

Application No: 12/3263N

Location: Peckforton Castle Hotel, STONE HOUSE LANE, PECKFORTON, TARPORLEY, CHESHIRE, CW6 9TN

Proposal: Listed Building Consent for Woodland Experience - Erection of Freestanding Glazed and Wooden Balustrade in Front of Existing Low Stonework Wall at Table Rock Viewing Platform in Connection with Planning Application 12/2556N

Applicant: Mr Tony Naylor, Majorstage Ltd

Expiry Date: 17-Oct-2012

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION: Approve subject to conditions

MAIN ISSUES:

- List description;
- Site history;
- The current proposal;
- Design

REFERRAL

The application has been referred to Committee at the discretion of the Development Management & Building Control Manager due to the close proximity of the site to a Grade I Listed Building and its potential impact of its setting and nature conservation within the locality.

SITE DESCRIPTION AND DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

The castle (Grade I Listed Building) is a folly and not a real castle and is currently used as a hotel. The applicants property is located wholly within the open countryside and within the Area of Special County Value (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. Located in close proximity to the site are a number of derelict buildings in various states of deterioration. These building are accessed via an undulating track and is screened by a number of large mature trees and other vegetation. This is a Listed Building application for a proposed woodland experience incorporating a multi purpose yurt, ancillary accommodation and temporary camping yurts in the woodland to the west of Peckforton Castle.

PREVIOUS RELEVANT DECISIONS

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 – 18th March 1982

7/11668 – Change of Use to Hotel – Approved – 7th February 1985

7/11669 – Alterations to Existing Access – Approved – 7th February 1985

7/12143 – Change of Use of Land to Jousting Area in Conjunction with Conversion of Castle to Hotel – Approved – 27th June 1985

7/12474 – Listed Building Consent to Convert Castle to Hotel – Approved – 6th January 1986

7/12475 – Conversion of Castle to Hotel – Approved – 17th October 1985

7/18921 – Listed Building Consent for New Door Openings and Internal Alterations – Withdrawn – 28th June 1991

P91/0019 – Listed Building Consent for Door Openings and Internal Alterations – Approved – 24th December 1991

P99/0844 – Change of Use and Alterations to form Hotel – Approved – 6th January 2000

P99/0845 – Listed Building Consent for Alterations to Form Hotel – Approved – 6th January 2000

P01/0159 – Phase Two Hotel Development (LBC) – Withdrawn – 25th October 2001

P03/1075 – Flagpole Antenna – Withdrawn – 15th October 2003

P03/1092 – Listed Building Consent Flagpole Antenna – 15th October 2003

P03/1309 – Telecommunications Equipment – Approved – 10th February 2004

P03/1357 – Listed Building Consent for Telecommunication Equipment – Approved – 24th 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 – 12th May 2009

09/1339N - Phase Two Restoration of Peckforton Castle to Provide 11 Bedrooms and Additional Public Hotel Space – Approved – 18th November 2009

09/1332N - Listed Building Consent for Phase 2 Restoration of Peckforton Castle to Provide 11 Bedrooms and Additional Public Hotel Space – Approved – 18th November 2009

11/3675N - Refurbishment of the Fire Damage to the East Wing, Together with a New External Opening at Undercroft Level, a New Opening at Roof Level and Solar Panels on Roof – Approved – 13th December 2011

11/3676N - Listed Building Consent for Refurbishment of the Fire Damage to the East Wing, Together with a New External Opening at Undercroft Level, a New Opening at Roof Level and Solar Panels on Roof – 7th December 2011

12/0252N - Two storey extension to the east wing of Peckforton Castle to provide improved access and laundry facilities, conversion of non-habitable space beneath drawing room in east wing into staff facilities and stores – Approved – 16th March 2012

12/0254N - Listed Building Consent for Two storey extension to the east wing of Peckforton Castle to provide improved access and laundry facilities, conversion of non-habitable space beneath drawing room in east wing into staff facilities and stores – 12th March 2012

12/2018N - Listed Building Consent for Proposed Erection of Waste Compactor and Recycling Shelter in Grounds of Grade I Listed Castle – Approved – 18th July 2012

12/2017N - Proposed Erection of Waste Compactor and Recycling Shelter in Grounds of Grade I Listed Castle – Approved – 20th July 2012

