

<b>Application Number</b>	17/1351/FUL	<b>Agenda Item</b>	
<b>Date Received</b>	4th August 2017	<b>Officer</b>	Charlotte Burton
<b>Target Date</b>	29th September 2017		
<b>Ward</b>	Market		
<b>Site</b>	Double Tree By Hilton Granta Place Cambridge CB2 1RT		
<b>Proposal</b>	Removal of glass pyramid structure to roof of existing leisure centre, re-cladding of the facades and erection of single storey extension (net gain of 10no additional bedrooms and leisure facilities).		
<b>Applicant</b>	Ability Hotels (Cambridge) Ltd		

SUMMARY	<p>The development accords with the Development Plan for the following reasons:</p> <p>The proposal would retain a comparable leisure facility as existing, which would be accessible to local residents.</p> <p>The proposed extension would be minor and would not harm the character of the conservation area or views from surrounding open spaces.</p>
RECOMMENDATION	APPROVAL

## **1.0 SITE DESCRIPTION/AREA CONTEXT**

- 1.1 The site comprises the leisure centre wing of the Doubletree Hilton Hotel situated on the eastern bank of the River Cam, between Sheep's Green to the west and Coe Fen to the east. It is accessed from Granta Place off Mill Lane. There is a large parking area within the site.
- 1.2 The hotel has been extended in several phases, however the majority of the building was constructed in 1972. Most recently, an additional third storey has been added to a central element of the building which has also been re-clad, to provide an

additional 16 no. bedrooms, which was granted under consent 14/1740/FUL.

- 1.3 The leisure centre extends to the south of the main hotel buildings. It dates from the early 1990s. It is single storey and constructed with extensive glazing on all elevations, as well as a glazed pyramidal roof. The leisure centre's linear form on a north to south axis presents a significant frontage along the River Cam, albeit relatively modest and partially screened with trees.
- 1.4 The site is within Conservation Area No. 1 (Central). The hotel buildings are not listed nor are they buildings of local interest (BLIs) but the location of the site is within the setting of adjacent listed buildings, including Peterhouse College and the Fitzwilliam Museum.
- 1.5 Coe Fen, Sheep's Green and the River Cam are designated as County Wildlife sites and Local Nature Reserves, and are within the Green Belt. There is a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) protecting four trees on the site and the site is within the Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ).

## **2.0 THE PROPOSAL**

- 2.1 The proposal is for extension and remodelling of the existing leisure centre to provide 10no. additional bedrooms and replacement leisure facilities, including removal of the glass pyramid structure to roof, re-cladding of the facades and a single storey extension.
- 2.2 The extension would be approximately 10m in length to the south of the existing leisure centre. It would have a flat roof and would continue the same building lines and height as the existing leisure centre.
- 2.3 The existing leisure centre and extension would be clad in brick slip rainscreen cladding, zinc metal rainscreen cladding, timber double glazed windows and doors with aluminium cladding, and a green roof. This would wrap around the front, side and rear elevations.
- 2.4 The proposal includes rearrangements to the existing parking area constituting the loss of 23 no. parking spaces. Additional

cycle parking would be provided. Two trees to the south of the existing leisure centre would be lost. A landscaping scheme has been submitted showing the soft planting around the perimeter of the building.

2.5 The application is accompanied by the following supporting information:

1. Design and Access Statement
2. Planning Statement
3. Heritage Assessment
4. Arboricultural Implications Assessment
5. Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
6. Flood Risk Assessment
7. Transport Statement
8. Sustainability Checklist

2.6 During the course of the application, the description of development was amended to clarify the leisure facilities would not only be for the existing hotel. The use of the leisure facilities by non-residents of the hotel is discussed further in this report. The floor plans of the leisure centre were also amended to change the proposed two beauty rooms into a virtual fitness suite. This additional/revised information was not publicly consulted on.

### **3.0 SITE HISTORY**

3.1 The planning history for the site comprises:

<b>Reference</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
10/0103/FUL	Erection of an extension to provide 56 additional bedrooms and a new leisure club at the Cambridge Doubletree Hilton Hotel, Granta Place.	REFUSED

11/0988/FUL	Demolition of existing single storey leisure centre, and erection a three storey extension to provide 31 additional bedrooms and a new leisure centre	REF/Appeal Dismissed
11/0975/CAC	Demolition of existing single storey leisure centre	REF/Appeal Dismissed
13/1207/FUL	Proposed conversion of existing leisure centre to form 13no additional bedrooms including removal of pyramidal roof and re-cladding of existing facade. Erection of third floor extension to provide 16no additional bedrooms and associated works. Re-cladding of existing facade and erection of third floor extension to provide 16no additional bedrooms and associated works.	REFUSED
14/1740/FUL	Re-cladding of existing facade and erection of third floor extension to provide 16no additional bedrooms and associated works.	Approved
16/0768/S73	Section 73 application to vary condition 2 (approved plans) of permission 14/1740/FUL to include additional over cladding and structure.	Approved
17/0126/CL2PD	Certificate of lawfulness under Section 192 for internal alterations to existing leisure facilities within hotel (C1 use) to provide conference and meeting rooms.	Pending consideration

17/1350/FUL	Removal of glass pyramid structure to roof of existing leisure centre, re-cladding of the facades and erection of a single storey extension (net gain of 14no additional bedrooms and a fitness suite for the existing hotel).	Pending consideration
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3.2 The pending applications 17/0126/CL2PD and 17/1350/FUL will be determined following the outcome of the current application.

