

Relevant History:-

12/00722/FUL Erection of 50 bedroom hotel on site of former Melton Mowbray Working Men's Club -
Permission granted 11 January 2013

Planning Policies:-

Melton Local Plan (saved policies):

Policies OS1 and BE1 allow for development within Town Envelopes providing that:-

- the form, character and appearance of the settlement is not adversely affected;
- the form, size, scale, mass, materials and architectural detailing of the development is in keeping with its locality;
- the development would not cause undue loss of residential privacy, outlook and amenities as enjoyed by occupants of existing dwellings in the vicinity; and,
- satisfactory access and parking provision can be made available.

The National Planning Policy Framework was published 27th March and replaced the previous collection of PPS. It introduces a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' meaning:

- approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and
- where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
 - any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or
 - specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.

The NPPF offers direction on the relative weight of the content in comparison to existing Local Plan policy and advises that whilst the NPPF does not automatically render older policies obsolete, where they are in conflict the NPPF should prevail. It also offers advice on the weight to be given to 'emerging' policy (i.e the LDF) depending on its stage of preparation, extent of unresolved (disputed) issues and compatibility with the NPPF.

It also establishes 12 core planning principles against which proposals should be judged. Relevant to this application are those to:

- **Support sustainable economic development.**
- **Promote mixed use development, encouraging multiple benefits from the use of land in urban and rural areas.**
- **Actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable**
- **Take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs.**

On Specific issues relevant to this application it advises:

Building a Strong Competitive Economy

- Planning should encourage growth, not prevent it and should plan proactively to encourage economic growth.
- Significant weight should be given to the need to support economic growth.

Ensuring the vitality of Town Centres

- Allocate a range of suitable sites to meet the scale and type of retail, leisure, commercial, office, tourism, cultural, community and residential development needed in town centres.
- Allocate appropriate edge of centre sites for main town centre uses that are well connected to the town centre where suitable and viable town centre sites are not available.
- When assessing proposals for retail, leisure and office development outside of the town centres which are not in accordance with an up to date Local Plan a sequential test and impact assessment shall be required (subject to scale exceeding 2500m²).

Promoting Sustainable Transport:

- Safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all people.
- Development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of the development are severe.

Promoting Healthy Communities:

- Plan positively for the provision and use of shared space, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments.

Require Good Design

- Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.
- Securing high quality and inclusive design goes beyond aesthetics considerations and should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment.

This National Planning Policy Framework does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. Proposed development that accords with an up-to-date Local Plan should be approved and proposed development that conflicts should be refused unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. (NPPF para. 12)

“Good Practice Guide on Planning for Tourism” – provides guidance on the role of planning in tourism development. It also underlines the importance of protecting and enhancing the visual quality of sites to ensure the development fits in well with its environs. Annex 1 addresses accommodation and advises:

- Planners should carefully weigh the objective of providing adequate facilities and sites with the need to protect landscapes and environmentally sensitive sites.
- New sites that are close to existing settlements and other services will generally be more sustainable as some local services may be accessed by means other than by car.