12/3262N - Listed Building Consent for Renovation, Alteration and Extension to Former Engine Sheds in Connection with the Planning Application 12/2550N Proposed (Woodland Experience - Conversion and Expansion of Former Engine Sheds to Create and Activity Centre, Animal Farm, Warden Accommodation, Ancillary Buildings, Means of Access and Car Parking – Approved – 20th March 2014

12/2550N - Proposed Woodland Experience - Conversion and Expansion of Former Engine Shed to Create Activity Centre, Animal Farm, Warden Accommodation, Ancillary Buildings, Means of Access and Car Parking – Approved – 18th March 2014

13/0265N - Development of the Coach-House and adjoining yard and buildings into a spa facility, and convert the Grainstore Tower and Stable block into additional habitable accommodation – Approved – 8th August 2013

13/0263N - Listed Building Consent for development of the Coach -house and adjoining yard and buildings into a spa facility, and convert the Grainstore tower and Stable block into additional habitable accommodation – Approved – 8th August 2013

14/0749N - The proposed minor works is to install a 0.3m Airwave transmission dish on the inside of the existing parapet wall as detailed on the drawings GA -03-A and DD-15-A – Approved – 17th April 2014

14/0754N - Listed Building Consent for proposed minor works is to install a 0.3m Airwave transmission dish on the inside of the existing parapet wall as detailed on the drawings GA -03-A and DD-15-A – Approved – 17th April 2014

PLANNING POLICIES

National Policy

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

National Planning Policy Framework

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.2 (Design Standards)

BE.9 (Listed Buildings: Alterations and Extensions)

Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy - Submission Version

SE1 - Design

SE2 – Efficient Use of Land

SE3 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity

SE4 – The Landscape

SE6 – Green Infrastructure

SE7 – The Historic Environment
SE8 – Renewable and Low Carbon Energy
SE9 – Energy Efficient Development
PG5 –

The above Policies are consistent with the Crewe and Nantwich Local Plan

OBSERVATIONS OF CONSULTEES

English Heritage: No objection

VIEWS OF THE PARISH / TOWN COUNCIL:

The Parish Council objects to the proposed development on the following grounds:

The site of the “temporary tents” seems to be a further attempt to establish additional bedrooms and function rooms away from the castle, and again this looks like an attempt to apply for a residential use that is inappropriate to the location, which will be the subject of attempts in the future to “improve” upon an existing permission.

The amount of additional traffic and the parking and road requirements that both schemes will generate within the woodland would seem to be totally at odds with all stated policies on the environment and the ASCV.

The view of Peckforton Parish Meeting is that these proposals should be rejected

OTHER REPRESENTATIONS:

No objections received

APPLICANT’S SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

Design and Access Statement

A Design and Access statement has been submitted to accompany the application. This is available on the application file and provides an understanding of the proposal and why it is required.

Heritage Statement

OFFICER APPRAISAL

List Description

Peckforton castle is a Grade I listed building and the list description for the building states:

‘Castle. 1844-50, by Anthony Salvin for Sir John Tollemache MP. Rock-faced red sandstone with lead, asphalt and tile roofs. Mainly 3 storeys with one tower 5 storeys high, all arranged

around a ward, with the principal accommodation on the north side. The castle has a triple-chamfered giant arch, above the gateway arch, a pair of oak Gothic headed studded doors, shouldered lintels to doors and windows, gate towers and battlements. The buildings at the west side of the inner ward are the stables, coach house, rectangular bell tower together with kitchens and service area. East of the entrance is the chapel (qv) and north is the Great Hall range of 18 bays with the entrance porch, set forward, approached up steps and with Gothic headed arch. The Hall has cross windows with trefoil heads and small trefoil lights in the gothic heads and a polygonal oriel window whereas the service and bedroom wing (west) and long gallery wing (east) mainly have two-light windows with shouldered lintels. The large circular main tower is behind the hall entrance and the octagonal Library tower is at the east end of the gallery wing. The outer walls of the castle have full height slender turrets or bartizans at changes in direction and there are corbel tables supporting part of the battlements, arrow slots, and even a gatehouse garderobe. The roof s mainly flat, of asphalt, concealed by the crenellated parapet. The single storey coach house makes early use of the timber lattice roof trusses.

