the construction of the Wilmslow turnpike. The pub was refurbished in 2002 when it was re-named the Coach and Four following a competition. The pub was extended and renovated again in 2014 and trade has increased. In 2004 a 36 bedroom block was erected on the land to the rear of the pub and since the renovation of the pub in 2014 the lodge occupancy rate has increased to over 90% after 12 years of successful operation. This success has led Hyde's to consider extending the lodge accommodation.

DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

This application seeks full planning permission for a three-storey rear extension to the existing hotel building to provide 17 additional bedrooms.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

04/0904P – 33 Bedroom hotel – Approved 21/06/04
05/0792P – Advertisement Consent – Approved 18/05/05
05/0967P – Glass Canopy – Approved 01/06/05
07/0855P – Smoking Shelter – Approved 24/05/07
13/0321M – Orangery Extension – Approved 22/03/13

POLICIES

Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (CELPS)

MP1 Presumption - Sustainable Development

PG2 Settlement Hierarchy

EG4 Tourism

EG5 Promoting a Town Centre First Approach to Retail and Commerce

SC1 Leisure and Recreation

SD1 Sustainable Development in Cheshire East

SD2 Sustainable Development

SE1 Design
SE2 Efficient use of land
SE3 Biodiversity and geodiversity
SE4 Landscape
SE6 Green Infrastructure
SE5 Trees, hedges and woodlands
SE12 Pollution, land contamination and land instability
IN 2 – Developer Contributions
CO 1 – Sustainable Travel and Transport
Appendix C – Adopted Parking Standards

Macclesfield Borough Local Plan Saved Policies (MBLP)

DC2 Extensions to existing buildings
DC3 Amenity
DC6 Circulation and Access
DC9 Trees of Amenity Value
DC35 Materials and Finishes
RT1 Open Space

Wilmslow Neighbourhood Plan (WNP)

TA1 Parking
TC1 New overnight accommodation
LSP1 Energy
LSP2 Green/Blue infrastructure
NE3 Green Links
NE5 Nature
TH3 Heritage
TA5 Cycling

Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework
Cheshire East Borough Design Guide 2017

CONSULTATIONS (External to Planning)

Head of Strategic Infrastructure – No objections

Environmental Protection – No objections subject to conditions relating to piling and dust control

National Grid– Issue standard advice on the protection of their assets

Wilmslow Town Council – No objections

OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

Wilmslow Civic Trust – Commented that whilst they are not opposed to the development, wish to bring to attention the possibility of a precedent being set by the Coach and Four's apparent arrangement as a solution for the lack of car parking spaces. Other

applications within the Town Centre may attempt to use the same arrangement, thus undermining the very essence of Planning Control. The only comment they wish to make on the application is the need for any windows overlooking neighbouring properties to be of obscured glass.

One letter of support submitted stating that parking seems low but welcoming the tidying up of the woodland and removal of certain trees.

One letter of objection submitted on the grounds of loss of privacy, intrusion to green area, overlooking and volume and height.

One letter of general observation submitted that requests additional planting to the boundary.

This is a summary of comments to the original submission and the full contents are available to view on the CEC website.

APPLICANTS SUBMISSION

There are no other hotel bedrooms available in the centre of Wilmslow; this is unusual for an affluent town with a population of around 30,000.

The current 36-bedroom lodge has enjoyed room occupancy rates of around 93% over the last three years. On this basis and Hydes understanding of currently unfulfilled demand (i.e. attempted bookings that cannot be accommodated) it is anticipated that the occupancy of the additional rooms will be around 80%.

On the basis of the above and an average occupancy of 1.5 people per room, the lodge extension would promote an additional 6,600 visits to Wilmslow town centre every year. At a time when the sustainability of many town centres is in question, and with a significant incidence of empty shop units in Wilmslow, this would be a major benefit.

The total additional spend with Hydes Brewery limited by the additional visitors to the lodge would be in the region of £460k per annum. Additional employment would likely comprise of one or two full time roles and a number of part time positions (4 full-time equivalent roles) at the extended hotel

It is reasonable to assume that 6,600 visits would generate between £100k and £200k expenditure in the town (£15-£30 per visit) - over and above the £460k spent at Hydes' premises – and that this would translate into at least one, and possibly two full-time equivalent roles being created.

Wilmslow is very poorly served for town centre hotel accommodation.

This is a summary for reporting purposes.

OFFICER APPRAISAL

Open Space

The application site is allocated as Existing Open Space within the MBLP (although it is not accessible to the public) under saved policy RT1. This policy states that areas of recreational land and open space as shown on the proposals map will be protected from development. RT1 does however accept that development of a building footprint which does not harm the integrity of the open space will normally be permitted.

Paragraph 97 of the Framework states that existing open space should not be built on unless:

- “a) an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or*
- b) the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or*
- c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.”*

These tests are reflected in policy SC1 of the CELPS which seeks to protect and enhance existing leisure and recreation facilities, unless a needs assessment has clearly proven them to be surplus to requirements to local community needs or unless alternative provision, of equivalent or better quality, is to be made. However this policy also seeks to support and promote the provision of better leisure, community and recreation facilities, where there is a need for such facilities, the proposed facilities are of a type and scale appropriate to the size of the settlement, are accessible and support the objectives of the Local Plan Strategy.

