

East Area Planning Committee

4th December 2012

Application Number: 11/03107/FUL

Decision Due by: 25th April 2012

Proposal: Refurbishment of hotel by: (i) conversion of conference room to additional 11 bedrooms; (ii) extension to dining room by infilling courtyard and fitting new glazed roof; (iii) re-laying and extending service road and parking area; (iv) excavation and construction of gabion cage, retaining structure and walkways; and (v) fitting of patio doors and external screens. (Amended plans)

Site Address: Hawkwell House Hotel, Church Way, Oxford (**site plan: appendix 1**)

Ward: Rose Hill and Iffley Ward

Agent: Paul Bowley

Applicant: Hawkwell House Hotel

Recommendation:

The East Area Planning Committee is recommended to support the development in principle but defer the application in order to vary the legal agreement in the terms outlined below, and delegate to officers the issuing of the notice of permission, subject to conditions on its completion:

- 1 That the proposed development would make an efficient use of previously developed land in order to reorganise the layout of the hotel in order to meet its needs. The works would help maintain the existing stock of tourist accommodation in an appropriate location and would not create any issues in terms of access, parking, highway safety, traffic generation or noise and disturbance for local residents. The proposed works would create an appropriate visual relationship with the existing building and the special character and appearance of the Iffley Village Conservation Area. The proposed works have also been designed in a manner that would not have an adverse impact upon the protected trees within the hotel grounds. As a result the proposal would accord with the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework and the relevant policies of the Oxford Core Strategy 2026 and the Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016.

- 2 In considering the application, officers have had specific regard to the comments of third parties and statutory bodies in relation to the application. However officers consider that these comments have not raised any material considerations that would warrant refusal of the applications, and any harm identified could be successfully mitigated by appropriately worded conditions.
- 3 The Council considers that the proposal accords with the policies of the development plan as summarised below. It has taken into consideration all other material matters, including matters raised in response to consultation and publicity. Any material harm that the development would otherwise give rise to can be offset by the conditions imposed.

Conditions:

- 1 Development begun within time limit
- 2 Develop in accordance with approved plans
- 3 Samples in Conservation Area
- 4 Landscape plan required
- 5 Landscape carry out by completion
- 6 Landscape hard surface design - tree roots
- 7 Landscape underground services - tree roots
- 8 Tree Protection Plan (TPP) 1
- 9 Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) 1
- 10 Details of parking and service road
- 11 Details of Cycle Parking
- 12 Construction Traffic Management Plan
- 13 Restriction on the number of guest bedrooms

Legal Agreement

- Deed of variation to remove the restriction on the number of guest bedrooms at the hotel

Main Local Plan Policies:

Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016

- CP1** - Development Proposals
- CP6** - Efficient Use of Land & Density
- CP8** - Design Development to Relate to its Context
- CP9** - Creating Successful New Places
- CP10** - Siting Development to Meet Functional Needs
- TR3** - Car Parking Standards
- TR4** - Pedestrian & Cycle Facilities
- TA4** - Tourist Accommodation
- HE7** - Conservation Areas

Core Strategy

- CS2_** - Previously developed and greenfield land
- CS18_** - Urban design, town character, historic environment
- CS32_** - Sustainable tourism

Other Material Considerations:

National Planning Policy Framework

This application is within the Iffley Village Conservation Area.

Relevant Site History:

The site has an extensive planning history. The decisions of most relevance to the application are as follows:

62/12583/A H - Outline application for extension to hotel to form additional bedrooms, public rooms and bathrooms: Approved

82/00867/NFH - Erection of a detached two-storey building for an additional 16 bedrooms and associated car park, breakfast room extension to existing hotel, erection of new wall and gates adjoining existing car park: Approved

88/00953/NFH - Erection of ground and first floor extensions to provide dining-room, bar and additional bedrooms (Amended Plans): Approved

97/01001/NFH - Retention of visitors car park for a temporary period of 1 year while existing car park is used for storage / site huts associated with construction of approved hotel extension: Approved

03/00686/VAR - Use of Hawkwell Annex as guest accommodation and increase in guest rooms from 50 to 66 (Deletion of conditions 12 and 14 of planning permission NFH/876/90) (Including tree work and alterations to landscaping): Approved

Representations Received:

No third party comments have been received.

