

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Conservation Advisory Group. 8<sup>th</sup> December 2004  
Conservation, Sustainability &  
Community Planning Portfolio Holder.  
**AUTHOR/S:** Conservation Manager

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### **Consultation on the implications for built and natural heritage of the proposed hotel development at Sawston Hall**

*Conservation Advisory Group members are invited to visit the site on 7<sup>th</sup> December and will have access to appropriate plans both on site and at the CAG meeting.*

#### **Purpose**

1. To present an application for the development of a hotel at Sawston Hall to inform the on-going consideration of the development proposal and enable the Conservation Advisory Group and portfolio holder to formulate a consultation response to the Development Control & Conservation Committee.

#### **Effect on Corporate Objectives**

2. Quality, Accessible Services	The consideration of planning applications and listed building applications is a key service. Securing viable new uses for historic buildings is one of the Council's performance indicators (SP903).
Village Life	Securing the use of the site will contribute to the restoration of local heritage assets and thereby contribute to the enhancement of village life.
Sustainability	The re-use of historic buildings is a fundamental contributor to the achievement of sustainability.
Partnership	N/a

#### **Background**

3. ***The Site's heritage designations :***
  - Sawston Hall is a Grade I Listed Building.
  - Within the site a statue of Atlas within the courtyard area is listed in its own right Grade II and the entrance gate piers and a pump also in the courtyard are also separately listed Grade II.
  - The hall is set within grounds which are Grade II Listed on the National Historic Parks and Gardens Register.
  - The site abuts St Mary's Church to the northern boundary which is a Grade I Listed Building.
  - The site is an area of archaeological interest.
  - The site It is located within the Sawston Conservation Area.
  - Part of the grounds are designated as a SSSI
  - The trees are subject to a TPO.

- The Hall and grounds are outside of the village development limit and are within the Green Belt.

4. ***History of the Building***

The records show that the original house on the site was destroyed by a fire started by a mob in 1553 after Mary Tudor had stayed there and was likely to have been timber framed. The existing stone structure was built between 1557-1584 and was a traditional Great Hall with a screens passage to the western side and the withdrawing parlors to the east. It is recorded that much of the stone derives from Cambridge Castle which Sir John Huddleston was given access to obtain the stone for the new house.

5. Historical analysis of the building shows the original plan to have been U-shaped. By 1600 the current entirely enclosed courtyard arrangement was in place with the long gallery being created on the southern side of the complex. The north wing therefore remains the oldest part of the property.

6. The building was owned by the Huddleston's until 1982. They were a Catholic family and there are at least 3 known priest holes in the building. It is the only surviving courtyard house in Cambridgeshire. The chapel dates from c1800.

7. During the nineteenth century the house was subject to a major remodelling of the house c1890. This was when the short gallery was added and the subdivisions in the west wing and the existing main staircase was installed (mimicking a 17<sup>th</sup> century design). The alterations aimed to improve circulation around the building. Most of the windows date from this period.

8. In the Second World War the building was requisitioned for use by 66<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing Command. This is commemorated at Duxford IWM. Graffiti remains in the attic space from this period.

9. In the twentieth century the glazed link to the western side of the house onto the coach house was formed and the extension to the coach house added.

10. In the period 1982- 2002 the building was used as a private educational establishment. The premises was sold to the current owner in 2004.

11. ***Previous Planning History***

Permission was granted for use of the site as a language school for both teaching and research 1982. A series of temporary buildings were granted permission for use associated with the school.

12. In 1991 as part of an application for one block of permanent student accommodation, a master plan for the site was produced by Donald Insall & Associates. This proposed a total of three student accommodation blocks west of the coach house and a freestanding lecture theatre and sports hall. A scheme to extend the coach house was also submitted. The student accommodation application was approved in 1991 and renewed in 1997. A subsequent proposal for renewal of this planning permission was refused in 2003, after the college went into receivership. The extension to the coach house has been approved three times and is still a live application.

13. The building was in receivership for over two years and was placed on the 'vulnerable' list of the Council's *Historic Buildings at Risk List*, to monitor its condition.
14. An application was made by the previous owner to remove the statue of Atlas from the site in 2003 but was refused Listed Building Consent.

### **Considerations**

#### 15. ***The proposed development***

The current applications seek change of use of the site for use as a hotel and associated facilities including : new freestanding accommodation blocks; a restaurant; swimming pool, and associated plant buildings.

The main hall would accommodate 20 bedroom suites with a further 8 being created in the coach house and 13 within the new build blocks giving a total of 41 rooms.

