

- 5C (a) 3/10/1396/FP - Erection of extension to provide 43 en-suite bedrooms;
(b) 3/10/1401/LB-Erection of extension and glazed link to provide 43 en-suite bedrooms;
(c) 3/10/1543/LB- Internal alterations to amalgamate bedrooms in courtyard building
at Fanhams Hall Hotel, Fanhams Hall, Fanhams Hall Road, Ware, Hertfordshire, SG12 7PZ for Exclusive Hotels.
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Date of Receipt: (a) 11.08.2010
(b) 31.08.2010
(c) 26.08.2010

Type: (a) Full – Major
(b) Full-Other
(c) Full-Other

Parish: THUNDRIDGE, WARESIDE

Ward: HUNSDON, THUNDRIDGE AND STANDON

RECOMMENDATION

- (a) That Planning Permission be **REFUSED** in respect of 3/10/1396/FP for the following reasons:-
1. The application site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt as defined in the East Hertfordshire Local Plan wherein permission will not be given except in very special circumstances for development for purposes other than those required for mineral extraction, agriculture, small scale facilities for participatory sport and recreation or other uses appropriate to a rural area. No such special circumstances are apparent in this case, and the proposal would therefore be contrary to policy GBC1 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007.
 2. The proposal would result in the loss of a number of prominent and attractive trees and the Local Planning Authority are not satisfied that the proposed replacement planting would be sufficient to mitigate against the harm that their removal would have to the character and appearance of the site and the visual impact that the proposed building would have upon the registered historic garden, contrary to policies ENV2, ENV11 and BH16 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007.
 3. Insufficient information has been submitted to demonstrate that an adequate sequential assessment has been carried out as required by PPS4 and the Council is not satisfied, from the information submitted, that the proposed development is essential to ensure the future viability of the existing business. The proposal is thereby contrary to national planning policy set out in PPS4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth.

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4. The application lacks sufficient information regarding the presence of protected species to enable the Local Planning Authority to properly consider the planning merits of the application. The proposal would thereby be contrary to policy ENV16 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007.
5. The proposal fails to make adequate financial provision towards sustainable transport programs. It would thereby be contrary to the provisions of policies TR1 and IMP1 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007.

(b) That Listed Building Consent be **GRANTED** in respect of 3/10/1401/LB subject to the following conditions:-

1. Listed Building three year time limit (1T141)
2. Samples of materials (2E123)
3. Listed building (new doors) (8L043)
4. Listed building (new window) (8L033)
5. Prior to any building works being first commenced, detailed drawings of the new glazed link at a scale of 1:200 or similar shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the historic and architectural character of the building is properly maintained, in accordance with the aims of PPS5 – Planning for the Historic Environment.

6. Listed building (making good) (8L103)

Summary of Reasons for Decision

The proposal has been considered with regard to the policies of the Development Plan (Hertfordshire County Structure Plan, Minerals Local Plan, Waste Local Plan and the saved policies of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007), and in particular PPS5 – Planning for the Historic Environment. The balance of the considerations having regard to those policies is that consent should be granted.

(c) That Listed Building Consent be **GRANTED** in respect of 3/10/1543/LB subject to the following conditions:-

1. Listed Building three year time limit (1T141)

(a) 3/10/1396/FP, (b) 3/10/1401/LB, (c) 3/10/1543/LB

2. Listed building (new doors) (8L043)
3. Listed building (making good) (8L103)

Summary of Reasons for Decision

The proposal has been considered with regard to the policies of the Development Plan (Hertfordshire County Structure Plan, Minerals Local Plan, Waste Local Plan and the saved policies of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007), and in particular PPS5 – Planning for the Historic Environment. The balance of the considerations having regard to those policies is that consent should be granted.