Statutory and Internal Consultees:Oxfordshire County Council Highways Authority:

The level of off-street parking provision is acceptable to cater for the increased accommodation at this Hotel.

Oxford Civic Society:

- Letter dated 10/01/2011

The proposal would result in a near 80% increase in residential accommodation, and proposed expansion of the dining room evidently anticipates increased numbers of visiting diners. Only 4 additional car parking spaces are proposed and there is no evidence of consideration of the effects of increased traffic generated by expansion of the hotel. The location is unlikely to mean that visitors use public transport. Church Way is a narrow cul-de-sac, of extended length, serving many properties.

The application should be refused at least pending demonstration that the already difficult conditions of parking and traffic in Church Way and the environs will not be adversely affected.

- Letter dated 26/03/2012

We commented on this application in an earlier letter in January. No changes had

been made and we still feel that the proposals are far too ambitious to be accommodated in this restricted site in a pleasant small village, without causing wholly unacceptable disruption, particularly in enormously increasing road traffic. The hotel is charming as it is and should not be enlarged.

Friends of Iffley

- The hotel is in a dominant position at the entrance to our village and is an important feature of our Conservation Area (see the Iffley Village Conservation Area Appraisal 2009).
- We recognise the need for good hotel accommodation within easy reach of Oxford city centre and we welcome some of the facilities that such an establishment can bring to our village. With the long history of application for expansion of this property, we are also very conscious of our role in balancing the commercial needs with our duty to preserve the character of our Conservation Area.
- We have no objection to the current application with regard to creating 11 new bedrooms by converting an unsatisfactory conference room and a laundry area to hotel bedrooms, since this will not increase the buildings footprint, nor will it damage the external appearance.
- We also have no objection to the plans to enhance the dining area by incorporating the courtyard and renewing the glazed roof. This promises to improve the dining experience and may result in greater use by non-residential customers, which we would wish to encourage.
- We are however concerned by the possible transport implications. The Transport Statement, dated 28th February, makes no reference to car parking needs resulting from non-residential use.
- Over the years there have been serious problems when overflow parking from the hotel into Church Way has threatened access for emergency vehicles to the village as well as inconveniencing local residents.
- We would not want to see the plans to improve this hotel jeopardised by unsatisfactory transport arrangements.
- A transport plan should address not only the number of parking spaces, but also the impact on the local area of the much increased traffic flow in narrow Church Way.
- To avoid over-use of the access road, and to prevent anti-social parking around the village, we would like to see a Transport Plan adopted which would use mini-buses to shuttle visitors from the nearby Park&Ride or Rail station of high demand.

Officers Assessment:

Site Location and Description:

1. The site lies on the southern side of Church Way within Iffley Village (**site plan: appendix 1**). The site is within the Iffley Village Conservation Area.
2. The site comprises a Victorian building which is currently in use as the 66 bedroom Hawkwell House hotel set within large grounds. There are a number of outbuildings within the site, and a parking area which is accessed from Church Way.

Proposal

3. The proposal is seeking planning permission for a number of refurbishment works to the hotel which would consist of the following:
 - The internal alterations to the main hotel to form 11 additional bedrooms, through the conversion of a conference room and unused storage / laundry areas
 - The excavation and construction of a gabion retaining wall and walkways around the building.
 - The fitting of patio doors and external screens to the external elevations
 - The extension to the dining room through the provision of a glazed roof to the courtyard
 - The re-laying and extension of the service road and parking area.
4. The scheme has been amended since it was originally submitted. The amendments effectively reduced the extent of excavation around the building in order to take into account the potential impact upon protected trees within close proximity.
5. Officers consider that the principle determining issues with regards to the proposal are as follows:
 - Principle of Development
 - Tourist Accommodation
 - Form and Appearance
 - Tree Matters
 - Highway Matters

Principle of Development

6. The National Planning Policy Framework encourages the effective use of previously developed land, provided it is not of high environmental value. This is supported by Policy CS2 of the Oxford Core Strategy 2026.
7. The proposed refurbishment would seek to make the best use of previously developed land, and therefore the general principle of development would accord with the aims of the above-mentioned policies.

