

## **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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

6<sup>th</sup> April 2005

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

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### **S/1800/04/F and S/2054/04/LB - Sawston**

**S/1800/04/F - Restoration, Refurbishment and Change of Use of Hall to Hotel; Restoration and Conversion of Coach House to Hotel Accommodation; Erection of New Restaurant, Pool and Treatment, Accommodation, Crèche and Laundry Facilities, and Plant Buildings; Alterations to Internal Roads; and New Parking Area.**

**S/2054/04/LB - Change of Use from Former Language School and Alteration and Extension as Part of Conversion to Hotel Comprising 41 Bedrooms Suites: Demolition of Extension to Coach House and Out Buildings with New Freestanding Accommodation Blocks and Restaurant Adjacent to Kitchen Garden Wall and Swimming Pool with Associated Car Parking. Rerouting of Access Drive**

**Sawston Hall, Church Lane, Sawston, for Adrian Critchlow**

**Recommendation: Minded to approve: Both applications to be sent to Secretary of State for consideration as a departure and works affecting a Grade I Listed Building. Dates for determination: 24<sup>th</sup> November 2004/5<sup>th</sup> January 2005**

### **DEPARTURE APPLICATION, AFFECTS GRADE I LISTED BUILDING AND CONSERVATION AREA**

Members will visit the site on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> April 2005.

#### **Site**

1. This 24 hectares approximately site is occupied by the Hall, a former stable block used as part of the attached restaurant and a number of outbuildings, its grounds and Sawston Hall Meadows Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Residential properties bound the site to the northeast, south and west. Church Lane, from which vehicular access is obtained, Spring Close Cottage and St Mary's Church are to the north. The site is located close to the centre of Sawston.
2. The site's heritage designations are as follows:
  - Sawston Hall is Grade I Listed;
  - Within the site a statue of Atlas and a pump located within the central courtyard area are Listed in their own right Grade II;
  - The entrance gates are Listed Grade II;
  - The grounds are Grade II Listed on the National Historic Parks and Gardens Register;
  - The site abuts St Mary's Church, a Grade I Listed Building;

- The site has been identified as being of archaeological interest;
- It is located within Sawston Conservation Area;
- Parts of the grounds are designated a SSSI;
- The trees are subject of a TPO;
- The Hall and grounds are outside of the village development limits and are within the countryside and Green belt.

### **History of the Building**

3. The records show the original house on the site was destroyed by fire in 1553 by a mob reacting to the fact that Mary Tudor had stayed there. The current clunch stone building was built between 1557-1584 probably from stones salvaged from Cambridge Castle. Date stones on the building provide some evidence for this chronology.
4. In the architectural analysis submitted as part of the applications, it is suggested that the original floor plan was in a U-shape consisting principally of a Great Hall and screens passage. By 1600 the current courtyard arrangement had been laid out with the long gallery being formed on the southern side. The northern wing remains the oldest part of the building.
5. The building was privately owned by descendents of the Huddlestone family from 1557 until 1982 when it was sold. The family were catholic and there is a private chapel and at least three priest holes in the building.
6. The building was extensively remodelled in the Victorian period - the chapel, most of the windows, main staircase and general layout, including the short gallery, date from this period.
7. During WWII the building was requisitioned for use by the 66th Fighter Wing Command in association with Duxford Airfield and graffiti still remains in the attic floor from this period.
8. Alterations in the twentieth century include alterations to the attic floor roof trusses, an extension to the coach house to form a restaurant and a glazed link to this.
9. In the period 1982- 2002 the Hall was used as a private educational establishment. This went into receivership and the building has not had a secure use for over two years. It has been put on the Council's Listed Buildings 'At Risk Register' as a precaution to monitor with regard to any deterioration of the condition of the building. The site was sold in 2004 to the applicant.

### **The Proposal**

10. The current applications seek change of use of the site as a whole for use as a hotel and associated leisure facilities. As part of the submission the following details have been received:
  - An historical architectural appraisal of the building by Mr T Baggs;

- An assessment of the impact on the historic designed landscape, gardens and grounds by Dr Twigs Way and Dr David Brown;
  - A design statement; and
  - A business case and plan for the proposals,
11. The main Hall would accommodate the ground floor public lounge and bar areas. It is hoped to have the chapel re-consecrated. The upper floors would accommodate 16 bedroom suites and the ground floor a further four rooms.
  12. The coach house would be converted to provide a further 8 bedroom suites. The attached restaurant would be removed.
  13. New build elements would include a restaurant built to accommodate the existing garden wall - the glazed form gives the appearance of a modern peach or glasshouse in design; a series of three accommodation blocks located where outbuildings from WWII are currently standing to provide a further 13 rooms.
  14. A total of 41 bedrooms are thus proposed. A freestanding modern design swimming pool with indoor and outdoor facilities is proposed close to the new accommodation blocks - this will have a grass covered dome roof and utilise a traditional 'HaHa' ditch element to secure the outdoor pool. A crèche and laundry facility and plant buildings are also proposed.
  15. The hotel will retain existing tennis courts on site.
  16. The aim is for the hotel to be the most environmentally friendly and sustainable hotel in Britain - it will be using solar energy, electric cars and a reed bed filter as part of achieving this.
  17. Vehicular access will be rerouted through the woodland to the eastern side of the church, so that vehicles approach the main frontage of the Hall. On an 1811 tithe map, an avenue is shown in this position leading to Church Lane. It is not clear if this was a former access driveway or not and there has been debate over this between the landscape consultants for the applicant and the Garden History Society.
  18. The case to justify this new approach is that it utilizes a former visual access that relates to the character of the Hall and by minimizing the loss of trees and seeking a no dig approach represents a sensitive and reasonable approach. Some of the existing hard surfacing will be replaced by lawn. Parking will be on the western side of the site where previously some temporary buildings associated with the language school were located. The Leylandii hedge will be removed and new planting is proposed.

