

Application No: 14/3170M

Location: Mere Court Hotel And Conference Centre, Warrington Road, Mere, WA16 0RW

Proposal: Listed Building Consent for proposed 2 Storey bedroom extension to existing grade II listed hotel premises. Internal remodelling of existing coach-house for function use associated with the hotel (within curtilage of listed building)

Applicant: Edgeman Limited

Expiry Date: 26-Sep-2014

Date Report Prepared: 20 August 2014

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

REFUSE

MAIN ISSUES

- Impact on Listed Building

REASON FOR REPORT

The application is for the construction of an extension with a floorspace of over 1000 sq.m and under the Council's Constitution, it is required to be determined by the Northern Planning Committee.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT

The application site measures 26,004.85 sq. m and comprises Mere Court Hotel And Conference Centre— a large Manor House originally called Meadowlands, built in 1907 in an Arts and Crafts style with a detached coach house located to the entrance set within extensive grounds associated with this country house.

The site is accessed from Warrington Road in Mere and is surrounded by fields to the sides and rear. The hotel is a Grade II listed building and located within the designated Green Belt.

All trees on the site are covered by a Tree Preservation Order.

DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

This application seeks listed building consent to construct a two storey extension containing 12 additional bedrooms with a link to the side of the hotel and alterations to the Coach House towards the front of the site.

Planning History

59738p Conversion of garage to form lounge and coffee area Approved 04-Oct-1989

64297p Refurbish lecture rooms and add a mezzanine floor within existing building replace roof and rooflights with new tiled roof Approved 12-Sep-1990

76040p Installation of gas dispensing equipment Approved 6-Jan-1991

96/1692p Alterations, extensions & change of use from training college to private hotel Refused 13-Jan-1997 Appeal Withdrawn

97/0138p Alterations, extensions & change of use from training college to hotel Refused 07-Apr-1997 Appeal Dismissed

97/0140p Conversion of training college to hotel Approved 07-Apr-1997

97/0614p Conversion of residential training college to hotel with single-storey extension for 16 bedrooms Refused 18-Jul-1997

97/0616p Conversion of residential training college to hotel with single-storey extension for function room, gymnasium and swimming pool Refused 18-Jul-1997 Appeal Dismissed

97/0618p Conversion of lodge to bedroom accommodation for hotel Approved 18-Jul-1997

97/1048p Conversion of training college to hotel, and erection of single-storey 16-bedroom building Approved 01-Sep-1997

98/1770p Proposed two-storey bedroom block and change of use of coach house into residential conference centre; all in connection with hotel use on the site Approved 03-Dec-1998

98/2083p Removal of external fire escape and demolition of boiler room, internal alterations, single storey extensions and corridor link Approved 01-Mar-1999

99/0004p Removal of existing fire escape and demolition of boiler room; internal alterations, single-storey extensions and corridor link Approved 09-Feb-1999

99/0375p Glazed atrium above courtyard and new glazed entrance scheme (listed building) Approved 12-Apr-1999

99/0390p Two-storey bedroom block (amended scheme with 24 bedrooms) Refused 12-Apr-1999 Appeal Withdrawn

99/0768p Two-storey bedroom block (19 bedrooms) Approved 10-Jun-1999

99/0769p Two-storey bedroom block (24 bedrooms) (listed building consent) Refused 10-Jun-1999

99/1265p 22-bedroom wing extension Approved 04-Aug-1999

99/1963p Retention of 3 dormers to the wrenshot lane elevation Approved 01-Nov-1999

99/2301p Kitchen extension & covered walkway (listed building application) Approved 5-Jan-2000

99/2305p Single-storey side extension to coach-house conference centre building Approved 5-Jan-2000

00/0814p Single-storey extension to lake elevation to provide dining room facilities (listed building consent) Refused 24-Jul-2000 Appeal Dismissed

02/0906p Single storey conservatory link extension to provide dining facilities. alterations and extensions to existing kitchen and storage area (listed building consent). Approved 8-Feb-2002

05/0995p Single storey extension to provide storage area for kitchen and staff accommodation (listed building consent). Approved 13-Nov-2005. Appeal Dismissed

06/2070p Single storey side extension (listed building consent). Approved 18-Oct-2006

07/0264p Single storey side extension- amendment to approval 06/2069p (part retrospective) (listed building consent) Approved 11-Apr-2007

POLICIES

Macclesfield Borough Local Plan – Saved Policies

BE1 – Design Guidance

BE2 – Preservation of Historic Fabric

BE15 - Listed Buildings

BE17 - Preservation of Listed Buildings

BE18 - Design Criteria for Listed Buildings

Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy – Submission Version

Paragraph 216 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that, unless other material considerations indicate otherwise, decision-takers may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to:

- The stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced the preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);
- The extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given); and

- The degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the NPPF (the closer the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given).

