

# Planning Services

## COMMITTEE REPORT

**AGENDA ITEM NUMBER: 3(c)**

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### APPLICATION DETAILS

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<b>APPLICATION NO:</b>	<b>PL/5/2010/0330 AND PL/5/2010/0331</b>
<b>FULL APPLICATION DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>EXTENSION OF TIME LIMIT FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF PLANNING PERMISSION REF NO: PLAN/2007/0405 AND LISTED BUILDING CONSENT REF NO: PLAN/2007/0406 FOR BEDROOM EXTENSION</b>
<b>NAME OF APPLICANT</b>	<b>VON ESSEN HOTELS</b>
<b>SITE ADDRESS</b>	<b>SEAHAM HALL HOTEL, SEAHAM SR7 7AG</b>
<b>ELECTORAL DIVISION</b>	<b>Seaham</b>
<b>CASE OFFICER</b>	<b>Barry Gavillet 0191 5274305 barry.gavillet@durham.gov.uk</b>

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### DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE AND PROPOSAL

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**Site:**

- 1 Seaham Hall is a Grade II listed building located to the north of Seaham in an area of high landscape value. The hall is set within landscaped grounds of approximately 13 hectares and is accessed from Lord Byrons Walk. Over recent years the hall has been restored to an exceptionally high standard and now operates as a luxury five star hotel with spa and associated car parking.

**Proposal:**

- 2 The applicant seeks to extend the time limit for the implementation of both the previously approved planning application and listed building consents; both were approved in August 2007. This report covers both of these applications.
- 3 The planning application for the extension to the hall would provide 29 new bedrooms, a meeting room, access road alterations, three additional disabled parking bays and landscaping. The listed building consent is required for the alterations to Seaham Hall where the proposed extension joins it.
- 4 The proposed extension would be situated on the site of Byrons Court, previously a residential block and more recently used as staff accommodation, which would be

demolished. The architectural style of the new building is contemporary and simple which would result in an appropriate contrast with the main hall. The materials would include the use of Venetian plaster, timber and glass panelled walls and timber framed windows. This would be enhanced by the use of landscaping, water features and a waterfall.

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## **PLANNING HISTORY**

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Change of use from nursing home to hotel, demolition of N.W. wing & covered link & extensions – 1997. Approved.

Staff accommodation and service road – 1998. Approved.

Erection of extensions, demolition & car parking provision – 1999. Approved.

Health Spa – 2000. Approved.

Bedroom extensions and associated Listed Building Consent – 2007. Approved.

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## **PLANNING POLICY**

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### **5 NATIONAL POLICY:**

Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1) sets out the Government's overarching planning policies on the delivery of sustainable development through the planning system.

Planning for Sustainable Economic Development proposes a responsive and flexible approach to planning which provides sufficient employment land and makes better use of market information. The PPS is designed to establish a national planning policy framework for economic development at regional, sub-regional and local levels for both urban and rural areas.

Planning Policy Statement 4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Development proposes a responsive and flexible approach to planning which provides sufficient employment land and makes better use of market information. The PPS is designed to establish a national planning policy framework for economic development at regional, sub-regional and local levels for both urban and rural areas.

Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment (PPS5) sets out the Government's planning policies on the conservation of the historic environment.

Planning Policy Statement 7 (PPS7) sets out the Government's planning policies for rural areas, including country towns and villages and the wider, largely undeveloped countryside up to the fringes of larger urban areas.

*The above represents a summary of those policies considered most relevant. The full text can be accessed at: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planning/planningpolicyguidance/planningpolicystatements>*

### **6 LOCAL PLAN POLICY:**

District of Easington Local Plan

Policy 1- Due regard will be had to the development plan when determining planning applications. Account will be taken as to whether the proposed development accords with sustainable development principles while benefiting the community and local economy. The location, design and layout will also need to accord with saved policies 3, 7, 14-18, 22 and 35-38.

Policy 7 - Development which adversely affects the character, quality or appearance of Areas of High Landscape Value (AHLV) will only be allowed if the need outweighs the value of the landscape and there is no alternative location within the County.

Policy 24 - Development which adversely affects the character, appearance, special architectural features or setting of a listed building will not be approved. The retention of architectural or historic features will be encouraged. Demolition of a listed building will be only be allowed in exceptional circumstances.

Policy 35 - The design and layout of development should consider energy conservation and efficient use of energy, reflect the scale and character of adjacent buildings, provide adequate open space and have no serious adverse effect on the amenity of neighbouring residents or occupiers.

Policy 36 - The design and layout of development should ensure good access and encourage alternative means of travel to the private car.