### **Relevant Planning History**

19. The principal applications in the planning history to date are summarised as follows:
  - 1964 - Planning permission was approved for restaurant use to the coach house and extension (**SC/0567/63**);
  - 1971 - Change of use was granted to business conference centre and erection of a hostel for 70 persons (**SC/0064/71/O**);

- 1972 - Permission was granted for 131 dwellings to be built on part of the estate (**SC1228/72/D**);
- 1974 - Planning permission was granted for the erection of a covered way between the main hall and restaurant (**SC/1316/73/F**);
- 1973 -renewal of the permission for change of use to conference centre and erection of 70 person hostel (**SC/1381/73/O**);
- 1982 - Change of use to a language teaching and research centre was approved (**S/0221/82/F**);
- 1990 - the erection of 2 tennis courts approved;
- 1991- Alterations and extensions to stables and restaurant (not implemented) (**S/1413/91/LB and S/1416/91/F**) Approved;
- 1991 - West garden - erection of students and tutors accommodation building (not implemented) **S/1450/91/F** Approved. As part of this proposal, a master plan for the site was produced by Donald Insall & Associates. This proposed in addition to the one approved block a further two student accommodation blocks and a lecture theatre and sports hall in the west garden;
- 1996- renewal of stable block applications **S/1413/91/LB** and **S/1416/91/F** - (**S/1916/96/F** and **S/1917/96/LB**) Approved;
- 1997 - Renewal of students and tutors block **S/1450/91/F** (**S/1129/97/F**) Approved;
- 1998/2000 Siting of portable buildings to provide student accommodation. Approved (**S/1571/00/F** and **S/0093/98/F**);
- 2002 - Second renewal of stable block applications **S/1916/96/F** and **S/1917/96/LB** (**S/0109/02/F** and **S/0264/02/LB**) Approved and still valid until 2007;
- 2003- Second renewal of student and tutors accommodation **S/1129/97/F** (**S/2018/02/F**) Refused.

20. This was refused as by this time the use of the Hall as a language school had gone into receivership - the application was made on behalf of the receivers. The development was considered to fail the criteria of enabling development as set out in the English Heritage Policy Statement Document 'Enabling development and the conservation of heritage assets'. New development could not be justified in a departure situation - the development would be in the Green Belt and affecting the setting of the Grade I Listed Building where there was no current user of the site to justify the need for this development. The whole point of enabling development is to secure the long-term future of a property and prevent fragmentation of control and management of the Hall and grounds. Such issues were not considered to be addressed by this application which was a purely speculative application;

- 2003 - Listed building consent for the removal of Atlas statue from the site Refused (**S/1256/03/LB**).

#### **Relevant Local Planning Policy**

21. The site is both within the countryside and the Cambridge Green Belt.
22. **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 Policy P1/2** states that development in the countryside will be resisted unless the proposals can be demonstrated to be essential in a particular rural location.
23. **Policy P1/3** requires a high standard of design and sustainability for all new developments.
24. **Policy P3/2** requires proposals for leisure and sporting and shopping facilities and other uses which attract large numbers of people to be focused in existing city and town centres. Out of town locations should only be considered where no suitable city, town or edge of centre sites are available.
25. **Policy P4/1** states that new or improved tourism, recreation and leisure development should:
  - Maintain or increase employment opportunities
  - Meet the needs of the local community as well as visitors
  - Be accessible by a choice of sustainable transport modes
  - Strengthen and diversify the local economy.
26. **Policy P7/6** states that Local Planning Authorities will protect and enhance the quality and distinctiveness of the historic built environment.
27. **Policy P8/2** requires new development to increase the ability to move by cycle, public transport and on foot. Travel plans will be required for new and expansion of non-residential developments.
28. **Policy P9/2a** states that, within the Green Belt, new development, including change of use, will be limited to that required for agriculture and forestry, outdoor sport, cemeteries, or other uses appropriate to a rural area.
29. **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004**
30. **Policy GB2** sets out the presumption against inappropriate development in the Green Belt unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated. The list of developments that are not inappropriate includes the re-use of buildings provided that:
  - The development does not result in a materially greater impact on the openness and purpose of the Green Belt;
  - Strict control is exercised over any proposed extensions and associated uses of land;
  - The form, bulk and general design of buildings are in keeping with their surroundings.
31. **Policy TP1** 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 reduce the need to travel especially by car. This includes securing appropriate improvements on and off site.
32. **Policy RT1** requires the Council to have regard to the need for tourist facilities and the benefits which might accrue. Nine criteria are identified against which tourist

related developments must be judged including proximity to an existing settlement, impact on ecology, amount of new build and impact of vehicle movements and waste generation.

33. **Policy RT10** supports the conversion of buildings to holiday accommodation where the criteria of RT1 and the following criteria are met:
  - The building is in sound condition and is capable of being reused without significant rebuilding, extension or alteration;
  - The building itself and the proposal are of an appropriate scale, environmentally acceptable and in keeping with the character of the area and surrounding buildings;
  - Together with the cumulative effect on neighbouring proposals, development would have an acceptable impact on the character and amenity of the locality.
34. **Policy RT11** states that development to provide overnight accommodation, public houses and restaurants will not be permitted outside the framework of settlements except (where the site is outside the Green Belt) in the cases of modest extensions to existing facilities or the change of use/conversion of existing buildings not requiring large extensions.
35. **Policy EN3** requires landscaping and design standards for new development in the countryside to be appropriate in the particular Landscape Character Area.
36. **Policy EN4** states that the District Council will not grant planning permission for development which would adversely affect or lead to the loss of important areas and features of the historic landscape whether or not they are statutorily designated.
37. **Policy EN9** states that, in all its planning decisions affecting SSSIs, the Council will safeguard, and wherever enhance, the intrinsic features of interest.
38. **Policy EN13** relates to protected species.
39. **Policies EN15** and **EN16** relate to archaeological sites.
40. **Policy EN20** states that the District Council will refuse planning permission for extensions to Listed Buildings which:
  - Are not necessary to the continuing use of the building;
  - Would dominate or detract from the Listed Building in scale, form, massing or appearance;
  - Would imply the loss of building fabric or architectural or historic interest;
  - Would damage archaeological remains of importance;
  - Would harm the well-being or setting of adjacent Listed Buildings.
41. **Policy EN26** states that, in judging applications for planning permission to change the use of Listed Buildings, the Council will consider whether or not:

- The existing use can continue with reasonable utility or life expectancy;
  - All other options for less damaging uses have been explored, including the outcome of any attempts at disposing of the building at a fair market price;
  - The proposed use can take place without the necessity of extensive alterations or extensions which would be harmful to the fabric, character or setting of the building;
  - The proposals would harm the setting and amenity of adjacent buildings.
42. **Policy EN28** sets out the criteria against which applications for new development within the curtilage or setting of a Listed Building will be considered and states that the District Council will resist and refuse applications which:
1. Would dominate the Listed Building or its curtilage in scale, mass, form or appearance;
  2. Would damage the setting, well being or attractiveness of a Listed Building;
  3. Would harm the visual relationship between the building and its formal or natural landscape;
  4. Would damage archaeological remains of importance unless some exceptional overriding need can be demonstrated.
43. **Policy EN30** sets out the requirements for developments in Conservation Areas, including the requirement that the development must preserve or enhance the special character of the area.
44. **Policy EN44** sets out the presumption in favour of the use of renewable energy resources and energy efficient technology as part of developments.
45. **Government Planning Policy Guidance (PPG's)**  
Of relevance are PPG6 'Town Centres and Retail Development', PPG9 'Nature Conservation', PPS9 (consultation paper) 'Biodiversity and geological conservation', PPG13 'Transport', PPG15 'Planning and the Historic Environment', PPG16 'Archaeology and Planning' and PPG 21 'Tourism'.
46. **PPG6** sets out the need for a sequential approach to development. Preferred locations are town centre sites, followed by edge of centre and then out of centre.
47. **PPG9** and PPS9 (consultation paper) relate to nature conservation, biodiversity and geological conservation.
48. **PPG 13** promotes the use of sustainable transport facilities. It emphasises the need to address links to public transport systems and the use of transport management.
49. **PPG15** sets out the Government Policies for the protection and reuse of historic buildings.
50. **PPG16** gives advice on how a site known to be of archaeological importance needs to address this issue with the new development.

51. **PPG21 Annex A** refers to the reuse of historic buildings as hotels. It states:  
'If carefully designed, additions can be achieved without adversely affecting the historic fabric or character and maintain the historic building in viable use. But large scale buildings in a small scale setting, buildings which break prominently into the skyline and those which by their design, materials, illumination or building line are out of sympathy with neighbouring historic buildings will normally be unacceptable.'
52. **English Heritage**: Policy Statement - "Enabling Development and the conservation of Heritage assets" offers guidance on what is enabling development and how this should be assessed in order to assist with the consideration of development which affects the setting of significant Listed Buildings.  
The statement only applies to development contrary to an established planning policy.

The statement sets out the following criteria:

- The development must not materially detract from the archaeological, architectural, historic, landscape or biodiversity interest of the asset or its setting;
- It avoids fragmentation of management of the asset;
- It will secure the long term future of the heritage asset;
- The issues arise from the inherent needs of the asset rather than the circumstances of the present owner or price paid;
- Sufficient financial assistance is not available from any other source;
- The enabling development is the minimum necessary to secure the future of the asset;
- The value or benefit of the survival of the asset or enhancement of it outweighs the long term cost to the community of providing it;
- Permission should only be granted if;
- The impact of the development is fully considered at the outset;
- The development is linked to securing the future of the asset;
- The asset is repaired to an agreed standard;
- The Local Planning Authority closely monitors implementation.

### **Consultations**

53. **Sawston Parish Council** recommends approval of the applications.
54. **The Councils Conservation Manager** supports the proposed new use for the building and the associated works to the Hall and Coach house. The removal of the rear extension and modern link element from these buildings is an enhancement.

The new build elements are considered to be of a suitable scale and form which complement and are subservient to the Listed Building and its setting. It should be noted that the Statutory Consultees are in general support of the proposals. A

detailed appraisal to support these conclusions is incorporated in the Planning Comments section below.

55. **Trees & Landscape Officer** states that the revised scheme is generally acceptable but recommends that, in order to retain the best quality trees, the precise positions of the crèche/laundry building and the structural grass road providing access to the pool and treatment building should be reconsidered. He also has concerns in relation to the proposed principal service trench and requests that its precise route and trenching method be investigated in more detail.
56. **Landscape Design Officer** raises no objections subject to the agreement of full landscaping details.
57. **Ecology Officer** has met the applicant's bat specialist on site and accepts that the proposal would not affect any protected species. He is happy with the proposed provision of the bat loft but recommends a condition be attached to any approval requiring details of an ecological management plan, including details of the proposed reed bed, for the part of the site outside the SSSI.
58. **Chief Environmental Health Officer** raises no objections.
59. **Building Control** states that the conversion of the main hall appears to be satisfactory and the latest amended plans satisfactorily address his original concern that fire brigade access to the new build may be insufficient.
60. **Local Highway Authority** has considered the proposal in terms of trip generation, impact upon transport network, layout, mitigation measures, sustainability and, subject to the securing of a pedestrian footway along Church Lane, it states that the proposed access and parking details as shown upon the latest site plan (SAW/01.101E) are acceptable. Its comments in relation to the highway objection received (detailed under the representation heading below) will be reported verbally.
61. **Environment Agency** raises no objections but recommends that a condition relating to pollution control, including foul and surface water drainage, is attached to any permission and makes advisory comments.
62. **County Archaeology** states that the site lies in an area of high archaeological potential and it is possible that significant archaeological deposits survive on site which could be destroyed or damaged by the proposal.