Policy SE6 aims to deliver a good quality, and accessible network of green spaces for people to enjoy, providing for healthy recreation and biodiversity and continuing to provide a range of social, economic and health benefits.

The proposed extension will be constructed on an area of Existing Open Space, and it has not been demonstrated that the open space is surplus to requirements; it is not being replaced by equivalent or better provision, and the development is not for alternative sports and recreational provision. Accordingly the proposal conflicts with policies RT1 of the MBLP, SC1 of the CELPS and paragraph 97 of the Framework.

Trees

Policy SE 5 of the CELPS outlines that development proposals which will result in the loss of, or threat to, the continued health and life expectancy of trees, hedgerows or woodlands (including veteran trees or ancient semi-natural woodland), that provide a significant contribution to the amenity, biodiversity, landscape character or historic character of the surrounding area, will not normally be permitted, except where there are clear overriding reasons for allowing the development and there are no suitable alternatives.

A small woodland located to the rear of 10 and 12 Greenway and immediately east of the existing building is protected by the Macclesfield Borough Council (Wilmslow - Rear Of The New Inn) Tree Preservation Order 1995 (Woodland W1).

17 lower quality trees will be removed to accommodate the proposed extension, which will have a low impact on the wider amenity of the area. Notwithstanding this low impact the proposed development will result in the loss of an area of protected woodland. The Applicant has stated in their Arboricultural Statement that the woodland would not meet the Council's current criteria for woodland TPO designation and it is too small to benefit from appropriate

grant funding for beneficial management and whilst the points made are correct, it is largely irrelevant as the TPO is a confirmed and valid Order and was effectively made prior to the current criteria.

However, as part of the application, the applicant has proposed a Biodiversity Management Plan (BMP) for the remaining woodland and has offered to secure appropriate woodland planting through agreement off site. The proposed package of measures include an area of woodland off site at The Carrs comprising of 375sqm of mixed species that will bridge a gap between existing woodland forming an ecological corridor and roadside barrier. The proposal has been the subject of discussions with Ansa Environmental Services and the Council's Principal Forestry Officer and has been agreed. It is proposed to ensure the delivery by way of a planning condition.

Subject to this mitigation, the proposal will comply with the element of Policy SE 5 that development must satisfactorily demonstrate a net environmental gain by appropriate mitigation, compensation or offsetting and provides for replacement of trees on a 3:1 basis.

Nature Conservation

Policy SE3 of the CELPS requires all development to positively contribute to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity and geodiversity and should not negatively affect these interests. Policy NE5 of the WNP also reflects these requirements.

The Nature Conservation Officer has commented on the application and noted that the submitted Biodiversity Management Plan makes recommendations for the enhancement of site overall. The enhancements are likely to have a positive impact upon biodiversity generally and should planning permission be granted, a condition should be applied which requires adherence to the recommendations. The modest net loss on site is recognised but it is offset by the positive enhancements and therefore the Nature Conservation Officer has not objected to the proposals. A bat survey has been carried out on the site and while some activity was detected generally, no legally protected bat roosts were identified. Given the proposed removal of vegetation, a condition is recommended in respect of safeguarding breeding birds. The proposal will therefore comply with the requirements of policy SE3 of the CELPS and NE5 of the WNP.

Design/Heritage

The Coach & Four public house building fronting onto Alderley Road is a locally listed building, a heritage asset. However, the existing hotel building will sit between the proposed extension and the locally listed building and as such will not result in harm to the significance of the asset, in accordance with policy SE7 of the CELPS and TH3 of the WNP.

Policies SE 1 and SD 2 of the CELPS seek to ensure that development is of a high standard of design which reflects local character and respects the form, layout, siting, scale, design, height and massing of the site, surrounding buildings and the street scene. CELP policy SD 2(1) (ii) states development should contribute positively to an area's character and identity, creating or reinforcing local distinctiveness in terms of height, scale, form and grouping, materials, external design and massing.

The character of the area is of town centre uses to the north (Sainsbury's and associated town centre car parking) and west and residential to the south and east. It is considered that a

proportionate development is proposed and it considered the design solution is acceptable and relatively discreet in the context of the overall character of site and town centre location. A three storey addition would be to the rear of the present lodge and views of the locally listed building would not be impaired as it would be separate and not readily visible from the main road. The extension would be rendered with a brickwork plinth and slate roof to match the existing building. The proposal is considered to comply with policies SE1 and SD2 of the CELPS as the design solution is considered to achieve a sense of place and enhance quality and would provide towards infrastructure, services or facilities and the green infrastructure. The relationship to the neighbourhood identity would be positive. The extension would be unobtrusive and would be sympathetic to the surroundings.

Amenity

Saved policy DC3 of the MBLP requires that new development should not significantly injure the amenities of adjoining or nearby residential property or sensitive land uses due to loss of privacy, overbearing effect, loss of sunlight or daylight, or other forms of disturbance and nuisance. Saved policy DC38 of the MBLP sets out guideline separation distances for new residential development, including minimum distances between windows, to ensure adequate space, light and privacy is retained.