#### 4.0 PUBLICITY

4.1	Advertisement:	Yes
	Adjoining Owners:	Yes
	Site Notice Displayed:	Yes

#### 5.0 POLICY

5.1 See Appendix 1 for full details of Central Government Guidance, Cambridge Local Plan 2006 policies, Supplementary Planning Documents and Material Considerations.

#### 5.2 Relevant Development Plan policies

PLAN		POLICY NUMBER
Cambridge Plan 2006	Local	3/1 3/2 3/3 3/4 3/7 3/9 3/11 3/14
		4/1 4/2 4/3 4/4 4/6 4/10 4/11 4/13 4/15
		6/1 6/3
		8/2 8/6 8/10 8/18

### 5.3 Relevant Central Government Guidance, Supplementary Planning Documents and Material Considerations

Central Government Guidance	<p>National Planning Policy Framework March 2012</p> <p>National Planning Policy Framework – Planning Practice Guidance March 2014</p> <p>Circular 11/95 (Annex A)</p>
Supplementary Planning Guidance	Sustainable Design and Construction (May 2007)
Material Considerations	<p><u>City Wide Guidance</u></p> <p>Biodiversity Checklist for Land Use Planners in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough (March 2001).</p> <p>Cambridge City Nature Conservation Strategy (2006)</p> <p>Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (November 2010)</p> <p>Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2005)</p> <p>Cambridge and Milton Surface Water Management Plan (2011)</p> <p>Air Quality in Cambridge – Developers Guide (2008)</p>
	<p><u>Area Guidelines</u></p> <p>Cambridge City Council (2002)–Southern Corridor Area Transport Plan:</p> <p>Cambridge Historic Core Conservation Area Appraisal (2006)</p> <p>Sheeps Green/Coe Fen Conservation Plan (2001)</p> <p>Christs Pieces/New Square Conservation Plan (2001)</p>

#### 5.4 Status of Proposed Submission – Cambridge Local Plan

Planning applications should be determined in accordance with policies in the adopted Development Plan and advice set out in the NPPF. However, after consideration of adopted plans and the NPPF, policies in emerging plans can also be given some weight when determining applications. For Cambridge, therefore, the emerging revised Local Plan as published for consultation on 19 July 2013 can be taken into account, especially those policies where there are no or limited objections to it. However it is likely, in the vast majority of instances, that the adopted development plan and the NPPF will have considerably more weight than emerging policies in the revised Local Plan. For the application considered in this report, no emerging policies are relevant.

### 6.0 **CONSULTATIONS**

#### **Cambridgeshire County Council (Highways Development Management)**

##### Initial comment 5 Sept 2017

- 6.1 The proposals will result in a net loss of 23 car parking spaces. There will be 10 additional bedrooms and the proposals will result in 8 additional staff being employed at the site. The site currently has an over provision of spaces based on the standards. As a result of the proposal, the demand for parking is expected to go up. The Transport Statement currently refers to the car parking on site being underutilised, although this should be evidenced. A car parking accumulation assessment is required. The additional cycle parking spaces proposed are acceptable to the County Council.

##### Comment on Transport Statement – 9 Nov 2017

- 6.2 The parking assessment demonstrates there is sufficient car parking available on site to accommodate the demand. A reduction in car parking provision is therefore supported. Recommend informing guests of limited availability of parking, continuing to charge for parking, increasing cycle parking spaces, and adopting a parking booking system. Recommend condition for Travel Plan, which should contain measures including personal travel planning for staff, travel information

notice boards in staff areas and promotion of car share schemes. In addition, travel information packs containing sustainable transport information should be made available in guests. Provision should also be made to promote the travel plan to visitors and users of the fitness centre and other on site uses. The transport impact of the proposal will not be severe.

### **Access Officer**

- 6.3 The accessible room should have a sliding bathroom door. The adjoining door should open into the adjoining room and not the accessible one.

### **Environmental Health**

- 6.4 No objection subject to conditions to control construction hours in the interests of local amenity. The proposed development will not have any significant impacts on residential amenity when operational.

### **Urban Design and Conservation Team**

- 6.5 The conversion creates a single storey bedroom wing with small (45sqm) leisure facility. As such it is considered to create a relatively low-key addition that is of modest visual impact. If well detailed and built of decent materials, it would have modest impact on the Conservation Area. The materials are consistent with the approach taken on the approved extension and recladding of the southernmost end of the hotel. Recommend conditions for materials and window samples. The sections of the elevation near the gym, pool and spa could be made more transparent to allow users better views out to the river and fen. A glazed roof light would create better interior lighting and create some visual interest to the otherwise flat roof scape.

### **Tree Team**

- 6.6 The required tree removals and works will have no material impact on amenity therefore there are no formal objections to the proposals subject to conditions for tree protection measures.



