

Report to District Development Control Committee



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Date of meeting: 3 June 2008

Subject: The Thatched House Hotel, High Street, Epping – EPF/0451/08

Responsible Officer: Lindsay Trevillian

Democratic Services Officer: Simon Hill

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

That planning permission be refused for the following reason:

The proposal would result in a cramped development and the loss of off-street parking that would lead to an insufficient number of spaces for the hotel causing increased congestion. This is contrary to policies DBE1 and ST6A of the adopted Local Plan and Alterations

Report:

This application is before this Committee since it is an application that is submitted on behalf of a Councillor (Pursuant to Section P4, Schedule A (j) of the Council's Delegated Functions).

Description of Proposal:

The application is a revised scheme for a single storey side extension to a reception building for 'The Thatched House Hotel'. It should be noted that planning permission was approved for the reception building (EPF/1892/05) however to date no works have been carried out.

The side extension is to comprise of a one bedroom suite which will incorporate wheelchair access. The extension which is to be located on the south eastern side of the reception building is to have a width of 5 metres by a depth of 6.4 metres.

Room for one vehicle space is to be provided next to the proposed extension and 3 bicycle and 3 motorcycle spaces have been provided to the rear of the site next to the vehicle entrance that leads onto Hemnall Street.

Description of Site:

The subject site is located on the south eastern side of the High Street approximately 50 metres south west of Grove Lane. Although the site fronts onto the High Street, it runs right through to Hemnall Street which is located at the rear of the site.

The Thatched House Hotel is a Grade Two Listed Building and the whole of the site is located within the Epping Town Conservation Area. The hotel itself, which comprises of 12 suites is located on the first floor of the building whilst a separate A3 use (Prezzo) is located on the ground floor. The front elevation of the building is situated within the key frontage area of the Epping town centre. To the rear of the Hotel is a large building known as 'Hemnall Mews'. This is a residential flat development that was approved in 2002 and revised in 2005.

Relevant History:

EPF/1035/02- Partial demolition of hotel and erection of 14 dwelling units- approved.

EPF/1943/04- Creation of loft bedrooms within existing roof space- approved

LB/EPF/1944/04- Grade II Listed Building application for creation of loft bedroom within existing and approved (LB/EPF/1019/04) roof space including new dormer windows- refused.

EPF/478/05- Partial demolition of the rear of Thatched House Hotel and the erection of 14 No. new apartments with basement parking, (revised application).- approved.

EPF/1892/05- Erection of new reception area- approved.

EPF/1213/06- Single storey side extension to approved reception for two proposed bedrooms with wheelchair access. (Revised application)- Refused.

EPF/1307/07- Erection of side extension to reception area for 2 no. bedrooms with wheelchair access. (Revised application)- Withdrawn.

EPF/2328/07 - Erection of side extension to reception area for 2 no. bedrooms with wheelchair access. (Revised application)- Refused

Policies Applied:

CP7A- Urban Form and quality

HC6- Character, appearance and setting of conservation area

HC7- Development within a Conservation Area

HC12- Development affecting the setting of a listed building

TC3- Town centre function

DBE1- Design of new buildings

DBE2- Impact on surrounding properties

DBE9- Impact upon amenity

ST4A- Road Safety

ST6A- Vehicle Parking

Issues and Considerations:

It should be noted that the previous application EPF/2328/07 was refused as Council considered that a single storey side extension that comprised two 1 bedroomed suites would be a cramped overdevelopment of the site that would cause the loss of off street parking which would therefore result in an insufficient number of parking spaces for the existing hotel.

The only difference between the previous scheme that was refused and the proposed scheme is that the applicant has reduced the size of the extension to only incorporate 1 bedroom suite instead of 2.

It was considered that the design of the previous extension that was refused was acceptable in terms of its design and appearance in terms of the setting of the listed building and the Epping Town Conservation Area. Once again it is considered that the proposed development is acceptable in terms of its form, bulk and scale and that it would not cause material detriment or appear as a visually intrusive feature within the surrounding area. The application was also referred to Council heritage officer who advised that he had no objections in relation to the design of the appearance of the proposed development.

Therefore the main issue to be addressed is whether or not the revised scheme has overcome Council's initial concern relating to the lack of off street car parking due to the construction of the development.

As the revised scheme has reduced the size of the extension and subsequently there is only 1 hotel suite instead of 2, there is now room for one off street car parking place to the side of the extension.

However the new extension will still result in a loss of 2 parking spaces, leaving the hotel with approximately 6 spaces close to the rear Hemnall Street site entrance. In light of guidance within the 'Vehicle Parking Standards', (*Essex Planning Officers Association, 2001*), the requirement for parking provision is 1 space per bedroom (guest or staff). The hotel accommodation will be increased to 13 rooms as a result of this extension and on this basis parking is still considered to be inadequate.

Also, like the previous scheme that was refused, it is considered that the proposed bicycle and motorcycle storage will not make up for the loss of off street parking.

In addition to the above, nearby 'Clarks International' objected to the previous application on the grounds of congestion to the rear of the site, in particular with regard to the large vehicles associated with refuse collection and the servicing of the hotel. The proposed extension will exacerbate this situation.

Conclusion:

In conclusion it is considered that the whilst the design of the building is acceptable in itself, the revised scheme is still considered to result in an increase in congestion in the vicinity and would provide inadequate off street parking. It is therefore recommended that the application be refused for the reasons outlined above.

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS:

Epping Town Council: The committee objects to the application for the following reason:

Committee objects to this application because the extension is overdevelopment of the site. Committee also expresses concern at the loss of parking on the site which is at a premium for this kind of facility.

Neighbours: One objection was received from:

CLARKE INTERNATIONAL - (Responded to all submissions). Overdevelopment of this area resulting in serious access and parking issues.