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Brandon House, King Street, Knutsford,
Cheshire WA16 6DX
Web: www.walsinghamplanning.co.uk

Our Ref: VH/KN0087/19

17 September 2019

Planning Department
Staffordshire Moorlands District Council
Stockwell Street
Leek
Staffordshire Moorlands
ST13 6HQ

Dear Sir/Madam

Extension to Premier Inn Hotel, Ashbourne Rd, Leek ST13 5AS

Planning Portal Reference PP-08164721

We are instructed by Premier Inn Hotels Limited to submit a planning application in relation to its existing hotel at Ashbourne Road, Leek Town Centre.

The application proposes an '*extension and installation of a cold store to the existing hotel together with associated alterations to the car park'*

The planning application has been submitted via the Planning Portal and in addition to the completed application form and certificate it is accompanied by the following drawings:

- Dwg No. PI642 – AP 01 – Existing Site Plan;
- Dwg No. PI642 – AP 02 – Proposed Site Plan;
- Dwg No. PI642 – AP 03 – Site Location Plan;
- Dwg No. P6I42 – AP 04 – Existing Floor Plans;
- Dwg No. PI642 – AP 05 – Proposed Flood Plans;
- Dwg No. PI642 – AP 06 – Existing Elevations;
- Dwg No. PI642 – AP 07 – Proposed Elevations;
- Car Park Survey Dated September 2018;
- Town Centre Car Park Location Plan.

This letter comprises the planning justification and should be considered alongside other submitted information when determining the application.

Introduction

This application is submitted in relation to the Premier Inn Hotel on Ashbourne Road in Leek Town Centre and seeks permission for a two storey, with undercroft parking, 28-bedroom extension to the existing 63-bedroom hotel.

Site and Surroundings

The site currently consists of a 63 bed Premier Inn Hotel with associated restaurant which currently operates under the Thyme Bar and Grill brand. The site includes 54 car parking spaces, a number of which are situated in an under-croft parking facility. It is roughly rectangular in shape and is circa 0.2 hectares in area.

The hotel was granted planning permission in 2013 under planning application 13/00312/FUL_MJ and has been successfully operating since its opening. The hotel was developed to include the facade of the former Talbot Hotel and the ground floor of this part of the building operates as the associated restaurant.

The hotel is located on the eastern periphery of Leek Town Centre and as such there are many commercial uses within the immediate vicinity, mainly shops, restaurants and public houses. There are also a small number of residential properties, both ground and first floor, particularly on Ashbourne Road. To the south of the hotel are a number of residential streets, mainly consisting of terraced houses.

Vehicular access to the car park is accessed via Ashbourne Road, this operates on an in and out system. Due to the Town Centre location the site is well served by public transport with excellent road and bus connections.

Proposal

Premier Inn has identified a considerable demand for additional budget hotel accommodation in this location and this proposal, for 28 additional bedrooms, would go some way in helping to address this demand.

The proposed extension will be located off the western elevation of the existing hotel on an area currently used for car parking with limited landscaping. The proposed extension will consist of two floors providing hotel accommodation and one floor of car parking, this will extend the existing form of the hotel, which currently provides under croft car parking.

The extension will mirror the design and form of the existing hotel and fits well within the site. The site will provide 48 car parking spaces to serve both the hotel and the restaurant, this is a slight decrease from the existing number of spaces of 54.

The proposed extension to the hotel will be constructed in materials to match the existing hotel. The materials used for external walls, roofing, windows will all be selected to match those used in the construction of the original hotel. The form and location of the proposal has been carefully chosen to allow an effective and efficient use of the site.

In addition to the 28-bedroom extension this application seeks permission for the installation of a cold store within the existing under croft car parking area. The external wall of this cold store will be constructed of insulated panelling.