Interior: The porch leads to a screens passage with oak screen, in early gothic style, and matching gallery rail above. The Great Hall has Minton Tile floor, large stone chimney piece and stone quadripartite ribbed vault supported by corbels with shields. The Long Gallery, (east) has oak panelling 1.8m high, a chimney piece in a wide arched recess, and a ceiling panelled by three longitudinal and six cross beams. The Long Gallery gives access to an irregular shaped Billiard Room with beamed ceiling (north) and the octagonal (tower). Library with oak linenfold bookcases (east). The Drawing Room (North) has an oak boarded floor, a wide stone fireplace. Gothic-headed door with ornamental strap hinges, plastered walls and beamed ceiling. The main staircase is behind the hall. It has a light well pierced by shouldered-linteled openings vertically and horizontally in pairs. The circular tower, at the north west corner, contains the octagonal Dining Room with Minton tile floor, two fireplaces, and vault of eight radial ribs running to a central boss. The room contains an Oak sideboard with carved 'Green Men'. Below the dining room the wine cellar is a circular tunnel vault from a short round pier. The Kitchens and Service rooms are south and west of this tower, extensive, unaltered and disused. The first floor nursery area has plastered walls with cornices, square headed cross braced oak doors with ornamental strap hinges and some plastered barrel-vaulted ceilings. The first floor gallery is above the long gallery and very similar in arrangement. The Racket room at fifth floor level in the round tower, approached up a stone spiral staircase, has a boarded ceiling and originally had its walls lined with boards. The roof of this tower room is covered with block lead. The upper ceilings of the Bell Tower and Gatehouse are barrel-vaulted.

The castle can be regarded as a great Romantic house or as the last serious fortified home built in England, created as a refuge from the social disturbances of its time. Designed on a great scale with consummate skill, it was executed to the highest standards and is one of the great buildings of its age'.

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 20th century but approximately fourteen 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 seven years ago and they have made a success of the business. On the 19th June 2011 a guest at the hotel started a fire, which did not result in loss of life and outwardly the east wing remained intact. However, the ferocity of the fire caused extensive damage to the structure and internal fabric of the building and further damage was caused by smoke and water, which was used to extinguish the fire. Planning permission and Listed Building consent was subsequently granted for the refurbishment of the wing and some other minor alterations.

Currently the guest facilities at Peckforton Castle include the function rooms (the Great Hall and the Drawing Room), the 1851 Restaurant, the 2010 Brasserie, the Tranquillity Spa and 47 guest bedrooms. Back-of house facilities occupy the remainder of the East and West Wings, as well as the former Kitchen and Bakery buildings. The Coach house is used in the summer as a bar area, but is under utilised in winter months. Only the ground floor of the Grainstore is occupied (by the Land Rover Experience) and the remainder of the building is semi-derelict. The Stable block houses those birds of prey not housed in the bays located within the castle Ward. The upper floors of the Gatehouse provide storage and staff accommodation.

The Current Proposal

Despite demand for more, Majorstage Ltd currently cap the number of weddings that take place at the castle at around 180 per annum and it is company policy to never have two weddings on one day in the castle. Aside from weddings, the castle also hosts numerous conferences, event launches and business events throughout the year. According to the applicants Design and Access Statement market research has shown that while Peckforton Castle itself is a fantastic venue, there is an opportunity to develop a second event space in the surrounding woodlands, which could be put to various uses, such as an alternative wedding venue, or for conferences, field-trip teaching or seminars.

The applicant contends that the Table Rock viewing platform in the woodland to the west of the castle represents an ideal location for the proposed second event space, as it offers far-reaching views over Cheshire and beyond, while also feeling suitably removed from civilisation. In keeping with the alternative feel of the venue, it is proposed that yurts are used to provide shelter for the events (weddings, conferences etc) as well as overnight accommodation for guests using these facilities.

Design

The principle issues surrounding the determination of this application are whether the development would adversely impact upon the residential amenity of neighbouring properties and would respect the pattern, character and form of the surroundings, in accordance with policies BE.2 (Design Standards) and BE.9 (Listed Buildings: Alterations and Extensions) of the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan 2011.

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.

