

West Area Planning Committee

11th July 2012

Application Number: 12/01150/FUL

Decision Due by: 5th July 2012

Proposal: Removal of existing front canopy and erection of new entrance porch. New tile hanging to front elevation. Erection of rear conservatory and installation of new windows and doors. Erection of new railings and wall to front boundary. (Amended Plan)

Site Address: Linton Lodge Hotel 11-13 Linton Road [Appendix 1]

Ward: St Margarets Ward

Agent: Mr Peter Icke

Applicant: Mr Anil Khanna

Application called in by Councillors Campbell, Wilkinson, McCready and Jones on grounds that the site lies at a prominent corner location within the North Oxford Victorian Suburb Conservation Area and there are concerns regarding the appearance of the building facing Linton Road.

Recommendation:

APPLICATION BE APPROVED

For the following reasons:

- 1 The proposal forms an appropriate visual relationship with the existing building and the surrounding development, would appear sympathetic to the street scene and would preserve and enhance the special character and appearance of the North Oxford Victorian Suburb Conservation Area. The proposal complies with adopted policies contained in both the Oxford Local Plan 2001 - 2016 and the Core Strategy 2026.
- 2 Letters of objection have been received from two local residents, the Chairman of the Linton Road Neighbourhood Association and the Victorian Group of the Oxfordshire Architectural and Historical Association and the comments made have been carefully considered. However it is considered that the objections raised, either individually or cumulatively, do not constitute sustainable reasons for refusing the application and that the imposition of appropriate conditions on the planning permission would ensure a good quality form of development that would appear sympathetic to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

- 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.

subject to the following conditions, which have been imposed for the reasons stated:-

- 1 Development begun within time limit
- 2 Develop in accordance with approved plans
- 3 Samples in Conservation Area
- 4 Erection of wall and railings prior to first occupation of new bedrooms
- 5 Details of mechanical ventilation to new bedrooms

Principal Planning Policies:

Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016

- CP1** - Development Proposals
- CP6** - Efficient Use of Land & Density
- CP8** - Design Development to Relate to its Context
- CP10** - Siting Development to Meet Functional Needs
- TR3** - Car Parking Standards
- TR4** - Pedestrian & Cycle Facilities
- HS19** - Privacy & Amenity
- HE7** - Conservation Areas

Oxford Core Strategy 2026

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

Other Material Considerations:

National Planning Policy Framework March 2012

This application is in or affecting the North Oxford Victorian Suburb Conservation Area.

Relevant Site History:

In the 1970's a number of applications were approved that enlarged the hotel. In addition there have been a number of applications relating to signage and other minor forms of development. The most relevant applications are as follows:

84/00850/FFH: Extension on 3 floors to provide 24 extra bedrooms. Refused

08/01824/FUL: Single and two storey extensions to provide 31 en-suite bedrooms. Withdrawn

11/02916/FUL: Removal of existing front canopy and erection of new porch. New orangery to rear and new car park in rear garden. New doors and windows to side elevation and new tile hanging to front elevation. Withdrawn

Public Consultation

Statutory Consultees

Highway Authority: No objection in principle subject to the existing pedestrian 2 x 2 metre vision splays being maintained with no obstructions over 0.6 metres in height.

Third Party Comments

The Victorian Group of the Oxfordshire Architectural and Historical Society: The application is a great improvement on the previous one and the proposed new railings and tile hanging on the link section are welcome. However the design of the proposed porch is crude and clumsy and the Victorian glasshouse in the rear garden should be properly repaired.

Three letters of objection from local residents

The main points raised can be summarised as follows:

- Pleased that the previously proposed new car park in the rear garden has been removed from the scheme
- The railings are to be welcomed as are the improvements to the frontage
- The new porch has a poor appearance
- The conservatory does not detract from the garden and would make the hotel more pleasant to guests
- The increase in the number of bedrooms will increase traffic and is not acceptable
- The existing hotel accommodation should be improved to enable the hotel to move 'up market' rather than increase the number of bedrooms
- The addition of a conservatory with open access to the garden area will reduce privacy and amenity for neighbours
- Additional guests will put extra demand on the limited amount of on site parking
- The proposal will increase noise and disturbance to neighbours and the threat of burglary
- There is no need for the extra bedrooms as the hotel has an occupancy rate of 84%
- The increase in traffic would pose a danger to pedestrians and children
- The glass conservatory would cause much light pollution and decrease the area of open garden
- The expansion of the hotel does nothing to benefit local residents

Officers Assessment:

Site Description

1. The application site lies on the north side of Linton Road within the North Oxford Victorian Suburb Conservation Area. The hotel comprises 70 en suite bedrooms together with dining rooms, meeting rooms and conference suites with staff and administrative support accommodation. The main entrance to the hotel is from Linton Road with a car park to the

forecourt and there is a small, secondary car park accessed off Charlbury Road. The hotel is served by spacious, private gardens to the rear.

2. The hotel was originally established on part of the site in 1957 and was significantly extended in the 1970's. The hotel currently has a frontage to Linton Road that extends to some 50 metres and encompasses a number of buildings of different styles. There are a total of 30 car parking spaces with 15 in front of the hotel and a further 15 at the side/rear of the hotel accessed off Charlbury Road.