In view of the level of consultation already afforded to the plan-making process, together with the degree of consistency with national planning guidance, it is appropriate to attach enhanced weight to the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy - Submission Version in the decision-making process.

At its meeting on the 28th February 2014, the Council resolved to approve the *Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy – Submission Version* for publication and submission to the Secretary of State. It was also resolved that this document be given weight as a material consideration for Development Management purposes with immediate effect.

The relevant policies are as follows:

SE7 – The Historic Environment

Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework
National Planning Practice Guidance

CONSULTATIONS (External to Planning)

None received

VIEWS OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

No objections to these developments as long as the proposed buildings are similar and sympathetic to the existing buildings.

OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

None received

APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The following documents have been submitted on behalf of the applicant:

Design & Access Statement

This statement provides a site analysis, constraints and opportunities, concepts and principles and design proposals.

Heritage Statement

This statement provides a site analysis, constraints and opportunities, concepts and principles and design proposals.

OFFICER APPRAISAL

Heritage Assets

The site comprises a Grade II listed building which is a designated heritage asset.

The building was originally a house and then a training college and was converted to a hotel in the 90s. The building has been extended considerably in the past. The original two storey building dates back to 1903 and is constructed of red brick and rendered brick with a tile roof.

The design includes projecting wings and projecting bay windows a 3 storey wing was added as a later addition but is included within the list description and is likely to have been added prior to 1948.

Whilst the grounds to the property are not included within the list description, they make a positive contribution to the character of the listed building.

Para 131 of the NPPF emphasises the importance of preservation of the Heritage asset.

The harm associated with the proposals is twofold:

1. Harm to the historic fabric
2. Harm to the significance of the asset itself

The harm to the setting of the asset is considered by the planning application.

Harm to Historic Fabric

The proposed extension would be attached to the more modern wing of the property and the proposed link reduces the amount of historic fabric altered as a result of the proposals. On that basis, the impact upon historic fabric would be reversible and therefore would not have an adverse impact upon the character of the property.

The Coach House was constructed at a similar time and therefore its fabric also has significance albeit to a lesser degree. The Conservation Officer has indicated that there is insufficient information to determine whether or not the alterations would be harmful to the character of the building, which is curtilage listed. In addition to this the Conservation Officer has expressed concerns regarding the amount of alteration proposed to the North West elevation given the prominence of this elevation, however there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate whether it would or would not be harmful either way.

Harm to Significance of the Asset

The building has been extended, however these previous extensions are unobtrusive as they are single storey and lie behind existing shrubbery which obscures them from view leaving the original listed building as the focal point. The previous extensions are also concentrated in one location whereas these extensions would involve expanding the form and footprint of the building in a new direction creeping this new development into public vantage points in a

resultant form which is not considered subservient to the main listed building. It would also be both prominent and dominant in a way which would adversely affect the significance of the heritage asset.

The extension actively detracts from the character of the building, and also fails to relate to it in any way- the scale is out of keeping, the form does not follow either the listed building or its extensions and its materials and fenestration does not respect the special qualities of the listed building. Whilst a modern approach to new development on this site may be acceptable, in this instance, it has been executed in such a way that it actively detracts from it.

This extension would harm the character of the listed building and this harm would need to be significantly outweighed by public benefits.

The changes to the Coach House would not alter its footprint, which means it would remain subordinate. The changes would also not alter the character of this building, leaving its relationship with the listed building unchanged. However for the reasons noted above, the Conservation Officer is concerned that it may harm the significance of the Coach House as a curtilage listed building.

Public Benefits

Any harm identified, would need to be outweighed by public benefits.

The use of the building as a hotel is one of a number of possible optimum uses. However it should be noted that this use is desirable as it also contributes towards the visitor economy. The proposals however are not necessary to secure the viability of the business although this by no means diminishes the very positive benefits that improvement of the facilities at this site would bring. However, this needs to be balanced against the harm to the listed building and its setting. Any extension in this location would harm the listed building and its setting however it may be that a more modest scheme or a detached outbuilding would result in less harm and still bring the required improvements to the hotel to ensure it remains a thriving business.

CONCLUSIONS AND REASON(S) FOR THE DECISION

The proposals would result in harm to the special qualities of the listed building and the public benefits associated with the proposals would not outweigh this harm. Whilst moderate weight can be attached to the benefits to the existing business, visitor economy and job creation, the moderate weight attached to these considerations would be insufficient to clearly outweigh the harm to the heritage asset.

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 Listed Building Consent

RECOMMENDATION: Refuse for the following reasons

1. Harm to listed building

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