

N.4

P/2007/1502/PA

Cockington With Chelston Ward

Grand Hotel, Torbay Road, Torquay

Alterations And Extension To Form 18 No New Bedroom Suites

Site Details

The Grand Hotel is a landmark building prominently located within the Chelston Conservation Area overlooking Abbey Sands and Corbyn Head. To the rear is Torquay Station which is Grade II Listed. It is within a Principal Holiday Accommodation Area. The building ranges in height from 4-6 storeys, is of a rendered finish and is topped with a mansard roof. It was constructed as a purpose built hotel rather than converted and is, in this respect, quite unusual in Torbay. It has been extended over the years but still retains a traditional and consistent appearance. To the front of the building, and prominent in the street scene, is a two storey flat roofed conservatory extension.

This was considered at the previous meeting and deferred for consideration of parking and sustainable urban transport contributions.

Relevant Planning History

P/2004/0201 Alterations and conversion of Churchill Room to provide 6 bedrooms and fire escape. Approved 21/4/2004.

P/2007/0534 Installation of lift. Approved 6/7/2007.

Relevant Policies

PPG21 "Tourism"

PPS1 "Delivering Sustainable Development"

PPG15 "Planning and the Historic Environment"

Torbay Local Plan 1995-2011 -

TS Tourism strategy
TU6 Principal Holiday Accommodation Area
BS Built Environment Strategy
BE1 Design of new development
BE5 Policy in conservation areas
BE6 Development affecting listed buildings
TS Land Use Development Strategy
T1 Development Accessibility
T2 Transport Hierarchy

Proposals

Extension to provide additional 18 bedrooms through removing the existing roof, constructing an additional floor of accommodation and replacing the mansard roof. Alterations to the restaurant/health suite are also included in the scheme.

Consultations

English Heritage: Whilst raising no objection in principle, they consider that the success of the scheme will depend greatly on the design and quality of materials used. It will be necessary to insist on an appropriate level of information to ensure that the architectural qualities that distinguish the building are accurately referenced and authoritatively reproduced in the areas of new build.

Conservation: Consider that other improvements should be carried out to overcome the impact of this proposal and suggest that the conservatory be modified.

Strategic Transport: Require £39,000 towards sustainable urban transport. (This was mistakenly reported as £54,250 at the previous meeting.)

Strategy: Obs. awaited.

Torbay Development Agency: Support the scheme.

Representations

One letter received asking to be re-consulted if the garage site is reconsidered. Two letters which offer no objection in principle but raise concerns about parking, and a letter of objection concerned at parking, highway safety, pedestrian safety, overdevelopment, amenity. Reproduced on Page N.203.

Key Issues/Material Considerations

Will the extensions adversely impact on the appearance of this building?

Once complete, and subject to appropriate details being confirmed, the building should look much like it does at the moment, but it will be an extra storey higher on all elevations. It will obviously produce a more dominant building and there are concerns that this could be overpowering in the street scene and could compromise views in the locality and relationships to surrounding buildings.

In this respect the height relationships to Seaway Court and the Railway Station are quite key.

Generally, the views of English Heritage and the Conservation Officer is that the principle of adding a slice to the main part of the building is acceptable providing that the detail can be assured. The Conservation officer recommends further that modifications to the conservatory be included as part of the application in order that any impact in terms of the increased scale of the building can be 'offset' by achieving positive enhancements at street level.

In terms of detail this is scant despite making it clear in pre-application discussions that it would be necessary to provide 1:20 drawings of existing features, and the proposed reconstruction in order that it can be confirmed that the new build sits seamlessly with the existing building and that the shape, form and appearance of the roof is identical to the existing. In terms of modifications to the conservatory area, it is proposed to introduce a dome to the flat roof and erect canopies around the extension presumably in an attempt to soften the rather solid impact of the conservatory extension.

It is also proposed to extend close to the front boundary of the site at ground and lower ground level to provide a restaurant terrace and new health suite. However, this is poorly detailed, with no elevations and is marked on the plans as "future development". The applicant will not commit to this nor is it established that this would be the most sympathetic approach to modifying the front elevation. For this reason this element of the scheme has been deleted from consideration.

Parking/highway and pedestrian safety

Consideration of this proposal was deferred at the meeting on the 22nd October for further information in respect of:-

- a) existing car parking provision for the Grand Hotel;
- b) future of the garage site;
- c) Sustainable Urban Transportation contribution and how it was to be spent.

In respect of (a) the Grand Hotel have a garage adjacent to the hotel. They also rent spaces at the Rugby Club and have an agreement to use spaces in the Railway Station. The scheme is likely to generate on-street car parking which is of concern to local residents. It is likely that most of the parking on nearby streets is generated by one-off events at the hotel, for example conferences and weddings, rather than arising from guests staying at the Hotel. The garage site is used for parking and is confined to guests. The owner of the Grand does wish to develop this at some stage and there are opportunities to increase parking provision as part of this proposal. There may be merit in looking at the impact of both schemes through a more comprehensive approach to the site.

It is proposed to spend the Sustainable Urban Transportation contribution on improving access around the Railway Station - signage, footpaths, and improving coach parking and enhancing the streetscape/pedestrian realm around the hotel. Given the points made by local residents, enhancements to pedestrian movement around the hotel may be a good solution. However, in

view of the position of the hotel and its relationship to public transport links, it is considered unlikely to be able to defend a refusal of planning permission on the grounds of car parking demand arising from this scheme.

Amenity

Problems cited relate to the impact of construction traffic and loss of private views. Neither of these are planning issues. Legislation exists to protect the amenity of local residents during construction periods and development cannot be resisted on the grounds of loss of a view.

Sustainability - More effective use of existing land and buildings.

Crime and Disorder - No observations received.

Disability Issues - New lifts have been approved recently and the new floor will be fully accessible to all users.

Conclusions

Whilst the principle is acceptable it needs to be demonstrated through the submission of an appropriate level of detail that the new floor will, in terms of detailed appearance/materials, be indistinguishable from the existing building and it need to be demonstrated that the new roof will be identical to the one removed. It will therefore be necessary to supply:-

1. Sections through the existing and proposed roof.
2. 1:20/1:5 drawings of each existing key feature affected by the proposal, including cross-sectional details.
3. As above for each proposed replacement feature.
4. Schedule of materials.

This could be requested by condition but in the circumstances would be better achieved in advance in order that there is clarity about viability of the scheme and it can be determined that the floor space proposed can be accommodated whilst maintaining the exact form and appearance of the mansard roof.

In terms of concerns regarding the impact of car parking, there is an argument that in view of the applicants interest in developing the "garage site" that a more comprehensive approach to development of the site be requested. This would enable the capacity of the site to be properly assessed, proper mitigation in terms of parking and improvement to the public realm to be established and for the applicant to be clear about the most appropriate package of development options to pursue.

Recommendation:

Subject to the details identified above being submitted and a Section 106 Agreement regarding sustainable urban transport contributions, Approval.

Condition(s):

01. Conditions to be delegated to the Assistant Director for Planning, Development and Policy.