## **Landscape Architect**

- 6.7 No objection subject to conditions for hard and soft landscaping scheme, landscape maintenance and management plan, and green roof. It is important that the area shown to be planted between the car park/development area and Coe Fen is enhanced to increase the screening potential of this area. Not only with trees but with understory planting as well. Request a change is made to the Sorbus aucuparia selected to an alternative

## **Nature Conservation Officer**

- 6.8 No objection subject to conditions for bat survey work, bird/bat box provision, construction environmental management plan and ecologically sensitive external lighting scheme.

## **Sustainable Drainage Engineer**

- 6.9 No objection subject to conditions.

## **Environment Agency**

- 6.10 No objection. Recommendations relating to flood risk standing advice, surface water drainage, foul water drainage and ground contamination.

## **South Newnham Neighbourhood Forum**

- 6.11 Not aware of any attempt by the applicant to consult residents, local groups or Councillors before submitting this application. The scale and massing of the proposed extension along the riverside would have a detrimental impact on the sightline and key views across Sheeps Green and Coe Fen. The proposed expansion of the business would obviously attract more custom; the only access road is narrow and already crowded with delivery lorries, guests' and visitors' cars (the car park has always been open to the public as well as visitors), cyclists and pedestrians, and increasing this traffic will create further hazards. Many of our constituents were members and made regular use of the leisure facilities that previously existed and which, we understand, formed part of the initial planning application to build those facilities. The leisure facilities

proposed are greatly reduced, and not available for use by the community.

- 6.12 The above responses are a summary of the comments that have been received. Full details of the consultation responses can be inspected on the application file.

## 7.0 REPRESENTATIONS

- 7.1 The owners/occupiers of the following addresses have made representations **objecting** to the proposal:

- 43 Broadway, Grantchester
- Flat 3 Brookfield, Newnham Walk
- 2 Chaucer Close
- 11a Chaucer Road
- 11 Clarkson Road
- 11 Derby Street
- 43 Eltisley Avenue
- 16 Grantchester Road
- 36 Hardwick Street
- 11 Latham Road
- Church Rate Corner, Malting Lane
- Frostlake Cottage, Malting Lane
- Granary Yard, Malting Lane
- 5 Merton Street
- 14 Merton Street
- 20 Millington Road
- 105 Millington Lane
- 3 Summerfield
- 8 St Marks Court
- 17 St Marks Court
- 9 Little St Mary's Lane
- 8b Selwyn Gardens
- 29 Selwyn Gardens
- 10 Summerfield
- 18 Wordsworth Grove

- 7.2 The following residents' groups have submitted representations **objecting** to the proposal:

- Newnham Croft Residents' Association (45 Eltisley Avenue)

- Newnham Croft Conservation Group
- Residents' Association of Old Newnham
- Southacre, Latham and Chaucer Road Residents' Association

### 7.3 The representations can be summarised as follows:

- Further extension to an already large hotel
- Previous extensions to the hotel have had visual impact
- Proposed extension 10m to the south of the hotel and to a height of three storeys along river frontage would be excessive
- Architecture is brutalist and out of keeping
- Scale and massing out of keeping and detrimental
- Materials would lack transparency of existing glazing and block views between Sheep's Green and Coe Fen
- Windows and lighting would be visually intrusive
- Impact on conservation area, river frontage, views from Coe Fen and Sheep's Green and Green Belt
- Urbanisation of rural views
- Development of fragile site
- Encroachment on valuable green space
- Impact on wildlife and biodiversity
- Lack of plans for a swimming pool
- Loss of residents' use of leisure facilities
- Previous leisure centre had 700 members
- Leisure centre has been closed since previous extensions to hotel approved
- Hotel management previously gain assurances of continued residents' use of leisure facilities
- Inadequate car parking
- Increase in traffic
- Impact on highway safety from increase in number of cyclists, pedestrians and tourists
- Poor hotel signage leads to delivery lorries using narrow roads
- Alien social use impacting on contemplative enjoyment of adjacent fens by residents and visitors
- Inspector's decision on 2013 application should be given weight
- Other hotels in the city more appropriate to expand
- Set precedent for further development along the river front

- Application documents difficult to read and not include full hotel floor plans
- Not all objectors on previous applications have been notified

7.4 Cambridge Past Present and Future submitted a representation **objecting** to the proposal. The representation can be summarised as follows:

- Support enhancements to the external appearance
- Support the green roof
- More sympathetic building within the highly significant setting
- Unclear how the need for the leisure centre has been considered.
- Piecemeal approach to development of the site

7.5 The owners/occupiers of the following addresses have made representations **supporting** the proposal:

- 4 Wordsworth Grove

7.6 The representations can be summarised as follows:

- Providing residents would be able to apply for memberships, having more leisure facilities within the area would be a benefit
- Increasing number of hotel bedrooms should reduce room prices

7.7 The above representations are a summary of the comments that have been received. Full details of the representations can be inspected on the application file.