It recommends that the site is subject to a programme of archaeological investigation in order to confirm the presence or absence, date, character and significance of any archaeological deposits. This programme of work can be secured through the inclusion of a negative condition (PPG16 para 30) on any planning consent and should be commissioned and undertaken at the expense of the developer.

63. **Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service** asks that adequate provision is made for fire hydrants by way of Section 106 Agreement or planning condition. It also states that, from the information supplied, access and facilities for the Fire Service as shown on the original plans may be considered inadequate and should be provided in accordance with the Building Regulations Approval Document. It continues by stating that responsibility for approving access and facilities for the Fire Service rests with the Building Control Department of the Local Authority. It raises no objections to the proposed conversion stating that the proposals offer a satisfactory standard of fire safety. One issue raised is that the use of the Long

Gallery for general use is not supported - given the limited size and nature of the exit using the turret staircase it is only acceptable for use by small numbers. The proposed use as a family bedroom is thus preferred.

64. **English Nature** advises that a Wildlife Enhancement Scheme Agreement has been signed by both the applicant and English Nature allowing positive management to proceed at Sawston Meadows Site of Special Scientific Interest. In addition, it has submitted to the applicant a letter supporting an application for planning permission to install an access to the SSSI in the north-east corner of the property which would facilitate management of the SSSI. It advises that it wishes to withdraw its original objection subject to conditions covering the following matters:

- English Nature has not yet been informed of the location of the proposed reed bed, and whether an alternative cleansing tank will also be required. It seeks assurance that there will be no nutrient enrichment or pollution threat to the aquatic and grassland interest of the SSSI.
- English Nature advised that the Authority directs the applicant to commission a bat survey of all areas to be affected by the works described in the application, and we await the detail of this survey, and additional information about the potential impacts of the proposal on protected species and, where necessary, details of mitigation which should be submitted before the application is determined.

65. **English Heritage** states that Sawston Hall is the most important Elizabethan house in the County. 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 development of ancillary hotel accommodation within the grounds would be regrettable, but the proposals for this have been thoughtfully conceived and are modest in scale. Subject to a number of matters of detail and to appropriate conditions the proposals are generally acceptable.

It also states that the information contained in the Historic Designed Landscape Impact Assessment and the recommendations made in respect of the design and maintenance of the gardens are considered to be acceptable. A no dig approach for the construction of the new drive is very important together with the need to maintain important views of the Hall.

It notes that their advice on the deletion of the stable block roof lights to the front elevation has been followed and have no further comments on the scheme, noting only that it needs to be referred to the Secretary of State.

66. **The Garden History Society** has considered the Impact assessment prepared by Dr T Way and Dr D Brown. The historic information obtained from documentary sources is considered to be used to produce a clear evaluation of the surviving historic designed landscape. They are in broad agreement with the findings.

The principal areas of special landscape interest are:

- The rectangular garden spaces or enclosures to the south and east of the Hall which may date from 16th or 17th century with a 19th or 20th century formal layout imposed on this;

- Elements of the moat;
- The walled garden;
- The park-like grounds north and east of the Hall.

The issues they raise are:

- Whether sufficient weight has been given to the development of the landscape to the north and east of the Hall particularly in the 19th century;
- It is not clear that the evidence fully demonstrates a driveway in the proposed alignment and requests further consideration of the new driveway in historic landscape terms;
- The opportunity exists to soften the eastern edge of the car park further;
- It is noted that the new kitchen is on the site of a former structure but it does extend further south. They are concerned at the increasing sense of enclosure which would result;
- They have no objections to the siting of the swimming pool and suggest an alternative siting of the kitchen garden rooms west of this facility.

67. These concerns have been relayed to the applicant for further response - on behalf of the applicant, **Dr D Brown** has commented:

- The new belt of planting along Church Lane in the 19<sup>th</sup> century created a park-like paddock and the report was not intending to down play this;
- The avenue to Church Lane may have been a purely visual one rather than a drive - the location of the new drive would build upon this visual relationship to the principal elevation of the house;
- They stand by the location of the new restaurant on the site of a former building - they consider it is important to retain a compact rectilinear form within the historic garden walls to protect the character of the open garden beyond;
- The garden to the south and west is less conspicuously designed but is important as a countryside setting in views out from the house and development in this area could erode this;
- The overall quality of the scheme must be balanced - it is not always possible to address all of the differing views put forward. In this case the consultants consider the proposals are of sufficient quality and offer potential for proper management to be considered as beneficial to the historic landscape of the Hall.

68. **The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB)** broadly supports the scheme. It calls for control (via conditions) of the following issues:

- The design of the new driveway including lighting and signage which could form visual clutter to the site;
- The internal redecoration details to ensure the use of acceptable materials;

- Treatment of the floors in particular how the stone floors are to be conserved;
- Any works of repair to the timber panelling;
- Works to up grade the roof insulation - in particular the coach house to ensure this does not adversely affect the moisture balance leading to damp and decay.

These points are included in the proposed conditions on the LBC.

69. **The Ancient Monuments Society** raises no objections to the proposals (as amended) and for further detailed comments they defer to English Heritage.
70. **Architectural Advisory Group** concluded that the overall design approach to the new build elements was acceptable - it was considered to be of a high standard of modern design and would not compromise the important historic buildings on the site or their landscape setting. The scale and form of the new buildings was supported and the materials proposed were considered to be appropriate.
71. **Conservation Advisory Group**: In December 2004, the Conservation Advisory Group visited the site and considered the proposals as consultees with a special interest in heritage to inform the progression of the development proposal.
72. The consensus of the **CAG Members** was that a modern approach to the new build elements was a correct one and that the scale of the proposed buildings was acceptable. The design of the swimming pool in particular was considered to be innovative and interesting. The CAG concluded that reconsideration of the new accommodation blocks should be undertaken and a realignment of the driveway to address the Landscape and Tree Officers concerns.

The scheme now presented for consideration has consequently been revised since the meeting of the CAG. The principal alterations are:

- Realignment/redesign of format of the drive to take into account the landscape and tree officers concerns;
- Redesign of the three new bedroom accommodation blocks - they now have pitched roofs and are all two-storey. Revised fenestration;
- Repositioning of the proposed accommodation blocks to address landscape and tree officers concerns.