_____ (139610FP.NB)

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The application site is shown on the attached OS extract.
- 1.2 Fanhams Hall Hotel is located within the Metropolitan Green Belt to the north east of Ware and is sited within substantial grounds of 10.64 hectares.
- 1.3 The principle building at the site is Grade II* Listed and a more recent addition to the site, known as North Lodge is Grade II Listed. Various other structures within the grounds of the hotel including stone lanterns, steps, bridges and outbuildings within the gardens are also Grade II Listed. The site is within a Historic Garden which is listed in the English Heritage's 'Register of Historic Parks and Gardens'.
- 1.4 The applications made under planning reference numbers 3/10/1396/FP and 3/10/1401/LB propose a 3 storey extension to provide 43 additional en-suite bedrooms.
- 1.5 The proposed extension would be sited to the north of the existing hotel buildings at the site on an area of lawn that is currently occupied by several mature Pine trees. The proposed building would be linked to the Grade II listed North Lodge, which is referred to within the applicant's submission as the Annexe, by a single storey glazed link. The 3 storey building would be sited at a distance of approximately 3.5 metres from the rear of the Annexe, the proposed building would then extend in a northern direction from the existing building reaching a length of 38 metres.
- 1.6 The part of the building that is closest to the existing Annexe building has a hipped roof which reaches a ridge height of 8.2 metres when taken from the western elevation and 7.4 metres when taken from the eastern elevation, this difference is due to a change in land levels. This ridge height is

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approximately 0.4 metre lower than that of the adjacent Annexe building. The land levels decline more substantially from a south to north direction which results in the ridge height of the building increasing to 9.8 metres. The ridge height of the Annexe buildings vary from 7.6 metres to 8.4 metres and the height of the Grade II* listed building at the site is approximately 13 metres.

- 1.7 The building is proposed with gable end projections within the north, east and west elevations. These are designed with parapet gables to match those found on the Annexe building. The building is proposed with dormer windows within the roof to serve the 2nd floor accommodation. These windows are designed, along with the remaining fenestration, which have stone quoins, to match that found on the existing Annexe. Several chimneys are proposed which would protrude no higher than 2 metres from the ridge of the roof of the building.
- 1.8 The application made for Listed Building Consent under Ipa reference 3/10/1543/LB, proposes internal alterations, including the removal of existing partitions to amalgamate existing bedrooms within the courtyard building as the applicant claims there is little demand for single bedrooms and this would create double bedrooms to make a more viable use of the premises. Officer's understand that these works would result in the loss of 14 bedrooms.

2.0 Site History

- 2.1 Fanhams Hall was previously used as a business training centre during which time various extensions were added to the buildings and in the late 1980's the buildings were considerably extended which resulted in the existing configuration.
- 2.2 In 2005, under Ipa reference 3/05/0001/FP planning permission was granted for the change of use of the buildings from a business training centre to a hotel, its current use.
- 2.3 In 2006 under Ipa reference 3/06/2160/LB Listed Building Consent was granted for internal alterations to the building.

3.0 Consultation Responses

- 3.1 The County Development Unit has commented in relation to the need for waste minimisation and has suggested that these issues can be addressed by condition if permission is granted.

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- 3.2 The Herts Biological Records Centre have commented that the site plan includes land that has been identified as a County Wildlife Site (46/044) Fanhams Hall Meadow and it is recommended that should permission be granted that careful attention is given to the need to conserve the Wildlife Site. HBRC recommend that an assessment should be made in relation to the on-site trees to be removed and their potential for bat roosts and nesting birds and a survey for great crested newts should be conducted prior to the determination of the application.
- 3.3 The Campaign to Protect Rural England objects to the proposed development and questions the special circumstances that the applicant presents in relation to additional bedrooms being needed to secure the future of the listed building.
- 3.4 County Highways do not wish to restrict the grant of permission subject to conditions in relation to the movement and parking of construction vehicles and the storage of materials, wheel washing facilities, and the submission of a Green Travel Plan. County Highways confirm general agreement with the findings of the Transport Statement submitted in support of the application and welcome the intention to provide an update to the existing Green Travel Plan. The only major point of disagreement is the lack of sustainable transport contribution being offered.