The new build would be located adjacent to the walled garden.

The existing access would be used but a new driveway is proposed across the northern boundary so that vehicles approach the principle frontage of the building with parking to the western side of the site.

#### 16. ***Policy Background***

The following local plan policies are applicable:

- a. EN15: Archaeology
- b. EN18 Demolition of listed buildings – relating to the demolition of curtilage structures
- c. EN 26 Conversion of Listed Buildings to new uses
- d. EN 28 Development within the curtilage of a listed Building
- e. EN30 Development within a Conservation Area
- f. EN9 Nature conservation
- g. EN5 Trees
- h. EN4 Historic landscapes
- i. GB2 Green Belt

17. As the proposals are outside of the village framework and within the Green Belt the proposals are a departure from the development plan policies and as such will need to be sent to the Secretary of State for approval, if the Development Control & Conservation Committee is minded to support the proposals.

#### 18. ***Material Considerations***

The following issues will be fundamental to the consideration of the development proposals :

##### *a. Archaeology*

A desk top study has been undertaken for the site which identifies the need for further archaeological investigations The County Archaeologist has confirmed that the site needs to be subject to a programme of archaeological investigations to confirm the presence or absence of any archaeological deposits. This can be secured by condition on any consent granted. This would be at the expense of the developer.

##### *b. Demolition*

The proposed demolition is of twentieth century structures dating either from the war time use of the building or the modern link/extension to the coach house.

None of the buildings are of any architectural merit to warrant their retention but a record would be sought to ensure the buildings were recorded.

c. *Change of use*

The property was marketed for over two years when in receivership. Most of the other proposals involved subdivision of the property into self contained dwellings or flats and redevelopment in the grounds. No approach was made for an alternative educational use.

In considering the proposed use the impact on the Hall and its setting have to be considered as well as how the surrounding land is to be managed and used. This should cover both the formal gardens and the habitat covered by the SSSI.

The estate has in the past been sold off for a number of housing estates. Officers consider that the remainder of the estate now left should not be sold off for any separate development to facilitate the conservation of the Hall but should be retained to complement any new use.

d. *New Build*

The applicant needs to demonstrate that the proposed new build elements can be justified as necessary to secure the continued, viable use of the building and that they would not compromise the character or setting of the Hall or the natural environment.

English Heritage: Have commented on this aspect that, *“The proposals would entail the removal of the unfortunate addition to the coach house and the construction of a number of pavilions to provide a restaurant and additional bedrooms as well as a pool. These have been designed in a discreet and subtle modern manner and although of course they would be visible within parts of the grounds, they would have little effect on the broader setting of the Hall.....”*

e. *Alterations to the Hall*

The proposed alterations have to be considered in terms of how the special character of the building would be affected.

English Heritage :have commented on this aspect that, *“the proposed conversion of the house into a hotel would entail some change to the building but would not significantly compromise its architectural and historic interest. The proposals have been conceived with considerable thought and to some extent the type of hotel that the applicants wish to establish would result in the use of the building in a manner not too dissimilar to domestic use. Although the intensity of the house’s use would inevitably be greater the planning of the proposals would leave the principal spaces substantially as they are.....”*

f. *Impact on the Conservation Area*

The proposed new build elements will not be able to be seen from any public land outside the site. The proposals seek to retain as many of the existing trees as possible and reinforce this with additional planting particularly to the new access and parking areas. The new structures are considered to enhance the site and to be a visual improvement on the buildings being demolished. The reinstatement of the coach house to its original external form is a welcome enhancement.

g. *Impact on Historic Park*

An assessment of the impact of the development on the character, appearance and special historic interest of the designed landscape surrounding the Hall will be required to inform the proposal. This will also necessitate a ‘Conservation

Management Plan' to be produced to detail how the site will be managed to maintain its important characteristics.

*h. Impact on trees*

The Trees & Landscape Officer will comment on the impact on this aspect.

*i. Ecological impact*

The Ecology Officer has commented that the SSSI is not going to be impacted upon directly by the proposals. However, it may be subjected to an increased level of visitors as a result of guests enjoying the Hall's surroundings.

English Nature are in the process of negotiating a Management Agreement to secure positive management of the SSSI. Presumably such a management agreement would only relate to the parties signed up to it. As such if the Hall and the SSSI were to change ownership management of the SSSI would have to be re-negotiated. It might be considered appropriate to link in the SSSI management to the S106, possibly via a site "*Ecological and Landscape Management Strategy*". This could then provide a means to secure management of other parts of the site, such as the moats and new reed bed, whilst adding weight to the English Nature negotiated Management Agreement.