The CAG welcomed the work being done to secure a management agreement for the SSSI.

The CAG was fully supportive of the proposed new use and means of converting the main Hall which was considered to respect the special character and historic fabric of the building.

### **Representations**

73. A number of letters of objection have been received from Dr's Bayraktaroglu of Spring Cottage, Church Lane (former owner of Sawston Hall).
74. The main grounds of objection raised are summarised below:

- The application should be considered on the basis of English Heritage's Enabling Development and the Conservation of Heritage Assets policy document and should be refused outright as contrary to planning policy unless it complies with this policy. In an appeal decision for a similar development at Wickham Court in Kent, this document was an important material consideration and a planning application for the renewal of Students and Tutors Accommodation Building (S/2018/02/F) at the Hall was refused on the grounds that the proposal failed to satisfy the set criteria contained in the Statement. By definition, enabling development is development contrary to established planning policy. The proposed change of use and new development fails to meet the criteria produced by English Heritage on Enabling Development. The use is considered to harm the Hall and its setting. It is not considered that this would remain the centre piece of the site and the new development would have a detrimental impact on the integrity of this heritage asset;
  - The financial viability of the scheme is questioned. The submitted Business Plan contains insufficient information to enable it to be verified;
  - Sawston Hall was purchased in the open tender after competing with many other interested parties and it was bought in the knowledge that the building needed repairs. Other than attention to the panelling, the repair of the main staircase and the strengthening of floor boards, there are no major repairs presently required to the building to justify the need of a large scale of conversion and development for a hotel use of this important historic house or which constitute special circumstances to approve the applications;
  - The works to the Hall will damage its architectural integrity. In particular objection is raised to the removal of the 19th century roof trusses, use of the Long Gallery as a bedroom, the works to the Short Gallery, external alterations within the courtyard and the proposed alterations to the chapel;
  - The proposal would have a detrimental impact on this Grade I listed building and its setting and the setting of St Mary's Church;
  - Concern that Officers have not approached this in the correct way - the proposal should be considered as enabling development and is harmful to the setting of the Listed Building and the benefits do not outweigh the setting aside of the Green Belt Policy; and
  - The use of the Hall as a private house would be less detrimental and the repairs could be carried out while the Hall is used as a private house.
  - They also state that they are statutory protected tenants.
- (a) In addition, a statement of highway objections submitted by Rutherfords Highway and Transport Planning on behalf of the occupiers of Spring Close Cottage objects on the following grounds:
- i. The submitted layout plans are very inaccurate and misleading at the Church Lane entrance;
  - ii. The visibility splays are severely substandard;
  - iii. The width of the access is restricted by gates; Church Lane to the east is narrow with inadequate footways which cannot be improved without causing regular road blockages;

- iv. Pedestrians have recently been injured in accidents on the short section of Church Lane in front of the Church;
  - v. The provision of adequate footways between the hotel and the High Street would impede access to the nearby shoppers' car park which already causes congestion even off-peak; and
  - vi. Within the grounds of the Hall, the proposed segregated footway through the adjacent woods would create safety concerns at night.
- (b) A letter was received from the applicant in response to the original objections from Dr Bayraktaroglu.
- (c) A representation has been received from Hon Mr Jones writing on behalf of the 66th Fighter Wing Association and US 8th Army Air Force. He is concerned that a war memorial formerly located in the grounds is returned to the site from its current location at The Imperial War Museum Duxford.
- (d) The Secretary to the PCC of St Mary the Virgin states that the PCC has no objection in principle to the restoration and refurbishment of the Hall but it is concerned that the new road close to the southern boundary of the churchyard could cause damage to the boundary clunch wall and it hopes increased traffic in the drive from Church Lane will not damage the wall on the western side of the churchyard. It also hopes few specimen trees will need to be felled.
- (e) The parish priest of St Mary's Church supports the proposal but is concerned about possible damage to the churchyard wall.
- (f) A letter signed by 10 residents of Hide Close and Glover Close states that a development of the scale proposed will undoubtedly have a detrimental effect on all the wildlife both in the immediate and surrounding area.
- (g) Occupier of 1 Church Lane is generally happy but objects on the basis that the access and Church Lane are not wide enough to serve the development.
- (h) Occupier of 14 Prince William Way is generally happy with the application but is concerned that use of the proposed swimming pool would generate noise and lead to loss of privacy and outlook. She also states that the beauty of the natural environment should be kept preserved as much as possible and requests additional screening to minimise noise coming from the pool. She also asks that provision be made to minimise noise during the construction period and that it is not carried out outside of work hours (i.e. not in the evenings or weekends).
- (i) Occupier of Byways, Church Lane, objects on the grounds of loss of view due to felling of trees, insufficient parking provision resulting in parking in Church Lane, noise from traffic and devaluation.
- (j) Occupiers of 3 Church Lane have no objection to the change of use but are very concerned that access to and from the site would constitute a considerable traffic hazard added to the number of vehicles which already use Church Lane.

## **Planning Comments - Key Issues**

### ***Change of use***

75. The Hall was built to serve as a dwelling and continued in this use up until the 1980's when the use changed to a language teaching school. The guidance in PPG 15 is

that the best way of securing the upkeep of historic buildings is to keep them in active use. The preference is to try and retain a building in the use for which it was originally designed.