The proposal is well over the thresholds referred to in the East Herts Planning Obligations SPD and whilst the applicant is not suggesting that additional parking is proposed or indeed required, they have identified that there will be additional peak hour traffic movements. The Hertfordshire County Council Planning Obligations Toolkit calculates financial contributions based on increase in peak hour movements as opposed to parking provision as referred to in the East Herts SPD. Whilst it is acknowledged that the increase in traffic is not significant in terms of numbers it is felt that it is not unreasonable for this development to make a Sustainable Transport contribution toward measures that would assist visitors to the establishment that choose to attend by public transport or staff who may choose to walk or cycle. In this respect the Hertford and Ware Urban Transport plan includes a variety of measures to promote and encourage sustainable travel. Based on the toolkit and the findings of the submitted Transport Statement a contribution of just £11,000 is appropriate. With regard to on-site highway issues the development site is remote from the public highway, parking and vehicle service/delivery areas are retained and should there be a need for extra parking at times of peak demand there is sufficient land to accommodate these needs without spilling out onto the public highway. No changes to the existing access and egress arrangements are proposed or required. Hence the minimal number of appropriate highway conditions included in this response.

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- 3.5 The Councils Engineer has commented that the site is outside of flood risk zones 2 and 3, has no records of historical flooding and is not shown as susceptible to overland flows. However, limited information is given in relation to surface water drainage and as part of the building would be sunken into the ground this would be vulnerable to flooding from surface water runoff.
- 3.6 The Hertfordshire Gardens Trust comment that whilst they have no objection in principle to the extension concerns are raised that it would impinge on the garden and the views across the garden. Mitigation planting is proposed and until such time as the replacement pine trees are mature enough to screen the extension these will not be sufficient to cancel out the impact of the new build upon the mature landscape. The Trust objects to the use of 'Chancer Village' bricks as opposed to harling (lime coating).
- 3.7 The Councils Landscape Officer recommends refusal of the application on the grounds that the location, size and scale of the proposals has left insufficient scope for any significant landscape measures to allow a sympathetic interface between the proposed development and either the existing car park or the surrounding historic garden.
- 3.8 The Conservation Officer has recommended approval of all three applications. With regards to the applications made for the extension to the hotel (Ipa. 3/10/1396/FP and 3/10/1401/LB) they have stated that although the impact the extension would have on the immediate and wider setting of Fanhams Hall is recognised, it is also noted that the design has been carefully considered to reflect the strong architectural features of the principle buildings which contribute to the character and appearance of their setting resulting in a modern constructed extension with a distinct relationship with its historic host. The success of which will be in the use and quality of materials proposed, a matter which can be dealt with via condition. The principle consideration, however, is the mass and scale of the proposal and the impact this would have on the wider setting of the historic buildings, landscape and gardens which include important views and vistas, a concern which could be overcome by the introduction of a good landscaping scheme including the re-instatement of mature pine trees around the periphery of the building providing some sense of screening which in turn will soften the overall mass, scale and distinct design.

In assessing the physical impact on the historic fabric of the Grade II North Lodge this is limited to a glazed link which will be attached to the existing projecting parapet gable, access to which is through an existing opening. The main concern therefore being the manner in which the frame of the link will be attached to the historic building a matter which can be dealt with in more detail via condition.

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In summary, although the extension is substantial, it is considered to have a minimal impact on the overall architectural and historic significance of the collection of listed buildings and historic landscape / gardens that make up Fanham Hall.

The Conservation Officer's comments in relation to the application for Listed Building Consent for the internal alterations to the existing building (Ipa. 3/10/1543/LB) states that the building in question has limited historic significance and as such the proposals would have limited impact on the historic fabric and is therefore acceptable.

4.0 Parish Council Representations

4.1 Both Thundridge and Wareside Parish Councils have been consulted on the applications and no comments from either of these Councils have been received.

5.0 Other Representations

5.1 The applications have been advertised by way of press notice, site notice and neighbour notification.

5.2 No letters of representation have been received.

6.0 Policy

6.1 The relevant 'saved' Local Plan policies in this application include the following:-

GBC1	Green Belt
ENV1	Design and Environmental Quality
ENV2	Landscaping
ENV11	Protection of Existing Hedgerows and Trees
ENV16	Protected Species
ENV17	Wildlife Habitats
SD1	Making Development More Sustainable
LRC10	Tourism
BH16	Historic Parks and Gardens
TR1	Traffic Reduction in New Developments
TR2	Access to New Developments
TR3	Transport Assessments
TR4	Travel Plans
TR7	Car Parking- Standards
TR20	Development Generating Traffic on Rural Roads
IMP1	Planning Conditions and Obligations

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6.2 In addition, the following National policy guidance are particularly relevant:-

PPG 2: Green Belts

PPS 5: Planning for the Historic Environment

PPS 4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth

7.0 Considerations

(a)3/10/1396/FP

7.1 The determining issues in relation to this application for planning permission are:

- Whether the principle of the development is acceptable, and whether very special circumstances exist to warrant a departure from Green Belt policy;
- The justification given for an extension to a town centre use in this rural location.
- The impact of the development on the setting of the Listed Buildings;
- The impact of the development on the Historic Garden;
- The loss of existing trees;
- The impact of the development on protected species; and
- The necessary contributions towards sustainable transport programs.