## 8.0 ASSESSMENT

8.1 From the consultation responses and representations received and from my inspection of the site and the surroundings, I consider that the main issues are:

1. Principle of development
2. Context of site, design and external spaces and impact on heritage assets
3. Transport impact
4. Car and cycle parking

5. Ecology
6. Flood risk and drainage
7. Disabled access
8. Residential amenity
9. Third party representations

## **Principle of Development**

- 8.2 The relevant considerations are the changes to the swimming pool and leisure facilities, and the expansion of the hotel to provide additional bedrooms, and whether this is acceptable in principle.

□ *Changes to swimming pool and leisure facilities*

- 8.3 The planning history for the site includes multiple applications affecting the swimming pool and leisure facilities. These are material considerations for the assessment of the current application. The most relevant is the 2013 application which included the 'proposed conversion of existing leisure centre to form 13no additional bedrooms including removal of pyramidal roof and re-cladding of existing façade' (13/1207/FUL). This application was refused on two grounds including the first reason for refusal:

*The proposed development would result in the loss of a well-used, highly valued and centrally located Leisure Centre which meets the needs of the local community and which does not operate as an ancillary facility to the primary use of the site as a hotel but which has become established as an independent D2 use. The leisure facility is neither replaced to at least the existing scale and quality within the new development nor relocated to another appropriate premises or site of similar or improved accessibility for its users. The loss of the Leisure Centre therefore represents an unnecessary loss of a valued facility which would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs. The proposed development is contrary to Cambridge Local Plan policy 6/1 and to advice provided in paragraphs 70 and 74 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.*

- 8.4 This application established that the use of the swimming pool and leisure facilities was as a community facility within Use Class D2. The community facility was considered to be an

independent use separate from the hotel, rather than an ancillary facility. This conclusion was reached following an assessment which took account of the removal of the condition on the original 1991 consent for the leisure centre at the hotel which restricted it from separate use. It was demonstrated that the use by members of the public/non-residents had intensified to the extent that the Leisure Centre has become established as a D2 Leisure facility in its own right and a new planning unit has been created.

- 8.5 The applicant has stated that the swimming pool and leisure facilities closed in December 2014. The site has since been cordoned off and inaccessible during the building works associated with the consented hotel expansion. It is understood that the swimming pool is still in situ, however has been rendered un-useable. While the facility has been inactive during this time, the local planning authority's view is that the current lawful use of the site is as a leisure facility within Use Class D2. The applicant has not demonstrated an alternative lawful use for the facility. This is therefore the starting point for considering the acceptability of the proposed replacement leisure facilities.
- 8.6 As in the 2013 application, the relevant adopted Local Plan (2006) policy is 6/3 which relates to the protection of community leisure. This states that development leading to the loss of leisure facilities will be permitted if:
- a) The facility can be replaced to at least its existing scale and quality within the new development;
  - b) The facility is to be relocated to another appropriate premises or site of similar or improved accessibility for its users.
- 8.7 The proposal includes the replacement of the leisure facility on the site and thus it is relevant to assess the proposal against part a) of policy 6/3. The 2013 included a replacement leisure facility, however this was found to be not of the same scale or variety as those existing on the site. This was considered to result in a reduction in choice for users of the leisure facility which would harm the quality of the quality of the leisure offer on the site. Thus when assessing the proposal against part a), it is relevant to consider whether the scale and quality of the replacement facility would provide a similar and acceptable offer

to users of the site as the facility to be lost. I will compare the current proposal against the 2013 scheme to provide a benchmark for this.

<b>Facilities to be lost (as shown on site plan)</b>	<b>2013 refused replacement facilities</b>	<b>Current application proposed replacement facilities</b>
Swimming pool (11m x 5.5m) Jacuzzi Large sauna Solarium Male/Female/Accessible changing rooms Gymnasium (approx. 70sqm) Workout studio (approx. 49 sqm) Physio room Two beauty salons. Reception and office	Fitness suite (45 sqm)	Swimming pool (10m x 5.5m) Jacuzzi Sauna Steam room Male/Female/Accessible changing rooms Fitness suite (approx. 47sqm) Virtual fitness suite Reception and office

- 8.8 The current proposal significantly exceeds the facilities proposed in the 2013 which proposed only a fitness suite and included the loss of the swimming pool. In my opinion, the scale of the facilities proposed in the current application is comparable to the facilities to be lost. The replacement swimming pool would be of a similar size. There would be a replacement fitness suite which would be similar to the gymnasium to be lost. The virtual fitness suite would replace the studio space. The proposal would include the loss of treatment rooms, however these primarily offered beauty treatments to hotel guests and their loss would not materially affect the leisure centre. The ancillary facilities including changing rooms, stores and reception areas would be comparable. The proposal would represent an opportunity to enhance the quality of the facility and to bring it up to standard.
- 8.9 The scale and type of facilities proposed would allow users to have access to a comparable range of activities and services on the site to the previous operation. The applicant has provided information on the range of classes that would be offered. In addition to children's swimming lessons, users would have

access to virtual fitness classes. While the change to virtual classes rather than classes led by instructors would be different to the previous operation, in my opinion, this is a result of an intention to reduce staffing levels and a general shift in the nature of fitness classes, and not as a direct result of the replacement facilities. The opening hours for members would be reduced by an hour and a half during the week, however I do not consider this would have a significant impact on the overall availability of the facilities.