Consultations:-

Consultation reply	Assessment of Head of Regulatory Services
<p>Highways Authority: No objection subject to conditions relating to the drop off point, parking and turning, drainage and surfacing.</p>	<p>The principle for a hotel development in this area has been agreed in principle by the previous planning application, which is considered to be extant following the demolition of the former Working Men’s Club. The latest proposal seeks changes to the fenestration and an increase in floor area of 94 square metres from that previously approved. This allows for the extra five bedrooms which is required in order for the site to be economically viable in this location. The hotel will be set back from the road frontage to allow for disabled parking and drop off facilities in accordance with the extant planning permission. Railings are proposed along the frontage of the disabled spaces to prevent over hanging of the pavement and will have a height of 1.1 metres.</p> <p>Access into the site will be from Soho Street which also serves B & H Printers and Gloucester House community facility. The parking to the rear will be retained providing 36 spaces with access gained from North Street to the rear of the site. The existing access from Jubilee street will be retained for delivery vehicles only.</p> <p>The site is in close proximity to the town centre where there is a choice of other modes of transport and car parking facilities.</p> <p>No objection has been received from the Highways Authority. The development will provide overnight accommodation with an ancillary breakfast/restaurant/bar facility for use customers of the hotel only. It is expected that most guests will arrive out of office hours and therefore the traffic generated is not considered have a detrimental impact upon highway safety through coming and goings to the site.</p>
<p>Conservation Officer: No objections. This is a very prominent roadside site on a major through route around the town centre. The north side of Norman Way is primarily lined by relatively modern buildings, which included the Working Men’s Club that formerly occupied the site, but there are a group of traditional buildings including the grade II listed former Magistrates Court directly opposite. The amended proposal is of fairly standard hotel design however it is not considered to have detrimental impact upon the setting of the listed building opposite nor the adjacent conservation area than the former Working Men’s Club building</p>	<p>The building is situated on the outskirts of the designated Conservation Area but on a prominent roadside frontage within the town. The setting of the Conservation Area is a material consideration.</p> <p>The hotel would consist of three floors with a hipped pitch roof giving an overall height of 14 metres, sloping to eaves height of 8.8 metres. The proposal seeks changes to that already approved and simplifies the fenestration which are due to constraints on costing in order to make the project viable and deliverable by Premier Inn. Previously the application was submitted by an agent and not by the hotel chain submitting this application, Premier Inn.</p>

<p>demonstrated, in fact to a degree it represents an improvement to the street scene.</p>	<p>The changes to the principle elevation seek to increase the length of the building by 3 metres and remove the projecting entrance gable in favour off a single central gable. The entrance to the hotel will still be located to the west with the lobby leading to the hotel reception and the bar/restaurant area. A brick and render finish is still proposed but rather than have insert panels around the windows in brick and the remainder in render it is proposed to use brick to the first floor and render for the first and second floors to provide the contrast.</p> <p>The entrance into the hotel with the restaurant/bar area being located on the corner having large paned windows will assist in providing natural surveillance whilst breaking up the massing of the elevations. The amended proposal still ensures that the arrangement of windows gives a coherent appearance and with the central gable gives the symmetric appearance. Landscaping to the front will remain unchanged from that approved and will provide a public amenity area which is not present and provide the connectivity to the town via a pedestrian link from the hotel to Norman Way, benefiting from the pedestrian crossing over Norman Way into the town.</p> <p>The NPPF seeks to promote a ‘sense of place’ (chapter 7) The building will be visible and will be recognisable to its function as a hotel. The neighbouring buildings are of single storey industrial units occupied by various commercial uses. It is considered that the amended design, whilst more simplistic is appropriate to the hotel development and offers some improvement to the streetscene. The proposal is considered to comply with the local plan policies OS1 and BE1 and will not have a detrimental impact upon the character of the area.</p>
<p>Environment Agency – No objection subject to conditions relating to possible contamination and surface water management.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>

Representations:

A site notice was posted and the immediately neighbouring properties consulted by letter as a result one letters of representation has been received. The matters raised are presented below:-

Representation	Assessment of Head of Regulatory Services
<p>Melton Mowbray Civic Society -</p> <p>The recently published planning practice guidance (6th March 2014) reinforces the National Planning Policy Framework's requirement for good design (NPPF Section 7). Local planning authorities are now required to take design into consideration and refuse permission for development of poor design. The planning practice guidance goes on to recommend that advice from appropriately skilled in house staff or consultants may be required to facilitate an improvement of the standard of design in an area.</p> <p>Although, as stated in response to Planning Application (12/00722/FUL), the Society welcomes the application for a hotel close to the centre of the town the design is still uninspiring. The earlier plan showed more variation on the southern elevation than the new one. In the current plan little has been done to reduce the 'bulkiness' of the building by changes to the roofline or to the elevations. The Morrisons' building in the town centre illustrates how the apparent bulk of a large building can be reduced by introducing brickwork details on the elevations and variations in roofline. There are brickwork details on the B & H Midland Services building but these are not clearly shown on the "street scene". It is appreciated that companies wish to promote a recognisable corporate "style" for their developments but their architects should be able to demonstrate sensitivity to the towns in which they place their developments.</p>	<p>Noted. The NPPF seeks to promote sustainable development and support economic growth. Paragraph 60 advises that planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirement to conform to certain development forms or styles. But it does advise that it is proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness. Paragraph 61 advises that good design goes beyond aesthetics considerations and the way a place functions and integrates with the natural built and historic environment are equally as important. Whilst the design is more simplistic from that approved it has been designed with its specific function as a hotel. It also sits within a commercial area of the town where there are many different examples of buildings. It would be preferable to have a more defined entrance to the hotel, for legibility reasons. However the change in window design along with the designated drop of points will assist in directing visitors into the site.</p> <p>It is considered that the overall design and construction materials are acceptable in this location and the proposal complies with the local plan policy OS1, BE1 and the NPPF.</p> <p>The local policies OS1 is considered to be complemented by the NPPF design chapter 7 and still commands weight when considering planning proposals.</p>