Principle of development

7.2 Both PPG2 and Local Plan Policy GBC1 outline specific types of development that are appropriate within the Green Belt, which includes agricultural related developments and essential facilities for outdoor sports and recreation. Developments involving extensions to hotels are not outlined as appropriate development within PPG2 and Policy GBC1 of the Local Plan. PPG2 states that inappropriate development is, by definition harmful to the Green Belt and that the onus is upon the applicant to demonstrate that the harm that the inappropriate development that is proposed would cause to the Green Belt would be clearly outweighed by other considerations. Very special circumstances must be demonstrated to permit the proposed inappropriate development and to justify a departure from local and national policy.

7.3 The 'very special circumstances' that the applicant argues within their

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supporting information relate to the future protection and maintenance of the heritage assets at the site, the future viability of the hotel and the wider economic contributions of the proposal. These 'very special circumstances' are discussed below:

Future protection and maintenance of heritage assets

- 7.4 The Design and Access Statement outlines that when the applicant purchased the site the buildings were in need of extensive refurbishment and the grounds had suffered some neglect. These works have come at a financial cost and it is a cost that will continue to need to be met on a regular basis if these important assets are to be conserved for the future. The applicant argues that the only means by which the future conservation of the heritage assets can be achieved is by ensuring that the business remains viable and successful.
- 7.5 Whilst Officers agree that the future preservation of the historical assets at the site is of importance and accept that achieving this would endure financial costs for the applicant, there is no evidence to suggest that any substantial repairs are currently required to the heritage assets at the site. Without any evidence to demonstrate that the existing business cannot sustain the necessary repairs to the heritage assets Officer's recommend that limited weight is given to these circumstances.

The future viability of the hotel

- 7.6 The applicant outlines that there is currently a mismatch between the demand for services and facilities provided by the hotel as a wedding and conference venue and the availability of bedrooms. A needs analysis has been submitted to accompany the application. This analysis explains that the main conference rooms at Fanhams Hall have a combined capacity of 430 delegates, whereas there are only 77 bedrooms at the hotel.
- 7.7 In addition to the concerns regarding the amount of rooms available compared to the conference room capacity, the applicant explains that there are problems due to the existing size of some of the bedrooms. Some of the existing bedrooms are single rooms which are difficult to occupy as most guests expect or require a double room. The application submitted for Listed Building Consent (ref. 3/10/1543/LB) proposes the demolition of internal partitions in order to amalgamate the existing single bedrooms into larger double rooms. The floor plans show that the part of the Annexe building where these alterations are proposed currently accommodates 47 rooms and as a result of the proposal to create larger rooms this would be reduced to 33 bedrooms. Although the proposed internal alterations to enlarge the rooms would overcome the existing problems with occupying

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the single bedrooms, it appears that this would inevitably displace 14 rooms.