8.10 The applicant has submitted a statement outlining the offer to hotel residents and non-residents. Hotel residents would have complementary access to the facility and a membership system would operate for non-residents. The statement commits to a maximum membership of 400 people with a waitlist. This anticipates 150-200 regular users, which the applicant states would be the same as when the facility previously operated. I am satisfied that demonstrates the applicants commitment to continue to allow use of the leisure facility for non-residents. I have recommended a condition to secure the opening hours to members and the operation of a membership system with a minimum of 400 memberships available. Subject to this, in my opinion, the use of facility by non-residents would be similar to the previous operation and the use of the facility as a standalone leisure facility would not be lost.

8.11 For these reasons, in my opinion, the current proposal represents a replacement leisure facility which would provide a similar and acceptable offer to users of the site as the facility to be lost. The scale of the replacement facility would be similar and the quality would be improved compared to the previous facility to be lost. The applicant has committed to providing access to non-residents through a membership system and I am satisfied that this can be secured through conditions. The current proposal is substantially different from the 2013 application and the previous reason for refusal does not apply to the current application. In my opinion, the proposal meets part a) of policy 6/1 and the principle of development is acceptable in this regard.

☐ *Additional bedrooms*

8.12 Local Plan (2006) policy 6/3 regarding proposals for tourist accommodation states that development which maintains,



strengthens and diversifies the range of short-stay accommodation will be permitted. The principle of expanding the hotel has been established through the previous consents on the site, including 14/740/FUL for an additional 16 no. bedrooms. In my opinion, the current proposal for a further 10 no. bedrooms would comply with policy 6/3 and the principle of development is acceptable.

### **Context of site, design and external spaces and impact on heritage assets**

- 8.13 The hotel sits on the eastern bank of the River Cam and is surrounded by the protected green open space of Coe Fen to the east and south, and Sheep's Green to the west. These large, open, natural spaces make the hotel highly visible with long views afforded of the hotel from across this surrounding fen land within the conservation area and the setting of listed buildings. This setting allows an awareness of the composition of the hotel buildings as two obvious phases. The main building constructed in 1972, and the remaining part of the pre-1972 hotel that was destroyed in a fire. The single storey pyramid-shaped leisure centre further extends the main mass of the building albeit less noticeable from longer views due to it's comparatively small scale.
- 8.14 There have been several previous applications to extend the hotel which have been considered by the planning committee. I have provided a comparison between the current proposal and the previous applications that included conversion or extension of the leisure centre in the table below. The most recent consent for the additional third storey to the existing hotel did not include works to the leisure centre so has not been included (14/1740/FUL).

<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Maximum height (m)</b>	<b>Maximum width (m)</b>	<b>Maximum length from main hotel building (m)</b>	<b>Position set back from river (m)</b>
<b>Existing leisure centre building</b>	7.4 (to apex of pyramid roof)	21.25	34.5	16.0
<b>Current proposal</b>	3.9 (excluding green roof)	21.25	44.1	16.0
<b>Refused extension 2010 (10/0103/FUL)</b>	14.4 (16.5 for 10 to accommodate rooftop plant)	19.5	47.25	18.5
<b>Refused extension 2011 (11/0988/FUL)</b>	10.8 (13.8 for 10 to accommodate rooftop plant)	20.5	51.25	21.0
<b>Refused extension 2013 (13/1207/FUL)</b>	3.8	21.25	34.5	16.0

8.15 The most recent application that included works to the leisure centre was the 2013 refused scheme (13/1207/FUL). This included removal of the pyramidal roof and external re-cladding, but did not increase the footprint of the leisure centre. This scheme was refused, however the reasons for refusal related to the loss of the leisure facility and transport mitigation, and did

not relate to the design or materials. This decision is a material consideration and for these reasons, I come to the same conclusion that the removal of the pyramidal roof and external re-cladding proposed in the current application are acceptable. Moreover, since the 2013 application, the additional storey to the southern wing of the hotel has been approved and constructed (14/1740/FUL). The proposed cladding would be within the same palette of materials as the additional storey which were previously considered to be acceptable. Using the same materials would visually tie the leisure centre wing to the main hotel to improve the coherence of the different buildings on the site.

- 8.16 The difference between the current application and the refused 2013 scheme is the proposed single storey extension and associated landscape works proposed in the current application, which is a relevant to consider. The previous applications to extend the leisure centre were for significantly larger extensions which increased the height of the existing leisure centre building. The refused 2011 proposal was for a three storey building to replace the existing leisure centre (11/0988/FUL). This was dismissed on appeal on the grounds that the scale and position would be prominent and a visually dominant, and as such failed to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. The Inspector's decision is a material consideration and I have referred to it where relevant in my assessment below.
- 8.17 The Inspector identified views from the pathways traversing Sheep's Green including vistas of the built envelope of the city centre and some of the historic buildings therein, including the Fitzwilliam Museum and Peterhouse College, as 'rather striking views', albeit noted that these are not identified in the Conservation Area appraisal (paragraph 9). The function of Sheep's Green and Coe Fen as pleasant routes through the city and places to linger and enjoy the surrounding environment, including the views of the city centre, were highlighted by the Inspector as making a strong positive contribution to the Conservation Area (paragraph 10).