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*The above represents a summary of those policies considered most relevant in the Development Plan the full text, criteria, and justifications of each may be accessed at <http://www.easingtonlocalplan.org.uk/>*

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## **CONSULTATION AND PUBLICITY RESPONSES**

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### **7 STATUTORY RESPONSES:**

English Heritage – no objections

### **8 INTERNAL CONSULTEE RESPONSES:**

Conservation and Design Officer – no objections

Environmental Health – no objections

Planning Policy – no objections

Landscape Officer – no objections

Highways Officer – no objections subject to visibility splay improvements as previously agreed

Archaeology Officer – programme of archaeology works required

Regeneration Officer – in support of the proposals

### **9 PUBLIC RESPONSES:**

None

### **10 APPLICANTS STATEMENT:**

Seaham Hall has received an unprecedented number of awards both regionally and nationally since its opening in 2001 raising both the profile of East Durham and the North East as a whole.

It is the intention of Von Essen Hotels to continue to provide this high standard of accommodation and wish to respond to their growing marketplace and potential for high profile events. Indeed it is felt that an increase in available rooms would provide an essential balance and compliment to the existing function, conference and spa business.

Currently, Seaham Hall offers nineteen 'five star' bedrooms and achieves a high occupancy in comparison to industry norms, throughout the year.

Some significant events cannot be accommodated by the hotel due to the restriction on rooms available, and the proposed increase in bedroom stock would secure the business and improve the appeal of the venue to large corporate functions.

An inherent increase in the employment of local staff would result and Von Essen strongly believe that the profile of the venue and locale would also result.

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*The above represents a summary of the comments received on this application. The full written text is available for inspection on the application file which can be viewed at <http://planning.easington.gov.uk/portal/servlets/ApplicationSearchServlet?PKID=10997>. Officer analysis of the issues raised and discussion as to their relevance to the proposal and recommendation made is contained below*

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## **PLANNING CONSIDERATION AND ASSESSMENT**

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The main planning considerations with regard to these applications remain the same as the previously approved applications which were:

- Impact on surrounding area including area of high landscape value
- Impact on listed buildings and their settings
- Impact on neighbours
- Highways issues
- Archaeological issues
- Need for visitor accommodation
- Accordance with planning policy

### **11 Impact on surrounding area including area of high landscape value**

It is considered that the simple contemporary design of the extension along with appropriately chosen materials would complement the main hall and would reflect the design of the Serenity Spa extension. In addition, it is considered that the design of the proposed extension together with its relationship with the surrounding landscape would not create any adverse impacts on the immediate locality or area of high landscape value. The County Council's Design and Conservation Officer supports the proposals.

### **12 Impact on listed buildings and their settings**

The proposed extension would be joined to the main hall which is grade II listed. It is also located close to the former vicarage at Greystones (grade II listed) and St Marys Church (Grade I listed).

It is not considered that the proposed extension would have a harmful impact on these buildings. It would be of the same scale and on the same footprint as the building it replaces and would be well landscaped into the site, with the ground floor being below the ground level of the hotel. As such, it would have no greater impact than the existing building. It would not threaten the main hall in either scale or design but would add to the interest of the site.

### **13 Impact on neighbours**

It is not considered that the proposal would lead to any adverse impacts on the amenity of surrounding residents. The proposed extension would not create any significant increased disturbance than the building it is proposed to replace which is used for staff accommodation.

## **14 Highways issues**

Durham County Council Highways Authority have no objections to the proposal subject to improvements to the vehicular access arrangement onto Lord Byrons Walk at the north west corner of the site being made. It is recommended that a condition on any planning approval should be applied to secure these improvements.

## **15 Archaeological issues**

An archaeological survey submitted as part of the planning application has shown that there is some archaeological interest on the northeast side of Byrons Court that would require further investigation. It is recommended that a condition should be applied to ensure that the impact of the development on the archaeological resource could be adequately mitigated.

## **16 Need for visitor accommodation**

Studies previously carried out by East Durham Business Service and the Regeneration Officers have highlighted the need for further visitor accommodation in the area and particularly in Seaham. This proposal would contribute towards the need to increase the amount of visitor accommodation and support the development of a prestigious hotel and spar resort.

## **17 Accordance with planning policy**

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that:

*“In considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority or the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses”.*

Paragraph HE9.1 of PPS5 (Planning for the Historic Environment) states:

*“There should be a presumption in favour of the conservation of designated heritage assets and the more significant the designated heritage asset, the greater the presumption in favour of its conservation should be. Once lost, heritage assets cannot be replaced and their loss has a cultural, environmental, economic and social impact. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. Loss affecting any designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II Listed Building, park or garden should be exceptional”.*

PPS5 also states that ‘local planning authorities should take into account the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to the character and local distinctiveness of the historic environment. The consideration of design should include scale, height, massing, alignment, materials and use’.

The most relevant Local Plan Policies are 24 and 35 which state that “Development which adversely affects the character, appearance, special architectural features or setting of a listed building will not be approved. The retention of architectural or historic features will be encouraged. Demolition of a listed building will be only be allowed in exceptional circumstances”, and that “The design and layout of development should consider energy

conservation and efficient use of energy, reflect the scale and character of adjacent buildings, provide adequate open space and have no serious adverse effect on the amenity of neighbouring residents or occupiers”.

For the reasons stated earlier in the report, it is considered that the scale, design and layout of the proposed development are acceptable and would have a positive impact on the listed building and its setting. It is also considered that the proposals would contribute toward much needed, high quality visitor accommodation in the area. Therefore it is considered to be in accordance with the relevant planning policies.