- 7.8 The report outlines that over 75 potential bookings have been lost since January 2008 due to the quality of the hotels bedrooms and its inability to host delegates on site.
- 7.9 Officers acknowledge the need to improve the size of the existing single rooms and understand that this would inevitably result in a reduction in the number of bedrooms that are available at the hotel. Officers have not been led to the conclusion by any of the evidence that has been submitted however, that the loss of these rooms would result in the failure of the existing business and furthermore no evidence has been submitted to demonstrate that the existing business is not profitable. Notwithstanding this, the applicant has outlined that the existing occupancy rate of the bedrooms is 39%, whereas other hotels in the group achieve a 70%+ occupancy rate. Based on the information that has been submitted Officers consider there is justification for the provision of new accommodation to replace the bedrooms that would be displaced by the internal alterations. This would ensure that the proposed internal alterations would make a more efficient use of the existing building and the accommodation that it provides without resulting in a loss of facilities for the hotel. It is assumed that as the applicant claims that the existing single rooms are difficult to occupy that this proposal would also increase the occupancy rate of the hotel to a level that is above 39%. However, the number of rooms that would be displaced by the internal alterations would be just 14 and therefore these circumstances do not justify the full 43 additional bedrooms that are proposed in the new extension to the hotel.
- 7.10 In relation to the applicant's argument that the number of bedrooms available at the site is disproportionate to the conference room capacity at the site, the applicant has stated that the conference capacity is 430 delegates, compared to 77 bedrooms. The applicant argues that the number of bedrooms that the hotel accommodates is insufficient compared to their conference facilities, which results in business being lost to other nearby hotels. In order for a fair comparison to be made between the facilities at the application site and nearby competitors it would seem reasonable to Officers to compare hotels of a similar standard. The supporting documents suggest that Fanhams Hall is currently classed as a 3*/4* hotel. Nearby hotels which are of a similar star rating to Fanhams Hall includes The Roebuck (3*), Tewinbury Farm (4*), Theobalds Park (4*) and Down Hall (4*). In addition the needs assessment claims that Hanbury Manor, albeit a 5* hotel is also strong competition for Fanhams Hall. Using information from the websites of these hotels the table below has been devised by Officers in order to compare the number of rooms with the

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conference capacity.

Hotel	No. of Bedrooms	Conference Capacity	Ratio
Hanbury Manor	161	592	1 : 3.68
The Roebuck	49	200	1 : 4.08
Theobalds Park	141	627	1 : 4.45
Fanhams Hall	77	430	1 : 5.84
Down Hall	99	911	1 : 9.20
Tewinbury Farm	29	404 (not including the marquee)	1 : 13.93

Members should be aware that the above figures are estimated and are included in this report in order to make some comparison between Fanhams Hall and other hotels in the area in order to assist in the determination of whether the existing number of bedrooms are disproportionate to the conference capacity and whether these circumstances would result in the loss of business to local competitors.

- 7.11 The above figures show that three of the five nearby hotels have more bedrooms to provide for their conference room capacity than Fanhams Hall. However, the differences between these ratios are small, whereas the two hotels that have less bedrooms than Fanhams Hall to provide for their conference capacity, Tewinbury Farm and Down Hall have a significantly higher ratio. Officers consider that the above figures demonstrate that the number of bedrooms available at Fanhams Hall compared to the conference capacity is not significantly disproportionate when compared to other nearby hotels. However, it is acknowledged that the proposed internal alterations to amalgamate the single rooms would change the existing ratio and result in less bedrooms to provide for the conference facilities. Officers consider that the applicant has failed to demonstrate that the existing number of bedrooms at the hotel is substantially disproportionate to their conference capacity. Furthermore, even if this were the case, Officers are nevertheless not satisfied that this would justify a new building for 43 additional bedrooms within the Green Belt, particularly when there is no evidence that the existing business with its number of bedrooms for the conference capacity is not profitable.

The wider economic contributions of the proposal

- 7.12 Policy LRC10 of the Local Plan states the Council will encourage suitable tourism proposals in appropriate locations and will give favourable consideration to suitable proposals for visitor accommodation within the District. The pre-ambule to this policy states that one key factor restricting the development of tourism within East Hertfordshire is the limited availability of visitor accommodation. New build hotels are, by size and nature, more appropriately located within towns. However, proposals for small-scale hotel or other visitor accommodation may also be acceptable within other settlements, and the adaptation and re-use of existing buildings for small-scale visitor accommodation may be acceptable in villages and the countryside.
- 7.13 Whilst Policy LRC10 in principle supports tourism proposals in appropriate locations and in particular recognises the need for visitor accommodation, the application site is within the Green Belt where development other than for small-scale accommodation is not favoured by LRC10.
- 7.14 The applicant argues that the extension of Fanhams Hall would maximize its potential as an existing tourism opportunity within the District and will increase spending and footfall into the nearby town of Ware. Officers acknowledge that the extension to the hotel may result in a small increase in employment opportunities at the site. However, as the site is an out of town location and within the Green Belt this is not a sustainable location for growth. Officers do not consider the benefits of a potential increase in employment opportunities in this case would outweigh the harm that the development would have upon the openness of the Green Belt. Although the applicant argues that the proposed extension would secure the retention of the existing business which provides employment opportunities within the District, there is no evidence to demonstrate that the existing business would fail without the proposed extension.
- 7.15 PPS 4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth states that in order to deliver the Government's objective of promoting vital and viable town centres, development should be focused in existing centres and that for development of this kind applicants are required to demonstrate the need for development; that the development is of an appropriate scale; that there are no more central sites for the development; that there would be no unacceptable impacts on existing centres and that locations are accessible. All of these issues should be addressed in a sequential assessment in order to justify the proposed extension to a hotel use that is located outside of a town centre. PPS 4 does indicate that the expansion of existing tourist and visitor facilities in the rural area may be appropriate where the scale of the extension is appropriate and where it would help to ensure the future