76. When the building was in receivership the main interest for residential use was for the conversion of the Hall into flats and the redevelopment of part of the grounds for new build dwellings. Such a use of the Hall was considered to harm the special character and lead to too greater intervention to the fabric and internal layout of the building. The further fragmentation of the grounds was considered to be harmful to the setting of the Hall, the character of the Conservation Area, the Historic Gardens and the quality of the natural landscape.
77. The principal objectors argue that the Hall should remain in educational use or should be used a single dwelling. They claim that a number of parties were interested in the Hall. No such parties approached the LPA and no formal applications were received on this basis.
78. One concern the LPA would have with such an educational use continuing is the further institutionalisation of the character of the Hall and the need for extensive new development in the grounds. The original master plan for the former use showed three linked accommodation blocks adjacent to the coach house and a sports hall and lecture theatre.
79. The proposals under consideration as part of this application propose a use which both the LPA and English Heritage consider to have similarities to a domestic use. The overall internal layout and circulation space of the house could be retained without significant intervention. The principal rooms on the ground floor would be retained for communal use. The alterations are therefore confined to more subordinate rooms and ancillary buildings such as the coach house. The principal rooms on the upper floors will be put back to the original function as bedroom spaces. The reintroduction of domestic furnishing would greatly add to the character and appearance of these rooms which has been significantly eroded by their use as classrooms.
80. The use enables the whole Hall to be brought into economic use and importantly the grounds would serve to function in association with this use. Whilst there is an element of new build proposed, this is not independent development to be sold off but would function as part of the overall use. The use as a hotel will have a more intensive use than if it were a single dwelling, but such an intensification has already been accepted in the 1980's with the education use. The proposed sensitive treatment of the new build elements and screen planting to the parking area and driveway realignment together with the proposed management of the Hall and grounds is considered to present a holistic approach to the various built heritage and landscape considerations of the site.
81. The LPA and the national amenity groups all consider the use to be an appropriate one which will not harm the special character of the buildings or landscape setting and therefore the tests of Policy EN26 are considered to be met.

### ***New Build***

82. There are five elements of new build proposed:
  - A new restaurant in the walled garden

- Three two-storey blocks of bedroom accommodation running along the garden wall to the western side of the garden
  - A indoor/outdoor pool
  - A subterranean crèche/laundry building; and
  - A plant building
83. Other than siting, no details of the proposed subterranean crèche/laundry and plant buildings were included as part of the application. The applicant proposes that these details be conditioned.
84. The existing restaurant attached to the former stable blocks and a number of outbuildings, detailed below, are to be demolished.
85. The new elements are of modern design to contrast with the architecture of the Hall. The scale and form of the structures are not considered to dominate the Listed Building or the landscape context in which they will be located. The LPA and national amenity groups agree these have been designed in a discrete and sensitive manner so as to meet the criteria of national and local policies. English Heritage has not taken the view that the proposals constitute enabling development but, if one considers the development in the context of the enabling development guidance, the proposals are considered to accord with the principles of this:
- It is not considered to detract from the archaeology, historic architectural landscape or biodiversity interest of the site;
  - It avoids fragmentation of the site;
  - It secures the long-term future use of the site as a whole;
  - There is a clear need to secure a long-term use for the site as a whole;
  - A business plan has been submitted to demonstrate the long-term viability of the scheme and the need for the new build elements;
  - The scheme secures investment in both the natural and built heritage of the site;
  - The Parish and local members are supportive of the scheme as it is seen as a benefit to the village and will enable a higher degree of 'public' access to the site than previous uses have afforded.
86. Internal and external alterations to Hall:
- Prior to formulating the application, a historical analysis of the building had been undertaken to establish the development of the layout of the building. The works can be summarized as follows:
87. Ground floor:
- The reinstatement of the front porch as the main entrance to the building;
  - Reinstatement of decorative ceiling to main hall which collapsed in 1960's;
  - Works to staircase to eastern range which is currently temporarily propped as it has structural problems caused by modern alterations;

- Formation of four bedroom spaces with en-suite bathrooms including one in vaulted area inserted in 19th century which will be part removed to reinstate window;
- Refurbishment of chapel with intention of bringing back into consecrated use and reinstatement of two former openings to this;
- Addition of new doorway within courtyard where existing window is.

88. First floor:

- Use of long gallery as bedroom, creation of new plaster ceiling and removal of modern beams to ceiling;
- Creation of six further bedrooms with ancillary en-suites including removal of twentieth century stud walls to western range. Some en-suites are in former wardrobe areas;
- Short gallery to be formed into semi open balcony areas associated with the two principal bedrooms in the two panelled rooms. Provision of bathroom to one bedroom within open gallery space;
- Formation of new staircase to second floor in eastern range;
- Roof terrace garden to be formed to flat roofed area to western end of long gallery.

89. Second floor:

- Creation of nine bedrooms with en-suite facilities;
- Removal of 19th/ 20th century queen post trusses and installation of new structural supports within wall void to all ranges;
- New roof lights.

90. Coach house:

- Formation of 8 bedroom units on the two floor
- Installation of roof lights to rear elevation
- Formation of bat roost area to roof void
- Fenestration

91. The guidance in PPG 15 is that where new uses are proposed that the proposed alterations to the building must be balanced against the special interest of the building and the viability of the proposed use and that of any alternative less damaging uses.

92. The LPA and the national amenity groups are of the opinion that the alterations proposed keep to a minimum the level of intervention necessary and where alterations are proposed it is principally to 19th or 20th century structures some of which detract from the special character of the building and their removal will be of benefit to the building.

***Archaeology***

93. The site has been identified as being of archaeological importance but the County Archaeological team is satisfied that this does not preclude the proposed development from taking place. The investigation of the archaeology below ground can be secured by a condition following the advice of paragraph 30 of Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 'Archaeology and Planning'.

#### ***Demolition***

94. The structures on site which are proposed to be demolished all date from the war or post war period. These consist of:
- A range of buildings on the western side of the walled garden;
  - Some freestanding corrugated outbuildings in the south western area of the site;
  - The post war extension to the coach house;
  - The glazed post war link between the coach house and the Hall.
95. None of the structures is considered to be of significant historic interest or architectural importance to warrant retention. It is proposed that a photographic record be made of the structures prior to their demolition.

#### ***Impact on character and appearance of the Conservation Area***

96. The Hall is not easily visible from public land. The landscape grounds provide an important setting to the housing which has developed around the site. The new use for the site and proposed development is not considered to adversely impact on the character and appearance of the site.
97. The new build elements are considered to be of an appropriate and high quality design which are considered to fulfil the test of preserving or enhancing the character of the area.

