

APPLICATION NO.	P15/S1544/FUL
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL APPLICATION
REGISTERED	11.5.2015
PARISH	TIDDINGTON
WARD MEMBER(S)	John Walsh
APPLICANT	Q Hotels
SITE	The Oxford Belfry Hotel, London Road, Milton Common, OX9 2JW
PROPOSAL	Change of use of land for stationing of eight static caravans for staff accommodation purposes
AMENDMENTS	(As amended by plans received 2015_06_16 to alter the positioning of the caravans away from the public footpath) (Further amended by plan 2015_07_23 to increase distances between caravans).
GRID REFERENCE	465029/203677
OFFICER	Marc Pullen

1.0 **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 This application is referred to the Planning Committee because the recommendation conflicts with the views of the Parish Council.

1.2 The application site (which is shown on the OS extract **attached** as Appendix A) is part of The Oxford Belfry complex and is currently an open grassed area. The site is bounded by tall vegetation to the north and west.

2.0 **PROPOSAL**

2.1 This application seeks full planning permission for the stationing of eight static caravans to be used for accommodation for the staff of the Oxford Belfry. Planning permission has been granted previously for a permanent two storey building adjacent to the kitchen area to meet staffing accommodation needs, but that permission has not been implemented.

2.2 This application has been subject to amendments to improve the layout of the eight caravans and increasing the distance from the public footpath to ensure that it does not become obstructed by the caravans.

2.3 A copy of all the current plans accompanying the application is **attached** as Appendix B. Other documentation associated with the application can be viewed on the council's website, www.southoxon.gov.uk.

3.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

3.1 **Tiddington Parish Council – Object**

- The proposal would be too close to the public footpath and neighbouring residents.
- The proposal is unnecessary since planning permission has been granted for permanent staffing accommodation already.
- Highly unsightly in residential neighbourhood.

CPRE – Object

- Development has the potential to intrude on the openness of the Green Belt which is less than 200 metres away. Would be visible from the north
- Would harm the open piece of countryside/gap in between the hotel and the village.
- Would bring noise and disturbance up to the boundaries of neighbours

CPRE – (Rights of Way) – Object (in line with the above)

Countryside Access – No strong views following submission of amended plan showing that the caravans avoid the public footpath by 1 metre

Health and Housing – No strong views, a separate licence should be obtained if permission is granted and technical details will need to be met. Concerns regarding the use of concrete slabs and mesh/gravel will be a sufficient base for the caravans and that they might not be insulated well.

OCC (Highways) – No strong views subject to conditions

Neighbour Approve (1)

- The development would have a minimal impact on the amenity of the surrounding neighbours and users of the footpath.
- The Hotel is a valuable generator of employment and contributor to the local economy and should not be unnecessarily constrained in its ability to contribute yet more valuably in these respects.

Neighbour Object (3)

- Highly visible and would have a significant impact on the surrounding landscape
- Current caravans sited to the right of the Belfry are suitable and well screened
- Use of footpath would result in potential privacy and safety issues of those living in caravans
- The site is currently used for an over-flow car parking area, helicopter landing and activity space – what will the impact of these caravans be the future parking provisions on site
- Increased risk of pollution (rubbish etc) and light pollution
- Impact on Green Belt
- Impact on the farm land bordering the proposed site from soakaways
- Increase in noise from people living on site
- Milton Common cannot support new development due to pressures on services such as water and sewerage

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 [P11/W0510/EX](#) - Approved (27/05/2011)

Extension of time to implement planning permission P07/W1416. Construction of new two storey staff accommodation building and storage buildings to replace existing. (As amended by Drawing Nos. 844/103B & 102B accompanying letter from Agent dated 7 March 2008 and clarified by letter from Agent dated 23 January 2008).

[P07/W1416](#) - Approved (12/06/2008)

Construction of new two storey staff accommodation building and storage buildings to replace existing. (As amended by Drawing Nos. 844/103B & 102B accompanying letter from Agent dated 7 March 2008 and clarified by letter from Agent dated 23 January

2008).