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viability of the business. Officers however consider that insufficient information has been submitted in this case, both in terms of the sequential assessment and the viability of the existing business.

- 7.16 With regards to the assumption made by the applicant that the proposed extension would result in increased spending and footfall within Ware, Officers are cautious of this claim having had regard to the estimation within the applicants supporting information that approximately 50% of the hotel's business is from weddings and 50% from conferences which would be less likely to draw footfall into the surrounding towns than customers visiting the site for leisure purposes.
- 7.17 In accordance with PPS 4, as the extension would create additional floor space in excess of 200sqm, a sequential test is required to be carried out by the applicant in order to identify whether there are any town centre sites that could be utilised to satisfy any identified need prior to an out of centre site. With regards to a sequential test the needs analysis that has been submitted by the applicant states that whilst it could be argued that there may be available sites within or outside the District where additional hotels could be developed, it is Fanhams unique setting within a listed building, together with its existing and well established location and reputation as a quality conference and wedding destination that preclude it from being replicated elsewhere. As such the applicant considers that the proposed site of the extension to be the most appropriate, as this would enable the hotel to develop its existing demand, thereby generating additional visitation to Ware, benefiting the local community. Officers consider that the above statement is not sufficient and does not demonstrate that a sequential test has been carried out in accordance with the requirements of PPS 4. Whilst Officers support the retention of the existing hotel and acknowledge that the existing setting is a benefit to the appeal of the hotel to its customers, Officers do not support the proposed extension to the hotel and consider that other hotel development could be carried out within nearby town centre locations to meet the Districts needs for additional accommodation for tourists. Without the benefit of a satisfactory sequential test being carried out, or sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the development is essential for the viability of the hotel, the proposal is contrary to the aims of PPS4.

Impact upon the setting of the Listed Buildings

- 7.18 The proposed extension is of a substantial size and as such the impact that the development would have upon the setting of the Listed Buildings at the site is an important consideration. The Conservation Officer's comments conclude that the impact that the proposed extension would have upon the setting of the Listed Buildings would be acceptable. The Conservation Officer outlines that the design has been carefully considered to reflect the

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strong architectural features of the principle buildings which contribute to the character and appearance of the setting resulting in a modern constructed extension with a distinct relationship with its historic host.

- 7.19 Officers consider that, should the need for an extension of this size within the Green Belt be justified, then the proposed design and siting of the building would be an appropriate option in relation to the setting of the Listed Buildings.
- 7.20 The objection received from the Hertfordshire Gardens Trust in relation to the use of 'Chancer Village' bricks as opposed to 'harling' or 'pebble dash' is duly noted. However, during a joint site visit the applicant has shown Officers an area of the original Grade II* Listed Building where a yellow stock brick has been used. The use of a 'pebble-dash' type of material for the adjacent buildings at the site is considered to be a technique that was appropriate to the time of their construction and Officers consider the use of 'pebble-dash' materials for the proposed building to replicate this would not appear sympathetic to the setting of the Listed Buildings or do any particular justice to the proposed design and appearance of the proposed extension. Officers have no objection to the use of brick for the proposed extension in principle, however, recommend that a condition is attached to the Listed Building Consent in order for samples of materials to be submitted and agreed by the Local Planning Authority to ensure that the choice of materials are appropriate.