- 8.18 With regard to the existing leisure centre building, the Inspector noted:

*The presence of the hotel's leisure centre building and car park disrupts the openness of the two green spaces and interrupts some of the views from Sheep's Green towards the city centre. However, the single storey height of the building helps to limit the degree to which it detracts from the general sense of openness in the locality and prevents it from impeding on views entirely. In the latter respect, the degree of intrusion quite rapidly lessens with distance, such that the building only marginally interferes in the longer views from many parts of Sheep's Green. (paragraph 11)*

- 8.19 Compared to the dismissed 2011 scheme, the current proposal would be single storey. It would comprise an additional 10m (approximately) along the river frontage and would be 45sqm. The Urban Design and Conservation team support the current proposal on the basis that the extension would be a relatively low-key addition that is of modest visual impact. I share this view. The extension would be minor in scale and proportionate to the existing leisure centre. The design and materials would visually tie the extension into the existing building. The extension would be into an area of existing car parking which already has some visual impact on views from the river. In my opinion, the minor extension would be appropriate and, for the reasons noted by the Inspector, would not be prominent in views within the Conservation Area compared to the existing building. The removal of the pyramidal roof would remove a prominent feature and the replacement with a green roof across the leisure centre building would soften the visual impact of the building.

- 8.20 Moreover, the extension would be partially screened by the existing trees and planting along the river frontage, which softens the appearance of the leisure centre. The proposed extension would require the loss of two trees within the site, however the Tree Officer has not objected to their removal subject to conditions for the remaining trees to be protected during construction. In my opinion, the loss of these trees would not have a significant impact in views from the river or the fen as other trees would be retained to maintain the screening of the building. The proposed landscaping scheme includes additional planting around the car parking spaces visible from

the river. This would soften the visual impact of the car parking compared to the existing situation. The landscaping scheme also includes planting around the perimeter of the building and the parking area. The Landscape Officer supports the proposal subject to conditions. I agree with this and in my opinion, the proposal has the opportunity to enhance the landscaping on the site.

- 8.21 The site is not within the Cambridge Green Belt. However, it does lie adjacent to land designated as Green Belt. The proposed development would be visible from the Green Belt, however as the proposal would have an acceptable visual impact in views from surrounding open space, in my opinion it would not harm the setting of the Green Belt.
- 8.22 The applicants have not submitted details of external or internal lighting but had the application been recommended for approval this could have been secured via a planning condition. In my view this would address concerns raised by third parties. I am satisfied that the application complies with policy 4/15 Cambridge Local Plan 2006.
- 8.23 For these reasons, in my opinion the proposal is compliant with Cambridge Local Plan (2006) policies 3/4, 3/7, 3/11, 3/14, 4/1 and 4/11. Notwithstanding this, should less than substantial harm be considered to arise to the significance of the Conservation Area, the NPPF states that this should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal (paragraph 134). In my opinion, the retention of the leisure facility on the site together with the additional 10 no. bedrooms which would contribute towards meeting the Council's identified demand for hotel spaces within the city, would outweigh the less than substantial harm to the Conservation Area.

### **Transport Impact**

- 8.24 The application is supported by a Transport Statement which has been assessed by the Highways Authority. In summary, the proposal would increase the number of bedrooms from 122 as existing to 138 as proposed. The number of non-residents users of the leisure centre is anticipated to be similar to the existing situation. Following additional information submitted during the course of the application, the Highways Authority are satisfied that the proposal would have an acceptable impact on

the highway network, subject to a condition for a Travel Plan to encourage the use of sustainable transport modes by staff, residents and users of the leisure centre. Due to the scale of the proposal, I agree with this advice. In my opinion the proposal is compliant with Cambridge Local Plan (2006) policy 8/2.

## **Car and Cycle Parking**

### ☐ *Car parking*

8.25 The proposal would increase the number of bedrooms by 10 while reducing the number of car parking spaces from 174 to 151 (reduction of 26 spaces). The Highways Authority requested a parking assessment which was submitted during the course of the application. There is currently an overprovision of car parking based on the Council's adopted maximum standards. The Highways Authority is satisfied that the parking assessment demonstrates that there is sufficient car parking available on site to accommodate the additional guests that the proposals will generate. The reduction in the number of car parking spaces is therefore supported by the Highways Authority.

8.26 Notwithstanding this, the Highways Authority has recommended a condition for a Travel Plan to be submitted. This should include measures such as informing guests before they arrive that parking on-site may be limited, operating a parking booking system for hotel guests when making reservations, continuing to charge for parking and increasing cycle parking spaces. In my opinion, these measures are important to manage demand for on-site car parking and to promote sustainable travel modes. There will be however an increase in disabled parking space provision from 4 existing ones to 8 in the proposed scheme. I am satisfied that the car parking provision would be compliant with Cambridge Local Plan (2006) policy 8/10.