Tourist Accommodation

8. The Oxford Local Plan seeks to retain the existing stock of guest-houses through Policy TA4 and supports the provision of additional accommodation in a range of locations on identified locations within the city.
9. The Hawkwell House is not located on one of the designated roads, but is a long established hotel situated within Iffley Village. The proposed refurbishment to provide 11 additional guest bedrooms would be achieved through internal alterations to the existing hotel, rather than any extension to the existing building which increases the overall floorspace. These alterations would replace an existing conference room which is capable of providing functions for 100 persons and also part of the hotel laundry which is no longer in use as this is externally

serviced. The extension to the dining room would be achieved through the provision of a roof over the small courtyard, would not significantly increase the size of the dining room but would provide a more flexible space.

10. Having regard to the scale of the works, officers consider that the proposal would effectively reorganise the internal layout of the hotel in order to better serve the needs of the hotel. The increase in number of guest bedrooms would be more than offset by the loss of the function space, and all other alterations, such as the dining room extension would not result in a significant increase in floor space for the hotel. As such officers consider that the proposed improvements to the existing facilities would accord with the aims of Local Plan Policy TA4 provided that the improvements do not create any issues in terms of access, parking, highway safety, traffic generation or noise and disturbance for local residents.

Form and Appearance

11. The site lies within the Iffley Village Conservation Area. The National Planning Policy Framework requires proposals to be based upon an informed analysis of the significance of any heritage asset affected and expects applicants to understand the impact of any proposal upon the asset with the objective being to preserve that significance. These aims are embodied in Local Plan Policy HE7 which requires development proposals to preserve or enhance the special character and appearance of the conservation area or its setting.
12. Policy CS18 of the Oxford Core Strategy 2026 requires proposals to demonstrate high-quality urban design that responds appropriately to the site and surroundings; creates a strong sense of place; contributes to an attractive public realm; and high quality architecture. The Local Plan requires new development to enhance the quality of the environment, with Policy CP1 central to this purpose. Policy CP8 requires development to relate to its context with the siting, massing and design creating an appropriate visual relationship with the form, grain and scale of the surrounding area.
13. The application is accompanied by a heritage statement. The proposal includes minimal alterations to the external elevations of the main hotel building. In order to provide the additional guest bedrooms a small area of excavation will be required on the eastern elevation of the building to provide windows to the rooms. The northern elevation will have an existing flat roof and screen removed and a new wall provided with windows to the rooms. The dining extension will be created by the provision of a glazed roof over an open courtyard.
14. Officers consider that the proposed works would not have a significant impact upon the visual appearance of the existing hotel building. The excavated areas are in a discreet underused area of the hotel with no views from the public realm and therefore it is considered that these works would tidy up these underused areas and serve to maintain the visual appearance of the building and its contribution to the significance of the conservation area. In a similar fashion the provision of the roof over the existing courtyard outside the dining room is set within the built form of the hotel and cannot be viewed from the public realm so as to have little impact. The new service road will make use of an area between the hotel and lawn at the

rear and could be surfaced appropriately so as not to have an impact upon the setting of the building alongside the lawn and its grounds. As a result the proposal is considered to accord with the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework, Policy CS18 of the Core Strategy 2026, and Policies CP1, CP6, CP8, CP10, and HE7 of the Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016.

