

DELEGATED

AGENDA NO.

REPORT TO PLANNING COMMITTEE

DATE: 31 January 2007

**REPORT OF THE CORPORATE
DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT AND
NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES**

06/3419/REM

Reserved Matter application for approval of external appearance for both Hotel Extension and for the erection of 250 no. Apartments

Tall Trees Hotel, Worsall Road, Yarm

Expiry date: 7th February 2007

Update report

Since the report was written comments have been received from the **Castle Leavington and Kirklevington Parish Council**. A number of issues have been raised which are summarised as follows:

Residential apartments

- Concerned about a major housing development on the south side of Green Lane eroding the green wedge between Yarm and the rural villages including Kirklevington.
- Concerned that low cost and low quality materials will be used.
- The façade is very detailed and fussy and if not properly implemented will create an eyesore. It also appears vulgar and brash and architecturally ugly for this type of development in a rural area. It will be a blot on the landscape.
- The mass of the elevations rising to 4 storeys will be oppressive and over dominate the site resulting in poor visual amenity for the dwellings facing the development.

Traffic

- The development will increase difficult traffic problems around the Yarm.
- The earlier traffic report, it is claimed, made no apparent allowance for the restriction of traffic movement through Yarm centre and the effect of the traffic lights at the railway bridge, which must significantly reduce capacity.
- The assessment also focussed on the apartment development and proposal now links this with a significant increase in size of the hotel and hence further traffic movements.
- Experience has shown that with the present facilities roads become overloaded at peak times and any increase in traffic at the Green Lane roundabout would

exacerbate rush-hour congestion. There is a need for significant road safety improvements for pedestrians.

It has also been noted that part of the sites' **planning history** has been inadvertently omitted from the main report. In paragraph 8 the following bullet points describing the other elements of the development previously approved at the outline stage should have been included:

- “An extension to the existing hotel, in the form of a curved structure on four levels extending from the south-western corner of the hotel, towards the Saltergill Beck and incorporating small shops as part of the foyer, leisure facilities, restaurant / bar, conference and function rooms, offices and apartments;
- The demolition and removal of the existing leisure and night-club facilities located within the site. It will form the second phase of operations on the site and will be undertaken over a period of some 10-12 months. Demolition will involve salvaging and recycling of fixtures, fittings and materials, wherever possible;
- The construction of new residential apartments, located in place of the existing leisure and night-club facilities, with associated underground and above ground car parking. This work will be undertaken in phases over a period of 4 years. In tandem with this construction work, new internal access roads will be created, linked to the existing site entrance, and additional landscaped areas provided in place of the extensive existing car parking within the site. It is anticipated that the apartments will be fitted out and released onto the market in three phases, during years 2 – 4 of the four year period.”

Material Considerations

As stated in the main report, concerns about the development conflicting with planning policy by being outside the urban limits (it is not within a Green Wedge) and the traffic impact of the proposed development and now raised by the Parish Council are not material to this reserved matter application. Such issues were fully considered at the outline stage. The only issue to consider with this application is whether the proposed external appearance and design of the approved extensions as set out in the planning submission is acceptable.

However, for members information on the traffic aspect, the outline planning application was accompanied by a full Transport Assessment and the approval was subject to planning conditions requiring detailed approval for the necessary off-site highway improvement works and the for a sustainable transport plan. Furthermore, a Section 106 legal agreement was entered into requiring the following financial contributions from the applicant:

- £75,000 towards the provision of a footpath and cycleway route linking the application site with Yarm Station.
- £105,000 towards improving or remodelling the crossroads roundabout.
- £100,000 towards the construction of a long stay car park to serve Yarm Town centre

In respect of the design concerns expressed by the Parish Council and which are relevant to this application:

The materials to be used will be controlled by planning condition (see main report). It is the stated intention of the applicant to use high quality materials given the purpose is to achieve a 5* grading for the hotel.

It has always been intended that the apartment blocks will be four storeys and was shown as such on the indicative drawings submitted with the outline planning application. The siting of the blocks was also approved at that time with the blocks staggered and set back from the main road to reduce visual impact. This application does not change that aspect of the development.

The design and appearance of those blocks shown at that time was more contemporary than is now proposed but still included the dome features. Whilst the comments made by the Parish Council on the more classical style now proposed are noted, its view that it is vulgar and brash and architecturally ugly in a rural area is not supported.

Design is often a matter of taste and as PPS 1 states “Local planning authorities should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes”. The intention for the hotel is to achieve a 5* status with the objective of the architectural design being “to create buildings which reflect the grand and impressive scale of a classical architectural style, similar in principle to a stately home set in the landscape grounds of a country estate”. In this it is considered that the design achieves this objective. Whilst this style might not be to everyone aesthetic taste and it might be argued by some that a more contemporary treatment rather than the classic style would have been better, it is considered the design put forward meets the essential requirement for high quality scheme. It proposes a distinctive but classical architectural style that is in proportion to and recognises its impressive landscape setting. The intention is also use a high standard of the finishing materials, the precise details of which can be controlled by planning condition.

As such, notwithstanding the concerns raised by the Parish Council, the details submitted for approval are acceptable and the application is therefore recommended for approval as set out in the main report.

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Financial Implications

As report.

Environmental Implications

As Report

Community Safety Implications

N/A

Human Rights Implications

The provisions of the European Convention of Human Rights 1950 have been taken into account in the preparation of this report.

Background Papers:

Planning Policy Statement 1 “Delivering Sustainable Development”

Adopted Tees Valley Structure Plan (February 2004)

Adopted Stockton on Tees Local Plan (June 1997)

Application files: 97.0295/P, 03/1622/P, 04/3905/EIS & 06/3419/REM

Ward Yarm

Ward Councillors Councillor Mrs J Beaumont
Councillor B Jones
Councillor A Sherris