Planning History

The relevant planning history is set out below;

05/04/2007
SMD/2006/0504 Conservation area consent for the demolition of single storey extensions to allow for the erection of a new apartment building
Approved

05/04/2007
SMD/2006/0503 Conversion and extension of public house to form retail unit at ground floor with 14 residential apartments on the upper floors together with associated parking, refuse storage, bicycle store and demolition of single storey outbuilding
Approved

22/02/2006
SMD/2005/1379 Conversion of public house/hotel into ground floor retail unit, with conversion of first floor to apartments. Demolition of single storey extension and erection of apartments. Car parking for 19 vehicles and garden space
Withdrawn

22/06/2006
SMD/2005/1449 Demolition of single storey extensions within a conservation area
Withdrawn

28/02/2005
SMD/2004/1054 - Conversion of public house to 6 flats and the erection of 6 new flats, plus access and car park
Approved

Planning Policy

The site falls within the Town Centre of Leek as well as partially within the Leek Town Centre Conservation Area.

The adopted development plan for the borough consists of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document adopted 2014. In addition, The National Planning Policy Framework should also be considered when determining this application.

The NPPF seeks to ensure that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and that positive planning solutions are found to ensure that economic development is brought forward. **Paragraph 11,** states that plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development and goes on to state that Local Planning Authorities should approve development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay.

The need to support and facilitate a prosperous economy is set out within **Paragraph 80.**

Chapter 14 of the NPPF is concerned with the issues of climate change and, flooding and coastal change and states, at **Paragraph 148**, that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate. **Paragraph 154** of this chapter states that local planning authorities should not require applicants to demonstrate need and recognise that even small-scale projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions.

Local Development Plan – Core Strategy

Turning to local policy; general development principles are set out under **Policy SS1.** This policy states that the LPA seeks to improve social, economic and environmental aspects of the area through supporting the delivery of quality local services, including tourist facilities. It also seeks to deliver high quality, sustainable developments that make effective use of resources as well as increased economic prosperity.

Policy TCR 1 is concerned with development within the Town Centres and states that the vitality and viability of the town centres will be protected and enhanced via a number of measures, including supporting tourism proposals

The Leek Area Strategy is set out under **Policy SS5a**. This policy states at point 4 that the Council will seek to consolidate Leek as the principle service centre through increasing tourist opportunities through additional high-quality accommodation. This is supplemented by a number of further measures that seek to enhance the town of Leek.

Tourism and cultural development policy is set out under **Policy E3.** This policy states that *New tourism and cultural development will be assessed according to the extent to which it supports the local economy and promotes the distinctive character and quality of the District and enhances the role of Staffordshire Moorlands as a tourism and leisure destination.* It goes on to state that visitor accommodation should be located in settlements that provide local services, facilities and public transport.

Policy DC1 sets out the Design Considerations for the Plan area. It states, amongst other considerations, that all development should;

- *be of a high quality and add value to the local area, incorporating creativity, detailing and materials appropriate to the character of the area;*

- *be designed to respect the site and its surroundings and promote a positive sense of place and identity through its scale, density, layout, siting, landscaping, character and appearance.*

Emerging Local Policy

The Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan Submission Version was published in February 2018 and as such is considered to be progressed enough to be considered a material consideration for this application. It represents mainly an update of the adopted Core Strategy and as such many of the policies are broadly similar to those currently adopted. However, the Policy concerning Heritage has changed to a slightly greater degree to the other relevant policies and as such we consider that this

application should be assessed against this Policy, noting the Inspectors comments regarding compliance with the NPPF.

Policy DC 2 states that;

- *The Council will conserve and where possible enhance heritage assets, including their setting in a manner appropriate to their significance. This will take into account the desirability of maintaining and enhancing their significance and will ensure that development proposals contribute positively to the character of the built and historic environment.*
- *Protection will be given to designated heritage assets and their settings and non-designated heritage assets as set out in the NPPF.*
- *All applications likely to affect heritage assets will require the submission of a heritage statement, including a qualitative visual assessment where appropriate.*

Principle of the Development

The principle of a hotel on the site was established by the granting of the original planning permission 13/00312/FUL_MJ in 2013, therefore, the hotel use is entirely acceptable at this location and the principle has been fully established. The hotel is located within Leek Town Centre and is therefore entirely sustainable in all planning terms. Both national and local policy seek to encourage this type of use within Town Centres.

The hotel operates viably and successfully, and as such Premier Inn have identified this as a site that can accommodate further hotel rooms. The Leek hotel is a highly successful hotel within the brand and as such it has been identified as one which should be extended in order to accommodate predicted visitor numbers.