It is considered that the proposals would injure privacy and amenity and would comply with policy DC3 as the extension would be a significant distance away from residential properties so not to be overbearing. Distances to any of the adjoining dwelling would observe the guidelines set out in policy DC38 of the MBLP even though the proposals are not directly for residential development. The nearest house is to the south and the extension would be 26 metres away with only stairwell windows facing. The main outlook from the new bedrooms will be towards the east and north, with no overlooking issues regarding adjoining gardens or houses. Conditions relating to pile driving and dust control are recommended to protect the living conditions of neighbouring properties.

Highways

Policy TA1 of the WNP expects development to provide sufficient parking in line with the CELPS Appendix C: Parking Standards. The access to the site would be unchanged and three additional spaces would be provided that is below normal council standards, which recommend 1 space per bedroom. However a footnote to the Council's Parking Standards within the CELPS states that "*Recommended standards should be reduced for hotels located in central and easily accessible locations*". In this case, the location is very sustainable within the town centre with bus and train links and immediate access to a range of facilities. A public car park accommodating over 300 spaces is also located adjacent to the site. Importantly the Highways Officer has commented that there are no significant material highway implications associated with the above proposal and has no objection to the planning application. The level of proposed car parking is therefore considered to be acceptable. Clarification on cycle parking is currently being sought from the applicant and will be reported as an update in terms of policy TA5 of the WNP which requires all new development to consider the needs of cyclists.

PLANNING BALANCE

The proposed development conflicts with the development plan due to the loss of open space, which weighs heavily against the proposal. The parking provision for the extended hotel is also below the standards recommended in the CELPS.

However, the size of the designated open space is approximately 3,146sqm and the footprint of the development is 199sqm which represents 6% of the total area. Therefore the net loss is relatively limited. Added to this is the fact that the value of the open space is more as a visual asset than as a recreational asset due to the lack of public access. The open space allocation extends from the application site in a linear form around the south and east boundaries of the adjacent car park where it appears to provide a boundary between the adjacent residential uses from the more commercial town centre uses. Given the limited encroachment into the open space, this delineation will still remain and the green backdrop to the area will be retained, and it is not considered that the visual integrity of the open space will be significantly harmed.

The area of retained woodland within the site will benefit from much needed management, and the loss of trees will be mitigated off-site with replacement planting on a 3:1 basis. ANSA have confirmed that the creation and enhancement of green corridors, to which this mitigation would contribute, will also figure in the forthcoming masterplan for the Carrs and the project will be in partnership with a number of stakeholders including the Friends of and Bollin Valley Rangers. There are quite far reaching benefits to improving these corridors which form strategic Green Infrastructure with Styal and the Dean valley. This carries moderate weight.

Other factors are that the Proposals Map for the Neighbourhood Plan does not identify the application site as an area of Open Space e.g. Amenity Greenspace, Natural or Semi-Natural Greenspace, Parks & Gardens etc. and appendix 3 of the Neighbourhood Plan does not include the application site within the 'Biodiversity Mapping' and it is not listed as a 'Local Wildlife Site'. Policy CR3 of the WNP identifies 23 Local Green Space designations for sites of 'special character, significance and community value'. The application site does not form one of these 23 Local Green Space designations

The applicant has also put forward a number of economic benefits arising from the proposed development including greater expenditure within Wilmslow town centre and increased employment opportunities. Coupled with the fact that Wilmslow town centre is not well served by hotel accommodation, these are benefits that are considered to carry substantial weight. It is also important to note that WNP Policy TC1 that states "Applications for new overnight accommodation (Hotels, Bed and Breakfasts) within the Town Core boundary, along key bus routes, or within close proximity to the railway station, will be strongly supported." Wilmslow Lodge falls within the Town Centre boundaries identified through the Neighbourhood Plan.

The proposal will also comply with CELPS policies EG4 by boosting tourism by way of the expansion of tourist accommodation; policy SE3 by the enhancement of biodiversity on the site; policy SE5 by way of the sustainable management of woodland and new planting at the application site and at The Carrs to deliver a good quality, and accessible network of green spaces for people to enjoy.

It is therefore considered that the conflict with the development plan in terms of the loss of this small area of open space allocated within the MBLP in 2004 is clearly outweighed by the social, economic and environmental benefits that are listed above.

CONCLUSION

The comments received in representation have been considered in the preceding text, however for the reasons stated above, the proposal is considered to be a sustainable form of development and a recommendation of approval is therefore made, subject to the following conditions.

In order to give proper effect to the Committee's intentions and without changing the substance of the decision, authority is delegated to the Head of Planning, in consultation with the Chairman (or in his absence the Vice Chairman) 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: Approve subject to following conditions

1. Commencement of development (3 years)
2. Development in accord with approved plans
3. Materials as application
4. Details of Pile Driving to be submitted
5. Dust management plan to be submitted
6. Breeding birds survey to be submitted
7. Parking spaces to be provided and retained
8. Implementation of off-site replacement tree planting
9. Development to be carried out in accordance with Biodiversity Management Plan