An initial bat survey has been undertaken. It has discovered that part of the stable block has been used as a bat roost. The exact extent of the roost's usage cannot be further investigated during the winter. In order for the issue to be properly evaluated further survey work is required in the spring. Once this information is obtained an informed decision can be made upon the value of the roost. This issue should not be left to condition as once planning consent is granted then disturbance/destruction of the roost has effectively be authorised (subject to DEFRA license). It may be more important to retain the roost in-situ or to modify the plans.

*j. Other Planning considerations:*

- i. Highway safety and parking - to be reported.
- ii. Impact on surrounding residential units – to be reported.
- iii. Impact on the green belt - to be considered.

**19. *Objections raised to date.***

To date the principal objection raised is from Dr's Bayraktaroglu of Spring Close Cottage, Church Lane, the former owners of the Hall.

Their objections can be summarised as follows :

- Concerns about impact on area from traffic generation
- Concerns about safety of access to site
- need to demonstrate with a business plan how the future of the Hall and grounds will be secured.
- detrimental impact of alterations to the hall specifically : the use of the long gallery ; removal of queen post trusses to attic area; and alterations to the short gallery.

**20. *Other consultation responses .***

1. Sawston Parish Council : recommend approval.
2. The national amenity groups have been consulted but no other formal responses have yet been received apart from English Heritage.

A re-consultation has taken place on amended details to the Hall.

**21. *Outstanding matters***

- a. Consideration of concerns raised by Trees & Landscape Officer

- b. Need to produce an assessment of the historical landscape context and a consequent '*Conservation Management Plan*'.
- c. Need for a more detailed business plan to justify the works and demonstrate this level of development is viable.
- d. Need to address issue of whether any bats roost on site, this may need a survey in the Spring when the bats become active.
- e. Need to produce a management plan for area of SSSI in conjunction with SCDC's Ecology officer and English Nature.
- f. Comments from Highways Officer to be received and considered.
- g. Awaiting comments of Fire Officer and Building Control

22. **Timetable**

The Conservation Advisory Group are invited to attend a site inspection on 7<sup>th</sup> December and discuss the proposals on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2004, to enable a view to be formulated and inform the subsequent report to the Development Control & Conservation Committee.

23. Depending on all the outstanding information being received, analysed and accepted it is anticipated that the earliest Development and Conservation Control Committee at which this could be considered would be February 2005. The applications will then have to be sent to Go East to consider as a departure.

24. **Section 106 Planning Agreement**

Planning Agreement will be required as part of any potential approval, to ensure :

- that works to the main Hall are undertaken before/in tandem with the new build.
- The completion of and implementation of the Conservation Management Plan for the Historic Gardens
- Undertaking an ecological management plan for the area of SSSI
- Implementation of possible highway works.

**Options**

- i. The Conservation Advisory Group are asked to consider the proposals and formulate a consultation response to be included in the eventual report to the Development Control & Conservation Committee to either :
  - i. Support the aim of the proposals and recommend that planning and listed building consent be granted, subject to conditions and a S.106 agreement.
  - ii. Support the proposals with reservations, identifying aspects of the proposals that may require reconsideration.
  - iii. Decline to support the proposals, outlining concerns and the reasons recommending an objection to the proposal.

**Financial Implications**

- ii. None specific

**Legal Implications**

- iii. The decision to grant consent for the development can only be made by the Secretary of State (as this application is a departure from the local plan), subject to a recommendation by the Council's Development Control & Conservation Committee.

**Staffing Implications**

- iv. None specific

**Risk Management Implications**

- v. Not applicable

## **Consultations**

The purpose of the report is to enable the Conservation Advisory Group to consider the implications of the development proposal as they affect the built and natural heritage to enable officers to continue to negotiate the development of the project.

## **Conclusions/Summary**

- vi. The views of the Conservation Advisory Group are sought on this development as this development has a significant impact on key components of the district's built and natural heritage. The group's objective should be to focus on the 'conservation' issues and consequently inform the development or continued negotiation of the proposals and eventually the recommendation to the Development Control & Conservation Committee.

## **Recommendations**

32. That the Conservation Advisory Group consider the report and advise the Conservation, Sustainability & Community Planning Portfolio Holder of their views to inform the progression of this development proposal.

**Background Papers:** the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report : Planning and Listed Building Consent applications ref: no.s : s/1800/04/f and s/2054/04LB.

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