The site falls within Flood Zone 1 and as such is not considered to be at risk of flooding.

Car Parking

Given the Town Centre location the hotel parking provision is entirely sufficient and appropriate. A parking survey, completed in 2018, shows that during the survey week the car park operated an average of 64 % occupancy.

A plan detailing all of the available car parking within Leek Town Centre is included with this submission. This plan clearly shows that there are both car parks as well as on street car parking opportunities available within close proximity to the hotel. The residential streets close to the hotel will offer hotel guests the opportunity to park overnight in the unlikely event that the car park is full.

Parking guidance set out under Appendix 8 of the adopted Core Strategy requires that hotels should offer 1 space per bedroom, however this does not take into account the town centre location of the hotel. The hotel is served by the existing car parks as well as other provision within the Town Centre.

This is a highly sustainable location in transport terms and as well as providing car parking opportunities the Town Centre also provides excellent access to public transport links.

Heritage Assessment

The site falls partially within the Leek Conservation Area and is close to the Grade II Listed Leek War Memorial, in this regard a brief Heritage Assessment has been undertaken, with specific regard to the guidance set out in Paragraph 196 of the NPPF.

Assessment of Significance

The site falls partially within the Leek Conservation Area, specifically the Eastern Section. The 2017 Leek Conservation Area Appraisal notes that the eastern section can be further subdivided into three elements:

- west of Ball Haye Street and adjacent to the market town;
- east of Ball Haye Street with Queen Street and the Monument;
- east of Earl Street with the Cross Street Mills.

The site falls within the area to the east of Ball Haye Street. The gentle fall in Derby Street towards the War Memorial is noted along with the dramatic outline of the former Talbot Hotel. There are a number of former mill buildings further west along Ashbourne Road. The listing for the War Memorial is set out on page 63 of the Conservation Area Appraisal.

It is considered that the significance of this part of the Leek Conservation Area can be derived from both the aesthetic value of the existing buildings and street layout and the communal value of the Talbot Hotel and the War Memorial. The Talbot Hotel has remained in its original use and retained its communal use

The significance of the War Memorial is derived from its both its communal and aesthetic value. It provides a focal point for the town and the location within a civic square adds to this communal value.

Assessment of Harm

The addition of an extension to this existing hotel will result in less than substantial harm to both the Conservation Area and the listed War Memorial. When weighed against the public benefits of this scheme, including but not limited to, the creating of additional hotel rooms that will contribute to tourism and economic prosperity in the town, the proposed extension clearly adheres to the test set out within paragraph 196 of the NPPF in relation to the Conservation Area.

Planning Assessment

The additional rooms provided through this proposed extension will provide additional visitor accommodation within the town centre of Leek. This clearly and fundamentally accords with policies E3, SS1, SS5 a and TCR1 of the Core Strategy.

The proposal responds to the pressing requirement to deliver additional rooms at this highly popular site in the most efficient and deliverable form possible. This has been achieved whilst maintaining the high design standards set by the original hotel. The extension mirrors the existing hotel in terms of

scale, massing and design. In this regard the proposal is fully complaint with the design standards set in **DC1** of the Core Strategy.

The site is sustainable in transport terms due to its location on a main road which provides excellent access to the local road network, which in turn leads to the national motorway network. Leek Bus Station is within 100 metres of the site and provides excellent links to the local bus network.

Conclusion

There is considerable policy support for this development and there are no policies contained within the local development plan that would seek to restrict a development of this nature in this location; this coupled with the sustainable and established location of the site means that the development is fully development plan compliant.

This proposal is fully compliant with policies within the NPPF in relation to economic growth and sustainable development as well as local planning policy. We consider that this development offers an opportunity for both economic and sustainable development in a well-established and highly suitable location.

Considering all of the above and in line with the National Planning Policy framework we urge that planning permission is granted without delay.

The fee for the application is £2,772 and as such this amount has been paid directly to the Planning Portal.

I trust that the information supplied is sufficient to enable the application to be registered and progressed. However, if you require any additional information or you have any queries then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

Vicky Harper
Planner
Walsingham Planning