Loss of Trees and Impact upon the Historic Garden

- 7.21 A total of 22 trees are proposed to be removed from the site to enable the construction of the proposed extension. The Arboricultural Statement that has been submitted with the application defines 17 of these trees as 'C' category trees which in accordance with BS 5837:2005 should not impose a significant constraint on development. However, 5 Pine trees are classed as either Category A or B. The Council's Arboricultural Officer has stated that the proposed removal of the significant Category A and B pine trees for the proposed accommodation should be resisted, as the loss of these trees would harm the setting of Fanhams Hall and be detrimental to the registered historic garden.
- 7.22 Whilst it is noted that the majority of the trees that are proposed to be removed are classed as Category C, Officers consider that these trees nevertheless cumulatively make a significant contribution to the appearance of the site.

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- 7.23 The applicant proposes new planting at the site to mitigate against the loss of the existing trees and the impact that the development would have upon the setting of the listed buildings and the historic garden. A total of 18 new Pine trees are shown on the proposed landscape plan. The comments that have been received from the Council's Landscape Officer and the Historic Gardens Trust raise concern in relation to the impact that the development would have upon the setting of the historic gardens at the site. Policy BH16 states that on sites listed in English Heritage's 'Register of Historic Parks and Gardens' and other locally important sites, development proposals that significantly harm their special historic character, appearance or setting will not be permitted. The Historic Gardens Trust suggest that the proposed replacement planting would not be sufficient until such time that it is mature enough to screen the extension. Officers are concerned that due to the size, scale and height of the proposed extension and its siting close to the landscaped gardens at the site, that the development would have a detrimental impact upon the setting of this Historic Garden, contrary to the aims of Policy BH16.
- 7.24 Officers are concerned that the loss of the important and prominent Category A and B trees together with the loss of a substantial number of Category C trees would be harmful to the existing character and appearance of the site and, furthermore, that the proposed new planting would not be sufficient to mitigate against the harm that their removal would have on the character and appearance of the site and the visual impact that the proposed building would have upon the registered historic garden.

Highways Matters and Parking

- 7.25 With regards to the implications that the proposed development would have upon access and parking County Highways have confirmed that they do not wish to restrict the grant of permission. However, as the applicant has identified that there will be additional peak hour traffic movements County Highways require a financial contribution of £11,000 towards Sustainable Transport for measures that would assist visitors to the establishment that choose to attend by public transport or staff who may choose to walk or cycle.
- 7.26 The Transport Statement that has been submitted in support of the application states that it is considered that the assessment demonstrates that the development would not have a significant impact upon any Council services and would not result in an increase to parking provision and as such a contribution towards sustainable transport is not necessary.

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- 7.27 Officers consider that a sustainable transport contribution is justified and is necessary to address the impact that the increased vehicular movements would have and to provide some mitigation against the unsustainable location of the site, outside of a town centre.
- 7.28 163 car parking spaces are currently available at the existing site. No additional parking is proposed as part of the current proposal. Appendix II of the Local Plan recommends a maximum parking provision of 1 space per bedroom plus additional spaces based upon the size of the dining, bar, conference and exhibition areas. The proposed extension would result in a total number of 120 bedrooms. Officers consider that the existing amount of parking provision at the site would be sufficient to provide for the resulting 120 bedrooms plus additional rooms that the hotel accommodates and that the proposed development does not conflict with the aims of Policy TR7.

Other Matters

- 7.29 The Herts Biological Records Centre have recommended that an assessment should be made in relation to the on-site trees to be removed and their potential for bat roosts and nesting birds and a survey for great crested newts should be conducted prior to the determination of the application.
- 7.30 Officers consider it to be reasonable to expect the recommended surveys to be conducted at the site prior to any approval of the current proposal and without such survey information consider this should form a reason for the refusal of the current application.

(b)3/10/1401/LB

- 7.31 The determining issue in the case of the application for Listed Building Consent for the proposed extension (lpa. 3/10/1401/LB) is the impact that the development would have upon the historical and architectural character and appearance of the Grade II Listed Building.
- 7.32 The Conservation Officer has considered the impact that the size, scale, mass and design of the proposed extension in relation to the existing Listed Buildings at the site and in particular to North Lodge from which the development would extend. Officers are satisfied that the building has been carefully designed to reflect the prominent features within the adjacent building at the existing site. The Conservation Officer has stated that, in

(a) 3/10/1396/FP, (b) 3/10/1401/LB, (c) 3/10/1543/LB

assessing the physical impact on the historic fabric of the Grade II North Lodge, this is limited to a glazed link which will be attached to the existing projecting parapet gable. The main concern therefore is the manner in which the frame of the link will be attached to the historic building a matter which can be dealt with in more detail via condition.