Development Control guidance advocated within the National Planning Policy Framework 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 specifically states 'Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions'. (Para 64). It is the opinion of the case officer that this proposal does not detract from the character of the host property and will not have a detrimental impact on the appearance of the area and is accordance with advice stated within NPPF. This view is supported by English Heritage and the Councils Conservation Officer

Policy BE.9 (Listed Building: Alterations and Extensions) states that development proposals for the alteration or extension of a listed building, or any feature of special or architectural or historic interest which contributes to the reasons for its listing, will not be permitted unless:

- The proposal respects the scale, materials, colour, detailing and other significant features of the building concerned; and
- The proposal does not detract from the character or setting of the building concerned, especially with regard to its surrounding gardens, landscape, street scene or relationship with adjoining buildings and significant views.

The NPPF intimates 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 and extensions do preserve the historic fabric of the buildings and do not detract from the setting of the castle and as such the proposal is in accordance with advice stated in NPPF and policy BE.9 (Listed Buildings: Alterations and Extensions)

In addition, the NPPF states that 'When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification'. (Paragraph 132).

The proposed development will involve the erection a multi purpose yurt, two portable containers to be used as a kitchen and store, portable toilet container, a tensile membrane canopy to provide sun and rain shelter outside the main yurt, a safety balustrade to be installed around the perimeter of Table Rock and 8no. temporary camping yurts remote to provide overnight accommodation for guests.

The multi-purpose yurt has been sited in an existing clearing close to the Table Rock viewing platform, but set back from the platform to ensure it would not be visible in long views of the platform from the Cheshire Plain. The proposed multi-purpose yurt is a permanent circular tent like structure with a diameter of 12.2m, height to eaves of just over 2m and a height to apex of around 3.6m. It is built off a ground supported concrete slab, with a superstructure consisting of two concentric rings of circular timber posts and radial rafters.

To support any event requiring catering in the multi-purpose yurt, it is proposed that a portable container is sited close to the multi-purpose yurt, together with a second similarly sized container to be used for storage. The proposed containers would measure approximately 5m long by 3m wide and 2.4m high. The containers will be located on small concrete pad foundations located to avoid tree rootballs. The containers are used for storing kitchen equipment and other ancillary equipment.

It is envisaged that some visitors to the event space will not be aware of the sanitary facilities in the Activity Centre. It is thus proposed that a portable toilet container shall be positioned outside the multi-purpose yurt for use by these guests. This container would have similar foundations to the kitchen container.

The tensile fabric canopy is proposed to be an open sided shelter from sun and rain for patrons gathering before and after events in the main yurt. It would shelter a roughly circular area with a diameter of 7.6m (approximately 50msq) and the highest point would be approximately 4.2m.

The proposed temporary camping yurts are proposed to provide guests attending evening events at the Table Rock venue with the opportunity to stay over night in the woodland. In contrast to the larger permanent yurt built off a concrete base, the smaller camping yurts are temporary circular tent like structures with a diameter of 4.3m, height to eaves of just under 2m and a height to apex of around 2.6m. Their construction would be similar to the larger yurts, except they are built off a timber platform supported on 9 short timber posts driven into the ground. The yurts would stand for 8 months of the year from spring to autumn and would be disassembled and stored for the winter. The yurts would have a small wood burning stove for heating. Electricity would be provided to each yurt, but guests would rely on the bathroom facilities in the Activity Centre.

It is considered given the materials used and the simple form and nature of the structures will not detract from the setting of the castle or have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the locality. Overall, it is considered that the proposal complies with policies BE.2 (design Standards) and BE.9 (Listed Buildings: Alterations and Extensions)

CONCLUSIONS AND REASON(S) FOR THE DECISION

The proposed development would sympathetically respect the traditional character of this Grade I listed building and is of an acceptable design and would not have an adverse impact upon the character or appearance of the Grade I Listed Building and is therefore in compliance with provisions of Policies 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 in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Approve subject to conditions:

- 1. Standard**
- 2. Plans**
- 3. Materials to be submitted and agreed in writing**

- 4. Surfacing Materials**
- 5. Drainage details to be submitted and agreed in writing**
- 6. Landscaping details to be submitted and agreed in writing**
- 7. Landscaping Implemented**
- 8. Details of External Lighting to be submitted and agreed in writing**
- 9. Details of Levels to be submitted agreed in writing**
- 10. Details of Service Routes**
- 11. Full details of the construction methods of the all footpaths and access road to be submitted and agreed in writing**
- 12. Details of stain to timber poles to be submitted and agreed in writing**
- 13. Details of the containers used for the kitchen to be submitted and agreed in writing**
- 14. Full constructional details of the balustrade to Table Rock to be submitted and agreed in Writing**

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