Other material considerations (not raised through consultation or representation)

Considerations	Assessment of Head of Regulatory Services
<p>Sustainable Development:</p> <p>The Governments primary objective is to promote Sustainable Development introducing three elements consisting of social, environment and economic.</p>	<p>It is considered that the proposal meets sustainable development requirements as it will help to boost the economy as generally visitors that stay longer spend more. Tourism is a growth industry desirable not only for the economic benefits obtained but also important in improving the quality of life in the region. Day visitors provide economic benefits but also mean that the environmental impact is proportionately large due to additional car traffic. Increasing the portion of visitors who stay overnight is therefore a regional priority. The borough of</p>

	<p>Melton would benefit from this type of facility which gives the visitor greater flexibility.</p> <p>It is considered that a Hotel would be appropriate in this edge of centre location and would meet the objective to promote sustainable development.</p> <p>The Railway station is located approximately 600 metres to the north of the site and is on the Birmingham to Stanstead Airport Central Trains Line. The bus interchange is located along Windsor Street and St Mary's Way where buses connecting Melton to Leicester, Nottingham, Grantham, Oakham operate.</p>
<p>Vitality and Viability of the Town Centre:</p> <p>For Melton in particular, opportunities exist within the food and drink sector and related supply chain. Tourism links directly with food and drink and that part of the food and drink experience that makes up and contributes to the overall 'Visitor Journey' experienced by day and staying visitors visiting Melton and the wider Leicester and Leicestershire destination. Event development and promotion as demonstrated by the highly successful East Midlands Food Festival is also an important constituent of the visitor offer in and around Melton, together with heritage and family experiences associated with Belvoir Castle and Twinlakes. Currently, there is a need to convert more day visitors to staying visitors within the destination, including within Melton Mowbray and district.</p>	<p>The redevelopment of the site for a Hotel will ensure the continual vitality of the town centre by encouraging visitors to stay over night and providing a needed facility. It has been identified that Melton has a shortfall of bed space and the proposal would support the Town Centre Master Plan objectives.</p> <p>The proposal includes a small restaurant and bar area to provide a breakfast facility and a limited evening menu. Previously the scheme proposed a vending/café area and no provisions were sought for a bar/restaurant however there is no restriction on the extant permission that would prevent the works from being carried out as ancillary works under permitted development. The restaurant is required to provide breakfast facilities and the offer of a limited evening meal service for visitors of the hotel. There is potential for the restaurants and bars located in the town centre to benefit from this development supporting the evening economy, whilst providing job opportunities with the day to day running of the facility.</p> <p>It is not considered that the addition of the bar/restaurant would have a detrimental impact upon the existing eateries and bars in the area as it is proposed to have the facilities open to residents of the hotel only and benefits those visits that arrive late or plan to leave early in the morning after breakfast.</p>
<p>Sequential Test</p> <p>The NPPF (para 24) requires Local Planning Authorities should apply a sequential test to planning applications for main town centre uses that are not in an existing centre and are not in accordance with an up-to-date Local Plan. They should require applications for main town centre uses to be located in town centres, then in edge of centre locations and only if suitable sites are not</p>	<p>The application seeks amendments to an extant planning permission where it has already been established that the sequential test has been met. It is not considered that the addition of 96 square meters of floor space undermines the previous assessment and the decision should equally apply to this amended scheme for 55 bed hotel with ancillary facilities.</p>