- 7.33 The proposed glazed link that would join the proposed building to the existing North Lodge is of a modest size. Therefore, the impact that the proposed extension would have upon the historic fabric of the Listed Building that it would adjoin would be very limited. Officers consider that the proposed development would have an acceptable impact upon the existing Listed Buildings at the site and would not have a detrimental impact upon the special historical and architectural character and appearance of these heritage assets, in accordance with the aims of PPS 5: Planning for the Historic Environment.

(c) 3/10/1543/LB

- 7.34 The determining issue in the case of the application for Listed Building Consent for the proposed extension (Ipa. 3/10/1543/LB) is the impact that the development would have upon the historic fabric of the Grade II Listed Building.
- 7.35 The Conservation Officer's comments in relation to the application for Listed Building Consent for the internal alterations to the existing building states that the building in question has limited historic significance and as such the proposals would have limited impact on the historic fabric and is therefore acceptable. Officers understand that the building in question was constructed in the 1960's and replaced stable blocks. The internal walls that are proposed to be demolished are therefore not of any historic merit.
- 7.36 The internal alterations are proposed to enable the enlargement of the existing single rooms that the applicant claims they are experiencing difficulties in occupying. Officers understand that this need has occurred since the change in operation of the site for a hotel from a training centre since the original construction of this building.
- 7.37 Officers consider the proposed internal alterations to the Listed Building to be justified and do not consider that they would result in any damage to the historic fabric of the building. The proposal does not conflict with the aims of PPS 5: Planning for the Historic Environment.

(a) 3/10/1396/FP, (b) 3/10/1401/LB, (c) 3/10/1543/LB

8.0 Conclusions

(a)3/10/1396/FP

- 8.1 The proposed development constitutes inappropriate development within the Green Belt and the 'very special circumstances' that the applicant has argued are not considered sufficient to outweigh the harm that the proposed development would have upon the openness of the Green Belt. The proposed development is therefore contrary to the aims of PPG2 and Policy GBC1.
- 8.2 Insufficient information has been submitted to demonstrate that an adequate sequential assessment has been carried out and it has not been demonstrated that the proposed development is essential for the viability of the existing business. The proposed development is therefore contrary to the aims of PPS4.
- 8.3 Officers are not satisfied that the proposed replacement trees would be sufficient to mitigate against the loss of existing prominent and attractive trees at the site and the visual impact that the proposed building would have upon the registered historic garden. The loss of the existing trees would therefore have a harmful impact upon the character and appearance of the existing site and the setting of the registered historic garden, contrary to the aims of Policies ENV2, ENV11 and BH16.
- 8.4 The application lacks sufficient information regarding the presence of protected species to enable the Local Planning Authority to properly consider the planning merits of the application. The proposal would thereby be contrary to policy ENV16 and refusal is recommended for this reason.
- 8.5 The applicant has failed to commit towards the provision of a financial provision towards sustainable transport programs. The proposal would therefore be contrary to the provisions of policies TR1 and IMP1.
- 8.6 Having regard to the above considerations it is recommended that planning permission is refused for the reasons given at the head of this report.

(b)3/10/1401/LB

- 8.7 The proposed extension to the existing Grade II Listed Building is considered to be acceptable and would not be detrimental to the historic and architectural character and appearance of the existing Listed Buildings at the site, in accordance with the aims of PPS 5: Planning for the Historic Environment.

(a) 3/10/1396/FP, (b) 3/10/1401/LB, (c) 3/10/1543/LB

8.8 Having regard to the above considerations, it is recommended that Listed Building Consent is approved subject to the conditions at the head of this report.

(c) 3/10/1543/LB

8.9 The proposed internal alterations to the existing building are considered by Officers to be acceptable and would not be detrimental to the historic fabric of the Listed Building, in accordance with the aims of PPS 5: Planning for the Historic Environment.

8.10 Having regard to the above considerations, it is recommended that Listed Building Consent is granted subject to the conditions at the head of this report.