### ☐ *Cycle parking*

8.27 The previous consented extension to the hotel to provide an additional 16 no. bedrooms (14/1740/FUL) included the replacement of 34 no. cycle parking spaces with new sheltered cycle parking providing 43 no. spaces. The current proposal for a further 10 no. bedrooms are calculated to require a minimum

of 6 no. additional cycle parking spaces, according to the Council's adopted standards. This would bring the total provision to a minimum of 49 no. cycle parking spaces. Two stores have been approved under the previous consent and the current proposal includes a further store to the south of the building. No details have been submitted and so I have recommended a condition for this to be submitted for approval.

- 8.28 There is no additional cycle parking proposed for the leisure centre. The proposal does not increase the amount of leisure facilities on the site and as such, it would not be reasonable to require additional cycle parking to be provided. However, I would encourage the applicant to consider providing cycle hoops in front of the reception entrance for non-residents users. In my opinion there would be space for this and it would encourage visitors to use sustainable transport modes. This would facilitate the aims of the applicant's Travel Plan. Nonetheless, I am satisfied that the cycle parking provision would be compliant with Cambridge Local Plan (2006) policy 8/6.

## **Ecology**

- 8.29 The site is adjacent to Coe Fen and Sheep's Green Local Nature Reserve, and to Coe Fen and River Cam County Wildlife Sites. The site is also within close proximity to other statutory and non-statutory sites. The application has submitted a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal which has been reviewed by the Ecology Officer. The proposed works include the loss of a small section of privet hedgerow, a small area of mown species-poor semi-improved grassland and the removal of a small number of trees. The loss of habitat is considered to be minor.
- 8.30 The construction phase has the potential to impact on the LNR and CWS through the creation of dust, noise, pollution spills and lighting. The Ecology Officer has recommended a condition for a Construction Environmental Management Plan to be submitted for approval. The Ecology Officer has raised a query about whether the Lime tree which is identified within the ecological appraisal as having the potential for roosting bats is to be removed, however this is not proposed. I have recommended a condition for bird and bat boxes. At the operational phase, there is potential for lighting impacts, and a

condition for details of an ecologically sensitive lighting scheme is recommended.

- 8.31 Subject to these conditions, I accept the advice of the Ecology Officer that the impact of the proposal on important habitats and species would be acceptable, in accordance with Cambridge Local Plan (2006) policy 4/6.

### **Flood Risk and Drainage**

- 8.32 The site is within Flood Zone 2 (medium risk) as shown on the Environment Agency's flood risk map. The proposed extension would be within this area. The proposed use is classified as 'more vulnerable' and is appropriate development within Flood Zone 2, according to the National Planning Practice Guidance. Flooding from other sources including surface water, sewer and artificial water is considered to be low risk.
- 8.33 The applicant has submitted a Flood Risk Assessment which has been reviewed by the Sustainable Drainage Engineer. The proposed finished floor level is required to match the existing floor level as it is an extension to an existing building. The finished floor level will therefore be 7.63m AOD, which is 250mm below the design flood level including an allowance for climate change. Flood protection barriers will be installed at the entrances of the extension to prevent flooding within the building as well as utilising flood resistant materials to a minimum height of 7.88mAOD around the extension perimeter walls. A Flood Warning Procedure and Evacuation Plan will be prepared by the hotel.
- 8.34 The Sustainable Drainage Engineer supports the proposal and has recommended conditions for surface water drainage details and flood resilient measures, including a warning and evacuation plan, to be submitted for approval. I accept this advice and in my opinion the proposal is compliant with the NPPF and accompanying Guidance, in this respect.

### **Disabled access**

- 8.35 The proposal includes an increase in the number of disabled parking spaces, the provision of an accessible bedroom with a linked room, and an accessible changing room within the leisure centre. The Access Officer has recommended changes to



internal doors to the accessible bedroom. These are not subject to planning control, however the applicant is aware of these comments and should incorporate into the build process. In my opinion the proposal is compliant with Cambridge Local Plan (2006) policies 3/7 and 3/14.

### **Residential Amenity**

- 8.36 The site is not near to residential uses, other than the hotel. The Environmental Health team has assessed the application and has not raised concerns about the impact on residential amenity either from the construction or operation of the development, other than a recommended condition to control construction hours. I am satisfied that the proposal would adequately respects the residential amenity of its neighbours and the constraints of the site and I consider that it is compliant with Cambridge Local Plan (2006) policies 3/4, 3/7 and 4/13.

### **Third Party Representations**

- 8.37 I have reviewed the third party representations and note the references that have been made to previous applications. I have considered the application in the context of these in my assessment within this report where relevant, however the current application must be assessed on its own merits. I have addressed third party comments in the body of my report and provide further comments as follows.
- 8.38 Concerns have been raised about the loss of the leisure facility. As set out in my assessment, I am satisfied that the proposal would replace the existing facilities with a comparable scale and type of facility. In addition, the applicant has stated their intention to operate a membership system to provide access for local residents. I am satisfied that the condition I have recommended (number 16) to control the minimum number of memberships and the minimum number of opening hours would secure this. Should the operation of the leisure facility not be in compliance with the terms of this condition, then this would represent a breach of planning which the Council could enforce against.
- 8.39 Third parties have queried the need for the additional hotel rooms. Adopted Cambridge Local Plan (2006) policy 6/3 supports the provision of tourist accommodation and the

Council has identified a need for additional hotel bed spaces across the city in its documents prepared to support the emerging Local Plan 2014. Notwithstanding this, the applicant does not need to identify a demand for the rooms in order to meet adopted policy.