<p>available should out of centre sites be considered. When considering edge of centre and out of centre proposals, preference should be given to accessible sites that are well connected to the town centre.</p>	<p>.</p>
<p>Compliance (or otherwise) with Planning Policy</p>	<p>As stated above, the development is considered to accord with the applicable Local Plan polices except in the interpretation of ‘small scale’. In this instance, the policies are considered to be complemented by the NPPF and retain relevance in this instance. The NPPF is considered to introduce a significant re-emphasis of national policy in terms of its encouragement for economic growth and the application of the sequential test, neither of which are present within the Local Plan. The NPPF advises that “significant weight” should be assigned and as such it is considered to weigh substantially in favour of the proposal.</p>

Conclusion

The proposal seeks to amend an extant planning permission for a 50 bed hotel by an increase in bed provision to 55 in an edge of town centre location. The location has policy support and the proposal is considered to comply with the objectives of the Local Development Framework, regional and national planning policies in terms of generating tourist accommodation. The objectives of NPPF to promote sustainable patterns of development are achievable given that there are good public transport links in the form of bus and train services. Accordingly the application is recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATION:- Permit subject to the following conditions:-

1. The development shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
2. The proposed development shall be carried out strictly in accordance with plan drawing numbers P1451/AP5, P1451/AP1 rev A and P1451/AP2 rev B received by the Authority on 5th March 2014.
3. The external materials to be used in the development hereby permitted shall be in strict accordance with those specified in the application unless alternative materials are first agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in strict accordance with the approved details
4. If, during development, contamination not previously identified is found to be present at the site then no further development (unless otherwise agreed in writing with the local planning authority) shall be carried out until the developer has submitted a remediation strategy to the local planning authority detailing how this unsuspected contamination shall be dealt with and obtained written approval from the local planning authority. The remediation strategy shall be implemented as approved.
5. The development hereby permitted shall not be commenced until such time as a scheme to install trapped gullies has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The scheme shall be implemented as approved.

6. If any vehicular access gates, barriers, bollards, chains or other such obstructions are to be erected across the vehicular access off Soho Street they shall be set back a minimum distance of 10 metres behind the highway boundary and shall be hung so as to open inwards only.
7. The gradient of the access drives shall not exceed 1:12 for the first 5 metres behind the highway boundary.
8. Before first use of the development hereby permitted, drainage shall be provided within the site such that surface water does not drain into the Public Highway and thereafter shall be so maintained.
9. No development shall commence on the site until such time as a construction traffic/site traffic management plan, including wheel cleansing facilities and vehicle parking facilities, and a timetable for their provision, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved details and timetable.
10. The car parking, servicing and turning facilities shown within the curtilage of the site shall be provided, hard surfaced and made available for use before the hotel is first brought into use and shall thereafter be permanently so maintained.
11. Notwithstanding the details submitted, minimum visibility splays of 2.4 metres by 7 metres to the right and 20 metres to the left shall be provided out of the proposed access on to Soho Street. These splays shall be cleared of any obstruction that exceeds a height of 600mm above the level of the adjacent carriageway before the access is first brought into use and shall thereafter be permanently so maintained.
12. Before the development is first brought into use, Soho Street shall have been widened as shown on the submitted plan, in accordance with Highway Authority standards.
13. Before first use of the development hereby permitted the proposed vehicular accesses shown serving the site off Soho Street, Charlotte Street and North Street shall have been surfaced with tarmac, concrete or similar hard bound material (not loose aggregate) for a distance of at least 10 metres behind the highway boundary and shall be so maintained at all times.
14. Before the development hereby permitted is first used, the proposed cycle parking provision shown within the curtilage of the site shall have been provided and once provided shall be maintained and kept available for use in perpetuity.
15. Notwithstanding the details submitted, no planting shall overhang the public highway, but shall at all times be kept trimmed so that it has a minimum clearance of 500mm from the edge of the highway boundary.

Officer to contact : Mrs D Knipe

Date: 20th March 2014