[P10/W0541](#) - Approved (27/07/2011)

Proposed new bedroom wing to provide 105 additional guest bedrooms, extension to bar and restaurant plus associated works including the construction of an overflow car park. **(Appendix C)**

5.0 POLICY & GUIDANCE

5.1 National Planning Policy Framework & National Planning Practice Guidance

5.2 South Oxfordshire Core Strategy (SOCS) 2012 policies;

CS1 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development

CSEM1 - Supporting a successful economy

CSEM4 - Supporting economic development

CSR1 - New housing in villages and towns

CSQ3 - Design

CSS1 - The Overall Strategy

5.3 South Oxfordshire Local Plan (SOLP) 2011 policies;

D1 - Principles of good design

D10 - Waste Management

EP2 - Adverse affect by noise or vibration

G2 - Protect district from adverse development

H15 - New residential caravans and mobile homes

R8 - Protection of existing public right of way

T1 - Safe, convenient and adequate highway network for all users

T2 - Unloading, turning and parking for all highway users

TSM2 - New and improved tourist attraction in the area

5.4 South Oxfordshire Design Guide (SODG) 2008

6.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 The main issues in the consideration of this application are;

- Principle of siting caravans on site and justification for the accommodation
- Impact on the amenity of neighbours
- Impact on highway network
- Impact on public footpath
- Other matters

Principle of siting caravans

6.2 The principle of caravan accommodation on site is largely governed by Policy H15 of the SOLP. This policy allows for residential caravans or mobile homes where exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated and will be granted on a temporary basis only. Policy H15 seeks to ensure that proposals for new residential caravans or mobile homes comply with all other housing policies within the SOLP.

6.3 The site falls within the built up area of Milton Common, which is one of the villages in the district where new residential development is considered acceptable under the provisions of Policy CSR1 and subject to compliance with the criteria of Policy H4 of the SOLP. However, this application is not for permanent residential accommodation; it proposes a temporary measure to meet the staff accommodation needs until a permanent solution can be found and economic circumstances allow for such permanent facilities to be provided. The proposal is more correctly assessed against

policies TSM2 and the employment policies which allow for proposals for improvements to tourist attractions and facilities.

- 6.4 Policy CSEM4 of the SOCS supports the development of new or existing businesses and employment sites, including the reasonable extension of premises, where the need can be demonstrated.
- 6.5 Officers accept that there is a need for additional staffing accommodation on site and have previously granted permission for a permanent, two-storey building to house the required staff accommodation under application [P07/W1416](#) (and then extended for a further three years by permission granted under application [P11/W0510/EX](#)). The applicant has provided further information to explain why the planning permission for permanent staff accommodation has not been implemented and a justification for the current proposal.
- 6.6 Shortly after the granting of planning permission [P07/W1416](#) the company which runs the hotel was hit by the financial crisis which constrained its capital investment. The applicant considers that without the appropriate staffing the service, quality standards may be impaired and that it would quickly impact negatively on the business, at the same time the hotel management currently cannot forecast with confidence that they can satisfy the requirement to compete for capital funding to provide a permanent solution to the staffing accommodation requirement. In the applicants view, providing this accommodation will help increase staffing levels to service an upturn in demand and will unlock the potential of the hotel by maintaining service standards allowing the business to grow, increase profitability and therefore affect further investment.
- 6.7 Your officers acknowledge the need for increased staff accommodation but do not consider the provision of eight static caravans on site an acceptable solution in the long term. A permanent solution to the staffing accommodation can be found, in your officer's view and would be a reasonable extension/addition to the hotel. As such, the recommendation is that planning permission is granted for a temporary period to allow for a permanent solution to the shortage in staffing accommodation to be found. By providing the mobile homes the hotel will be able to maintain service standards and this will help obtain the necessary capital funds required to fund a more permanent solution to their staffing accommodation needs which can be implemented in the future. Paragraphs 18-21 of the NPPF seek to ensure that the planning system and local planning authorities help to deliver sustainable economic growth and proactively meet the development needs of local businesses and develop policies which recognise and seek to address potential barriers for investment. Officers consider that the development would be in-line with Policy CSEM4 of the SOCS and the principles of the NPPF by providing an opportunity for the hotel to overcome current barriers to obtaining investment in order to achieve sustainable economic growth.
- 6.8 The surrounding area does not provide any precedent for the stationing of caravans but the use of the land would be specified to be used by staff in association with the hotel and would therefore be in keeping with the character of the site as a whole.