#### ***Impact on Historic landscape and gardens***

98. The formal and natural landscapes are both to be formally managed as part of the use of the site as a hotel. An analysis of the historic landscape has been undertaken as part of the proposals. This supports the location and form of the new build elements as proposed. General support for the approach has been given by the Garden History Society and where they have raised a slightly different point of view this has been responded to.

#### ***Impact on Listed buildings and their setting***

99. The impact on the Hall and coach house have been considered above. In addition to these buildings are the entrance gates, the church and statue of atlas to be considered. The entrance gates are not to be altered as part of the works and the Highway engineers have accepted the access width at this point. The new access will be taken around the rear boundary of the church and so the setting of this needs to be considered. The surface treatment of the driveway and the retention of the majority of the existing trees are considered to minimise any potential impact of this development. The statue will remain in situ within the courtyard area of the Hall.

#### **Development plan policies including impact on Green Belt**

100. Local Plan Policy RT11 supports the principle of the conversion of existing buildings outside village frameworks to provide overnight visitor accommodation and Policy GB2 states that the re-use of buildings is not inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The conversion of the Hall and stables elements of the scheme accords with these policies. However, the new build element of the scheme is inappropriate development in the Green Belt and, as it involves new building in the countryside, is also contrary to Local Plan Policy RT11. Very special circumstances are required to set aside the presumption against inappropriate development in the Green Belt and, in order to allow new build overnight visitor accommodation and restaurants in the countryside, there must be material considerations which justify setting aside the presumption against the approval of such development in the countryside.

101. It is considered that it is important to find a viable and sustainable use for the Hall site. There is also a benefit of what might be termed a semi-public use like a hotel and restaurant use over the use of the site as a single dwelling in that there would be a degree of public access to this important site. In order to ensure that the proposed hotel use would be viable but did not involve any more development than is necessary, a firm of consultants, HLL Humberts Leisure, a Chartered Surveyors and International Leisure Business Consultancy, was instructed to comment on the proposal. Specifically, it was asked it to comment on the scheme on the basis that the District Council needed to ascertain whether any new build development is necessary in order to make a hotel use of the site viable and sustainable, and if so, what scale of new build development is necessary (i.e. is the scale and nature of new build development proposed necessary and appropriate in scale?). In response, it concluded that:

- The hotel is in a reasonable catchment for corporate and high net worth leisure visitors. The immediate catchment in the local area does not fit the trading profile of the proposed hotel.
- The property is not in a high profile location and will therefore need to attract the customer profile that has been recognised in its business plan through its “offering” and through aggressive marketing.
- To operate successfully within its identified market profile, the hotel needs to be of the order of 40 bedrooms. It also needs a high quality spa and a restaurant of sufficient size and quality to enable it to gain award winning-status. The existing building is not of sufficient size to accommodate these facilities.
- Without the new build, the market profile of the business will, of necessity, be different. Conferencing and leisure will be limited which, in turn, will impact on occupancy levels.  
It can be the case to expect occupancy levels to decrease as bedroom stock is increased. In this case the reverse would be true because the market mix would be restricted.
- The absence of the new build would potentially reduce the number of local non-residential visits. There would be no day spa guests and the number of non-resident diners would be lower. This would impair local amenity enjoyment.
- Without the new build, the quality of conference delegates and leisure users would be diminished because of the lack of associated facilities such as the spa which are now an expectation of many conference goers. The resultant

reduction in revenues through both lower achieved room rates and less food and beverage spend would be to the financial detriment of the business.

- The level of return on capital, without the new build would put in jeopardy the restoration of an important Grade 1 Listed building.
- Without the new build facilities, the EBITDA and value of the property would be reduced to a level where funding of the project would probably be unobtainable and if it were forthcoming, the business would not be able to cover interest and capital repayments.

102. It is also worthy of note that, as Members will see from the Planning History section of this report, the District Council has approved applications for new build development on the site in the past, including an accommodation building for the language school which was never implemented. In order to ensure an appropriate use of the site, having carefully considered the detailed advice from HLL Humberts Leisure and considering that the continuing income generated by occupation of the new build elements of the scheme would provide revenue to ensure that the Hall and grounds are appropriately maintained, it is considered that there are very special circumstances in this instance to justify the approval of the scheme even though it constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt and as a departure from development plan policies.

103. It is considered that the proposal would not seriously detract from the openness of the Green Belt or the visual amenities of the countryside.

#### ***Impact on trees***

104. The scheme has been amended in response to concerns about the impact on trees. Subject to (1) the receipt of satisfactory amended plans and further information in relation to the precise positions of the crèche/laundry building and the structural grass road providing access to the pool and treatment building and details of the proposed principal service trench in response to the Trees & Landscape Officer's comments and (2) conditions, the proposal is considered to be acceptable in this respect.

#### ***Ecological impact***

105. In its latest response, English Nature still requests the results of a bat survey. However, the Ecology Officer is of the opinion that the proposal has appropriately addressed this issue and is seeking English Nature's updated view on the matter. Bat activity was identified but it did not necessarily constitute a roost. The Council's Ecology Officer is satisfied that no protected species would be affected. English Nature's further comments in response to this will be sought before the meeting. Subject to the receipt of confirmation from English Nature that it does not require any further information before the applications are determined, and conditions, the scheme as amended is considered to be acceptable with respect to ecological interests as it provides a significant new bat roost and management of the SSSI.

#### ***Highway safety and access issues***

106. The Local Highway Authority has carefully considered the proposal and, subject to the securing of a pedestrian footway along Church Lane, it states that the proposed access and parking details as shown upon the latest site plan (SAW/01.101E) are acceptable.