Tree Matters

15. The application has been accompanied by an Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Survey by Sylva Consultancy. The proposed development has been amended since it was originally submitted in order to respond to the constraints of the existing trees (Horse Chestnut and Lime Tree) placed upon the development.
16. Officers consider that if adequate care is taken during the construction phase of development these existing trees should not be harmed by the development. The 'Provisional' Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan that have been submitted in support of the planning application provide some comfort on this, but these details should be reviewed with the appointed building contractor and finalized before work starts on site. Additional details should be submitted about how the excavation works for the extension will be carried out. Details of the location of underground services and design of new and re-laid hard-surfaces would also need to be approved.
17. The development provides the opportunity to improve the boundary landscaping of the hotel grounds for the benefit of the appearance and character of this part of the Iffley Conservation Area. In particular new trees should be planted along the eastern boundary of the site.

Highways Matters

18. In terms of the existing parking provision at the hotel. There are currently a total of 56 marked parking spaces, with an overspill area available which could provide a total of 28 additional spaces. The proposed development would seek to increase the parking provision on site, with an additional 14 marked parking spaces provided giving a total of 70 marked spaces and the 28 potential overspill parking spaces.
19. The Local Plan sets the maximum parking standards of 1 space per 2 bedrooms and 1 space per resident staff. In accordance with these maximum parking standards there would be a requirement for 36.5 parking spaces for 77 guest bedrooms. The hotel does not have any staff in residence and therefore there is no requirement to provide any additional staff parking.
20. The Local Highways Authority considers that the level of off-street parking provision is appropriate for the size of the hotel. Officers would share this view, and recognise that the level of parking available on site is virtually double the required maximum standards. In terms of traffic generation, although the number of bedrooms is to be increased by 11 this is at the expense of a conference facility capable of providing functions for 100 persons. Therefore the additional rooms would be unlikely to result in a significant increase of traffic generation at the site.

It is not clear how the hotel proposes to provide suitable cycle parking for visitors and staff and therefore a condition should be attached which secures appropriate cycle parking.

21. Officers consider that the proposed development would not give rise to increased traffic generation, and would provide an appropriate level of off-street parking to cater for the proposed development and prevent any adverse impact upon the local highway. As a result the proposal would be accord with the aims of Policy CP1, TR3 and TR4 of the Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016.

Legal Agreement

22. The hotel is subject to a legal agreement as part of the original planning permission (NFH/876/90) which restricts the maximum number of guest bedrooms on site. This was varied in 2003 when permission was granted to increase the number of guest bedrooms from 50 to 66 under reference 03/00686/VAR.

23. The legal agreement will therefore need to be varied in order to remove the restriction on the number of guest bedrooms and a planning condition then attached which restricts the maximum number of guest bedrooms. The use of a planning condition would still allow suitable control of the guest bedrooms but would remove the need to vary the legal agreement each time the hotel wished to consider any extensions. The use of a condition would also be consistent with government advice that recommends the use of conditions rather than legal agreements where possible.

Conclusion:

24. The proposal is considered to be in accordance with the relevant policies of the Oxford Core Strategy 2026 and the Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016 and therefore the committee is recommended to grant planning permission for the proposed development.

Human Rights Act 1998

Officers have considered the Human Rights Act 1998 in reaching a recommendation to grant planning permission, subject to conditions. Officers have considered the potential interference with the rights of the owners/occupiers of surrounding properties under Article 8 and/or Article 1 of the First Protocol of the Act and consider that it is proportionate.

Officers have also considered the interference with the human rights of the applicant under Article 8 and/or Article 1 of the First Protocol caused by imposing conditions. Officers consider that the conditions are necessary to protect the rights and freedoms of others and to control the use of property in accordance with the general interest. The interference is therefore justifiable and proportionate.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

Officers have considered, with due regard, the likely effect of the proposal on the need to reduce crime and disorder as part of the determination of this application, in accordance with section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. In reaching a

recommendation to grant planning permission, subject to conditions, officers consider that the proposal will not undermine crime prevention or the promotion of community safety.

Contact Officer: Andrew Murdoch

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Date: 21st November 2012

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