The Proposal

3. The application seeks planning permission for the erection of a rear conservatory and a new front entrance porch. It also seeks permission to tile hang part of the front elevation of the building and to erect low, boundary walls with railings along the Linton Road frontage.
4. Internally, it is proposed to make alterations to the existing ground floor dining and conference areas to create 19 additional en suite bedrooms which would increase the overall number of bedrooms from 70 to 89. This will require the insertion of four new fixed windows to the side elevation of the hotel, close to the boundary with number 15 Linton Road together with two new fire exit doors and two new windows in the back of the building facing the secondary car park.
5. The application has been the subject of pre-application discussions which has resulted in a revised front porch design and revised railing details. Officers consider the principle determining issues in this case to be:
 - Planning policy
 - Impact on the Conservation Area
 - Highways and parking
 - Impact on neighbours

Planning Policy

6. Conservation principles, policy and practice seek to preserve the value of heritage assets, in this case the North Oxford Victorian Suburb Conservation Area. With the issuing of the National Planning Policy Framework [NPPF] in March of this year, the Government has re-affirmed its aim that the historic environment and its heritage assets should be conserved and enjoyed for the quality of life they bring to this and future generations. The NPPF sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development and explains that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of this. For development to be sustainable it must, amongst other things, perform an environmental role, contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment and using natural resources prudently.
7. The NPPF states that local planning authorities should take account of

the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable use consistent with their conservation and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness

8. In relation to development affecting a designated heritage asset, the NPPF states that when considering the impact of a proposed development or the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation and the more important the asset, the greater that weight should be.

Impact in the Conservation Area

9. Policy HE7 of the adopted Oxford Local Plan states that planning permission will only be granted for new development that preserves or enhances the special character and appearance of the conservation areas or their setting.
10. The proposed conservatory would be sited to the rear of the hotel and would not be unduly visible in the public realm. Officers consider that it would appear sympathetic to the host building, would not detract from its attractive garden setting and would preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area.
11. The proposed new tile hanging on the 'link' building fronting Linton Road is intended to introduce an element of uniformity to the frontage buildings and to alleviate the current long stretch of uninterrupted rendered walls. Tile hanging is evident elsewhere on the frontage buildings and officers consider its further use would positively improve the appearance of the front of the hotel.
12. It is accepted that the existing front entrance to the hotel is bland and uninspiring and officers have been working with the agent to design an appropriate new entrance porch that would be both contemporary in form and provide a much needed focal point for the front of the building. It is considered that the proposed new front entrance porch would form an acceptable addition to the building that would enhance the appearance of the front of the hotel.
13. The extended brick piers and the new, frontage brick walls and railings are to be welcomed in terms of improving the appearance of the front of the hotel site and introducing a traditional element that is apparent in the wider conservation area. The new railings would be painted black and would feature a traditional pattern. Officers take the view that the new boundary treatment would give the site a greater identity in the street scene and would help to screen the forecourt car park.

Highways and parking

14. Oxfordshire County Council is not raising an objection to the application

which would result in the loss of the existing conference facilities and their replacement with 19 additional en-suite bedrooms. There would be no change to the number of car parking spaces [30].

15. Planning permission is not required for the internal change of use of the conference facilities to additional bedrooms.
16. As well as the existing on site car parking spaces, on street parking is available to guests, agreed with the Highway Authority, by a residents' parking scheme whereby the hotel issues parking permits to guests on arrival.
17. The agent has submitted a survey of car parking use during the daytime for conference and meeting use over a one year period from March 2011 to March 2012. This sets out the monthly figures for people attending the hotel specifically to use the conference facilities. The agent concludes that the loss of these conference facilities will result in a considerable drop in demand for car parking in the day time.
18. Concern has been raised by local residents that the proposal to create 19 additional bedrooms to replace the conference facilities will result in extra traffic and more parking problems. Planning and Highway Officers do not believe this to be the case and that the maximum number of cars resulting from 19 extra bedrooms is likely to be significantly less than the volume of traffic resulting from the use of the conference facilities.

Impact on neighbours

19. Given that the proposal is likely to result in less traffic visiting the hotel, particularly during the daytime, it is considered that the application proposals would have no increased impact on the amenities enjoyed by neighbouring occupiers.
20. Concern has been raised by the occupier of number 15 Linton Road that the proposed mechanical ventilation to the 4 new bedrooms close to the joint boundary could result in noise and disturbance to the occupiers of number 15. This concern has been raised with the agent who has confirmed that he would be happy with the imposition of a condition on the planning permission which would require such details to be agreed.

Conclusion:

21. The proposal forms an appropriate visual relationship with the existing building, would appear sympathetic to the street scene and would preserve and enhance the special character and appearance of the North Oxford Victorian Suburb Conservation Area. The proposal complies with adopted policies contained within both the Oxford Local Plan 2001 – 2016 and the Core Strategy 2026.

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, officers consider that the proposal will not undermine crime prevention or the promotion of community safety.

Background Papers:

12/01150/FUL

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Date: 18th June 2012

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