107. Appendix 7 of the Local Plan sets out maximum standards for car parking provision. It sets out a maximum provision of 1 space per 5 square metres of public restaurant area and a maximum of 13 spaces for 10 guest bedrooms, which equates to 53 spaces for the hotel use and 32 spaces for the restaurant. The proposed pool and treatment building is also likely to generate some demand for parking. The proposed parking provision (52 car spaces, 6 spaces for courtesy electric cars plus 20 cycle racks) is considered to be acceptable. Although some way below the maximum standards, many of those visiting the restaurant and pool/treatment building will be hotel guests. Unnecessary parking could also detract from the setting of the Hall and the appearance of the site.

### ***Sustainability***

108. The applicant's aim is for the hotel to be the most environmentally friendly and sustainable hotel in Britain. He proposes using solar energy, electric cars and a reed bed filter as part of achieving this.

### ***Impact on surrounding uses***

109. The proposal would not unduly affect the amenity of occupiers of neighbours or surrounding uses.

### ***Other issues***

110. Both the Imperial War Museum, Duxford, and the applicant are willing to enter in discussions over the return of the memorial to the site from its current location at the Imperial War Museum once the change of use/long-term future of the site has been secured.

### **Recommendation**

111. That, subject to (1) the receipt of satisfactory amended plans and further information in relation to the precise positions of the crèche/laundry building and the structural grass road providing access to the pool and treatment building and details of the proposed principal service trench in response to the Trees & Landscape Officer's comments; and (2) the receipt of confirmation from English Nature that it does not require any further information before the applications are determined, the applications be referred to the Secretary of State and, if he does not call them in, that they be approved as amended subject to the conditions set out below.
112. S/1800/04/F - Planning Conditions
1. Standard time limited condition
  2. External materials to be used for the new buildings and full details of the crèche/laundry building and new plant building
  3. Archaeology
  4. Protection of trees during course of development
  5. Agreement and implementation of landscaping scheme
  6. Widening of Church Lane footway

7. During the period of construction and alterations, no power operated machinery outside specified hours except in accordance with agreed noise restrictions
  8. Pollution control, including foul and surface water drainage
  9. Details of construction and surfacing of the new access roads
  10. Demolition of existing buildings
  11. Ecological management plan, including details of the proposed reed bed, for the part of the site outside the SSSI
  12. Fire hydrants
  13. Use of the crèche by guests only
113. S/2054/04/LB - Listed Building Conditions
1. Listed Building Consent 1- standard time limit. (Reason LBC1);
  2. LBC2. Drawing numbers:
    - Block plan SAW/01.101 F 15.02.05
    - Existing site plan SAW/01.191
    - North drive detail SAW/01.111
    - Pool: SAW/01.216
    - Kitchen layout
    - Restaurant SAW/01.219
    - Proposed Ground floor SAW01.201 E
    - Proposed first floor SAW/01.202 E
    - Proposed second floor SAW/01.203 D
    - Proposed courtyard elevations SAW/01.225 and 226 A
    - Proposed Hall elevations SAW/01.222A, 223A
      - Proposed coach house elevations SAW/01.224C
    - Proposed layout for coach house SAW/01.205D
    - Kitchen garden rooms SAW/01. 317B,318B
    - Proposed roof plan SAW/01.204
    - Existing elevations SAW/01.210, 211,212 and 213
    - Existing coach house elevations SAW/01.214
    - Existing floor layouts SAW/01.101,102,103
    - Existing roof plan SAW/01.104
  3. LBC 9 - securing archaeological investigation. (Reason - LBC9).
  4. The buildings and extensions to buildings to be demolished as part of this consent shall be subject of a photographic record prior to any demolition taking place. The photos shall be annotated to a site plan. Three copies of the record shall be submitted to the LPA within six months of the demolition having taken place.  
(Reason - To ensure the buildings to be demolished are properly recorded before the demolition works take place).
  5. LBC 3 - full specification and schedule to be secured;
  6. LBC 12 - access to English Heritage for recording;

7. LBC16 - window details;
8. LBC 20 - hard landscaping details;
9. LBC 23 - details of materials;
10. LBC 28 Agreement of following details;
  - a. Specification and method statements for all repair works and site meeting with proposed contractors to discuss the works including stone work, roof, internal floor repairs and repair or cleaning of panelling;
  - b. Protection measures for the historic features of the main building to be installed for the duration of the works in particular to protect the turret staircase, glass in the windows and panelling and fireplaces within the building;
  - c. Detailed specification for all interior decoration;
  - d. Details of the screen to be installed to the balcony to the chapel;
  - e. Details of the treatment of the new roof terrace adjacent to the Long Gallery including any strengthening works and materials to be employed;
  - f. Details of treatment of floors including the method of lifting the existing floor boards to ensure they are not damaged and ensure they are refitted to match the existing configuration;
  - g. Details of new ceilings for the Hall and Long Gallery;
  - h. Details of the routing of new services including the runs of service pipes and the internal or external visible elements including signage, ducts, smoke alarms, lighting and ventilation grills;
  - i. The details of any fire precaution measures specifically including the design of new firedoors or the means of upgrading existing doors, and signage details;
  - j. The details of any works to improve the insulation of the building;
  - k. The details of any new rainwater goods;
11. LBC 29 - mortars plasters etc to be lime rich;
12. LBC 33 - rooflights;
13. Precise details of how the new openings are to be formed and detailed in the existing garden wall as part of the new kitchen garden developments shall be submitted to and agreed with the LPA before works commence on this development.  
(Reason: To secure detailing appropriate to this Listed Building);

14. A sample panel of materials for each of the new build elements shall be constructed in site to enable the LPA to agree all the materials including where applicable the colour finish, brick bonding and joint details.  
(Reason: to ensure the use of materials appropriate for this historic context Departure Application).

### **Informatives**

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

- Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Structure Plan 2003
- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004
- English Heritage: Policy Statement - Enabling Development and the conservation of Heritage assets
- Planning Policy Guidance Notes Nos. 6, 9, 13, 15, 16 and 21 and PPS9 (consultation paper)
- Planning files referenced under Relevant Planning History heading

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