

## **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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**REPORT TO:** Development and Conservation Control Committee

7<sup>th</sup> June 2006

**AUTHOR/S:** Director of Development Services

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**S/0719/06/O - Girton  
Extension to Provide Function Room Hotel Felix, White House Lane  
for Cassel Hotels**

**Recommendation: Refusal  
Date for Determination: 7<sup>th</sup> June 2006**

### **Departure Application**

#### **Site and Proposal**

1. The Hotel Felix is a hotel complex located within the Cambridge Green Belt which lies between the Girton village framework and the Cambridge City boundary. The site abuts the residential street The Brambles to the northwest and Thornton Close to the north. The site is accessible via White House Lane, which is located off the Huntingdon road.
2. The outline application dated 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006, is for a proposed function room, of 25m x 15m, which would be located on the northwestern corner of the hotel. This will create a courtyard affect between the northern wing of the hotel and the proposed function room. This room will serve a host of annual functions. Siting is included for consideration at this stage. Design, mean of access and landscaping are reserved for future consideration.

#### **Planning History**

3. Planning application **S/00817/00/F** - Planning permission for the conversion, part demolition and extensions to form 48-bedroom hotel, subject to 106 agreement

#### **Planning Policy**

4. **Policy GB2** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan adopted 2004, and Policy **P9/2a** of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 seek to restrict inappropriate forms of development within the Green Belt.
5. **Policy RT1** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan adopted 2004 states that, in considering applications for the development of recreational and tourist facilities, the District Council will have regard to the need for such facilities and the benefits which might accrue. Therefore the District Council will resist any proposals which would:
  - a) Not be in close proximity to and not be well related with an established settlement and its built up area;
  - b) By reason of its scale, form, design and materials of the proposal, together with any associated development such as other buildings and structures would create an intrusive feature in the landscape or surrounding area;

- c) Generate significant motorised traffic movements;
  - d) Have inadequate provision for parking and manoeuvring of cars and service vehicles to the District Councils standards;
  - e) Not provide appropriate provision for screening and to minimise the visual intrusion into neighbouring development and the countryside.
6. **Policy TP1** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan adopted 2004 states that the Council will seek, through its decisions on planning applications, to promote more sustainable transport choices, to improve access to major trip generators by non-car modes, and to reduce the need to travel, especially by car. To give effect to these aims, planning permission will not be granted for developments likely to give rise to more than a small-scale increase in travel demands unless the site has (or will attain) a sufficient standard of accessibility to offer an appropriate choice of travel by public transport or other non-car travel modes.
7. **Policy P8/1** of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 relates to Sustainable Development and the links between Land Use and Transport. This states that new development should provide for the need of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users as well as an appropriate access from the highway network that does not compromise safety.
8. **Policy ES6** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan adopted 2004 states that the District Council will seek, by the means of appropriate planning conditions, to minimise the impact of noise and pollution on noise-sensitive development arising from any new industrial, commercial or recreational activities.

### **Consultations**

9. **Girton Parish Council** – Approve subject to appropriate care being taken to screen neighbours in Thornton Close and the Brambles from sound.
10. **Chief Environmental Health Officer** – Objects to the proposal on the grounds that there is a history on site of noise in the form of amplified music and events, which have resulted in complaints from the local residents. The supporting documents do not provide much information on the degree of acoustic insulation, and the plans show doors that would open out to the nearby residential development. In the absence of sound insulation information and given the history of the complaints in respect of the site I object to the proposal and am not aware of any attempt by the applicant to consult with this Department or to obtain advice regarding sound insulation prior to submitting the application.
11. **Local Highways Authority** – No comments received any future comments received to be added at committee meeting on the 7<sup>th</sup> June 2006.
12. **Environment Agency** has no objections.

### **Representations**

13. Owners of 6 The Brambles, Thornton Road, Girton objects to the proposal on the following grounds:
- a. There have been noise issues due to a number of events held at the hotel. The proposed function room would exacerbate the existing issue of noise from such events as well as the spillage of hotel guests onto the surrounding banks which

- number 6 backs onto. This would compromise both the privacy of the owners as well as cause undue noise and disturbance.
- b. The undertaking made at the start of this development was that no more development would take place. It is only just over three years since the hotel opened and further development should not be allowed because of their poor business planning.
  - c. To accommodate the function room the access and car parking would be moved substantially towards No 6, making privacy issue even more unacceptable.
  - d. With the function room in continuous use and the access road nearer No 6, there will be a significant increase in the number of deliveries creating an unacceptable amount of noise and disturbance.

### **Planning Comments**

- 14. The proposed function room would reduce the distance between the hotel complex and the local residential development at The Brambles to 45 metres. The plan shows openings within the rear of the structure, which would face the properties within The Brambles. There is a history of complaints on this site due to events held in marquis, which have caused noise and disturbance to the nearby residents. Although this proposal would appear to be an attempt to address this issue there has been no pre-application discussion with the Environmental Health Department on the measures that would need to be taken to address the situation. There is also insufficient information within the supporting documentation addressing of noise attenuation.
- 15. The previous permission under planning reference S/0817/00/F was approved with a S. 106 agreement, which stated that "For so long as the property (or any part of it) is in the Cambridge Green Belt there shall be no additional built form of development (by way of extension in any dimension or new build) thereon without the written consent of the Council. "The site is within the Cambridge Green Belt and due to the scale of the footprint of the proposed function room the development would be inappropriate within this Green Belt location. This part of the Green Belt has a clear division between the hotel complex and the residential development on the outskirts of Girton village. This open space is part of the openness and character of the Green Belt and would be compromised by any further development of this nature. There are no clear very special circumstances within the supporting statement to warrant making exception to Green Belt Policy. Need to compete within the competitive market is not considered very special circumstances.
- 16. The scale of the footprint of the proposed function room would result in the close proximity of the hotel complex to the residential properties on the edge of Girton such. This would result in an intrusive feature to the landscape and surrounding area which would impact upon not only the relationship between the built up area of the established settlement of Girton but also the openness and character of the Green Belt. Although there are no comments from the Local Highways Authority it would appear that a development of this nature would generate significant motorised traffic movements. Due to the sensitive nature of the close proximity to the nearby residential area the plans fail to show appropriate provision for screening to minimise the visual intrusion into the neighbouring development and the countryside.

### **Recommendation**

Refusal for the reason set out below:

- 1. Due to the excessive scale of the footprint of the proposed function room, the development would result in a materially greater impact upon the openness and

character of the Green Belt. It would therefore be inappropriate development in the Green Belt and would be contrary to Policy GB2 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Plan adopted 2004 and Policy P9/2a of the approved County Structure Plan.

2. Due to the nature of the history on site of noise pollution, as well as the failure to clearly show provision for sound insulation, the proposal would be contrary to Policy ES6 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan adopted 2004, which aims to minimise the impact of noise from new commercial development.
3. Due to the close proximity of the hotel to residential development, of the proposal would reduce the space between the two. The scale of the footprint of the function room and other associated development, would result in an intrusive feature upon the nearby residential development. The proposal would also result in the generation of significant traffic movements and does not show the provision for adequate screening to minimise the visual intrusion into the neighbouring residential development. It would therefore be contrary to Policy RT1 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan adopted 2004, which seeks to minimise visual intrusion into neighbouring development.

**Background Papers:** the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003
- Planning files Ref. S/0817/00/F & S/0719/06/F

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