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## **CONCLUSION**

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- 18 In conclusion, it is considered that the proposals accord with the relevant planning policies and there are no other material planning considerations that would warrant refusal of planning permission or listed building consent. There has been no significant change in the planning situation that would warrant a different view being taken in respect of the proposals since the previous grant of planning permission and listed building consent in 2007. In these circumstances, it is considered appropriate to extend the time limit for implementation.
- 19 The development represents a significant expansion of Seaham Hall and would contribute to the high quality accommodation and facilities provided there.

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

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- 20 That the applications be **APPROVED** subject to the following conditions;

### **Conditions:**

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
2. Notwithstanding any details of materials submitted with the application no development shall commence until samples of the external walling and roofing materials have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local planning authority. The development shall be constructed in accordance with the approved details.
3. A scheme for the improvement of visibility splays at the access from Lord Byrons Walk shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority before the development commences. Thereafter, the approved access arrangements shall be implemented in full before any part of the development is brought into use, and the visibility splays shall be retained during the lifetime of the development.
4. Within one month of the commencement of the development, or other such time period as may be agreed in writing with the Local planning authority, a detailed landscaping scheme shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local planning authority. No tree shall be felled or hedge removed until the landscape scheme, including any replacement tree and hedge planting, is approved as above. The landscape scheme shall include accurate plan based details of the following: Trees, hedges and shrubs scheduled for retention. Details of hard and soft landscaping including planting species, sizes, layout, densities, numbers. Details of planting procedures or specification. Finished topsoil levels and depths. Details of

temporary topsoil and subsoil storage provision. Seeded or turf areas, habitat creation areas and details etc. Details of land and surface drainage. The establishment maintenance regime, including watering, rabbit protection, tree stakes, guards etc. The local planning authority shall be notified in advance of the start on site date and the completion date of all external works. Trees, hedges and shrubs shall not be removed without agreement within five years.

5. All planting, seeding or turfing and habitat creation in the approved details of the landscaping scheme shall be carried out in the first available planting season following the practical completion of the development. Any approved replacement tree or hedge planting shall be carried out within 12 months of felling and removals of existing trees and hedges. Any trees or plants which die, fail to flourish or are removed within a period of 5 years from the substantial completion of the development shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the planning authority gives written consent to any variation. Replacements will be subject to the same conditions.
6. Notwithstanding the submitted information, details of the structural alterations proposed to the Listed Building to provide the connection with the extension hereby approved shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority before the development commences. Thereafter the development shall be completed in accordance with the approved details before the extension is brought into use.
7. a) No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work as defined in a brief prepared by the County Durham Archaeology Team. The works must be in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which must be submitted to, and approved in writing, by the local planning authority. The strategy shall include details of the following:
  - i. Measures to ensure the preservation in situ, or the preservation by record, of archaeological features of identified importance.
  - ii. Methodologies for the recording and recovery of archaeological remains including artefacts and ecofacts.
  - iii. Post-fieldwork methodologies for assessment and analyses.
  - iv. Report content and arrangements for dissemination, and publication proposals.
  - v. Archive preparation and deposition with recognised repositories.
  - vi. A timetable of works in relation to the proposed development, including sufficient notification and allowance of time to ensure that the site work is undertaken and completed in accordance with the strategy.
  - vii. Monitoring arrangements, including the notification in writing to the County Durham Archaeologist of the commencement of archaeological works and the opportunity to monitor such works.
  - viii. A list of all staff involved in the implementation of the strategy, including sub-contractors and specialists, their responsibilities and qualifications.
- b) The archaeological mitigation strategy shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and timings, subject to any variations agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

c) Prior to the development being beneficially occupied, a copy of any analysis, reporting, publication or archiving required as part of the mitigation strategy shall be deposited at the County Durham Historic Environment Record within six months of the date of completion of the development hereby approved by this permission or such other period as may be agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

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## **REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATION**

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1. The development was considered acceptable having regard to the following development plan policies:

DISTRICT OF EASINGTON LOCAL PLAN  
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PLANNING POLICY STATEMENT/GUIDANCE  
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ENV07 - Protection of Areas of High Landscape Value (AHLV)  
ENV24 - Development Affecting Listed Buildings and their Settings

ENV35 - Environmental Design: Impact of Development  
ENV36 - Design for Access and the Means of Travel  
GEN01 - General Principles of Development  
PPS1 - Delivering Sustainable Development  
PPS4 - Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth  
PPS5 - Planning for the Historic Environment  
PPS7 - Sustainable Development in Rural Areas

2. In particular the development was considered acceptable having regard to consideration of issues of the impact on the landscape, protection of heritage assets and sustainable economic development.

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## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

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- Submitted Application Forms and Plans.
- Design and Access Statement
- District of Easington Local Plan 2001
- Planning Policy Statements / Guidance, PPS1, PPS4, PPS5, PPS7
- Consultation Responses