Impact on the amenity of neighbours

- 6.9 Council policies seek to ensure that proposals for new development does not have any overriding harm to neighbour amenity by way intruding upon privacy, or by an oppressive or overbearing impact. Officers do not consider the caravans would cause any harm to the amenity of neighbours given their siting in relation to the closest neighbouring properties to the south-west. They would be single storey and would not overlook these neighbouring properties. Whilst close to the site boundary, these

caravans will be well screened from view. Officers consider that the distance between these properties and the proposed caravans would not result in any adverse light and noise harm.

Impact on highway network

- 6.10 The proposed caravans would be accessed from the existing private car park which currently serves The Oxford Belfry and 10 additional car parking spaces for staff would be provided. The site is already used for overflow car parking when need requires additional parking areas. The County Council's Highway Liaison Officer raises no objection to the proposed development subject to the parking area being constructed in compliance with SUDs. Officers consider that the proposed development would allow for sufficient parking space in accordance with the SOLP minimum parking standards and would provide safe and convenient access to the highway network from the existing car park. As such the development is considered to comply with Policy T1 and T2 of the SOLP.

Impact on public footpath

- 6.11 The Tiddington and Albury Footpath 13 runs directly through the site. Policy R8 of the SOLP seeks to retain and protect the existing public rights-of-way network. When determining applications for development the Council will ensure that existing rights-of-way are protected. Representation from the Oxford County Council's Countryside Access team raised concern regarding the siting of the proposed caravans as it ran close to the footpath. Following an amendment to the scheme the County's representative removed their objection. The scheme now allows for clear passage on the footpath adjacent to the mobile homes and is considered acceptable.

Other matters

- 6.12 The development proposes the planting of new trees along the parking area and toward the front of the caravans. A condition is attached for the applicant to submit a landscaping scheme for the site to be first submitted and approved by the Council to ensure that the development is assimilated into its rural backdrop. A further condition is attached to ensure the existing trees and hedges bordering the site are protected whilst development operations are in progress and are protected during the entire course of development to ensure that the visual impact of the development is contained to this site.
- 6.13 Officers note objections which relate to the proximity and perceived harm to the Oxford Green Belt. The development lies approximately 180 metres away from the Green Belt and would not be openly visible from the wider context of the area. In Officer's opinion the proposed development will not have any impact on openness or the special character and landscape qualities of the Oxford Green Belt.
- 6.14 Policy EP2 of the SOLP restricts development which have adverse impacts on the existing occupants living nearby by reason of noise or vibrations, unless effective mitigation measures will be implemented. The level of disturbance depends upon the existing background levels, and the character and duration of the noise or vibration. The Council should ensure that the level of noise created from development is minimised and located away from sensitive locations such as residential areas. It is Officer's opinion that the proposed development would be sited a sufficient distance away from those closest neighbours and consider that the development would not have any adverse harm on the amenity of neighbours.
- 6.15 The development would be accompanied by a close boarded refuse area for waste.

Officers consider that the development accommodates sufficient management for waste and is in line with Policy D10 of the SOLP.

- 6.16 In Officer's opinion the proposed development would not cause problems with regard to water soakaway and sewerage. The site is not prone to flood risk and the development will not therefore increase the flood risk of the site. Drainage and sanitation matters need to be addressed on site, among other matters, in order to obtain a mobile home licence and these matters need to be proven acceptable before such a licence is granted.

7.0 **CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 It is recommended that planning permission is granted because accommodation is needed to meet the operational requirements of the hotel and the existing staff accommodation is inadequate. A temporary permission of two years is recommended because the mobile homes are not a satisfactory permanent solution but will allow for standards of service to be maintained whilst capital funding is generated to provide a permanent solution. Subject to the proposed conditions the development generally accords with the Development Plan Policies.

8.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

- 8.1 **To grant planning permission subject to the following conditions:**

1. **Temporary permission – two years.**
2. **Development to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans.**
3. **Use of land as specified for staff accommodation only.**
4. **Landscaping scheme to be implemented (trees and shrubs only).**
5. **Protection of trees and hedges during the development.**

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