- 8.40 I have assessed the visual impact of the proposal and for the reasons given, I consider the proposal to be acceptable. I do not consider the scale of the proposed extension or the cladding materials to result in urbanization or to harm rural views. The proposal would not set a precedent for further development along the river as each proposal must be considered on its own merits. Third parties have raised a concern about the piecemeal development of the hotel. It is acknowledged that the wholesale redevelopment of the site would be advantageous to the enhancement of the surrounding conservation area and the heritage assets within this setting. However, this is not what has been brought forward by this application and cannot therefore be seen as a constraint or a material consideration of this application.
- 8.41 I note the concerns regarding the impact on traffic, highway safety and parking. This has been reviewed in detail by the Highways Authority and has been found to be acceptable for the reasons set out in the relevant section of my report, subject to the conditions recommended.
- 8.42 The ecological impact has also been carefully considered and I have taken advice from officers on this. Windows and lighting would be arguably less visually intrusive than the existing fully glazed building. I do not consider the proposal to be an 'alien use' as described by third parties, as the proposal would be an extension or replacement of existing uses on the site.
- 8.43 Third parties have raised concerns about the consultation process, accessibility of the application documents and the lack of hotel floor plans. I am satisfied with the consultations that have been undertaken and the quality of the application submission. Floor plans for the whole hotel are not required in order to assess the current proposal.

## **9.0 CONCLUSION**

- 9.1 I recognise the strength of local residents' concerns about further development on the hotel site - particularly proposals affecting the leisure facility – and the level of local engagement on previous applications. I have assessed the current application having regard to the history of previous planning applications. In my opinion, the current proposal represents an opportunity to retain the leisure facility with access for local residents, while allowing the hotel to expand with a further 10 no. bedrooms, which also contributes to meeting the city's identified need for more hotel bedrooms. In terms of the visual impact, the proposed single storey extension would be minor and would not have a harmful impact on the conservation area or views from the surrounding open areas. The palette of materials for the cladding has been previously accepted on the site and would visually tie the leisure centre wing to the main hotel. This would enhance the coherence of buildings on the site. For these reasons, in my opinion the current application is a reasonable proposal and the benefits in terms of retaining the leisure centre and providing additional hotel bedrooms should be weighed against any minor visual impact.

## **10.0 RECOMMENDATION**

**APPROVE** subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: In accordance with the requirements of section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans as listed on this decision notice.

Reason: In the interests of good planning, for the avoidance of doubt and to facilitate any future application to the Local Planning Authority under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

3. No construction work or demolition work shall be carried out or plant operated other than between the following hours: 0800 hours and 1800 hours on Monday to Friday, 0800 hours and 1300 hours on Saturday and at no time on Sundays, Bank or Public Holidays.

Reason: To protect the amenity of the adjoining properties. (Cambridge Local Plan 2006 policy 4/13)

4. Prior to commencement of the development hereby permitted, and in accordance with BS5837 2012, a phased Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) and Tree Protection Plan (TPP) shall be submitted to the local planning authority (LPA) for its written approval, before any equipment, machinery or materials are brought onto the site for the purpose of development (including demolition). In a logical sequence the AMS and TPP will consider all phases of construction in relation to the potential impact on trees and detail the specification and position of protection barriers and ground protection and all measures to be taken for the protection of any trees from damage during the course of any activity related to the development, including demolition, foundation design, storage of materials, ground works, installation of services, erection of scaffolding and landscaping.

Prior to the commencement of site clearance a pre-commencement site meeting shall be held and attended by the site manager, the arboricultural consultant and LPA Tree Officer to discuss details of the approved AMS.

The approved AMS and TPP will be implemented throughout the development and the agreed means of protection shall be retained on site until all equipment, and surplus materials have been removed from the site. Nothing shall be stored or placed in any area protected in accordance with this condition, and the ground levels within those areas shall not be altered nor shall any excavation be made without the prior written approval of the local planning authority.

Reason: In the interest of protecting trees (Cambridge Local Plan 2006 policy 4/4).

5. No development shall take place (including demolition, ground works, vegetation clearance) until a construction environmental management plan (CEMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The CEMP shall include the following:
- a) Risk assessment of potentially damaging construction activities;
  - b) Identification of "biodiversity protection zones";
  - c) Practical measures (both physical measures and sensitive working practices) to avoid or reduce impacts during construction (may be provided as a set of method statements);
  - d) The location and timing of sensitive works to avoid harm to biodiversity features;
  - e) The times during construction when specialist ecologists need to be present on site to oversee works;
  - f) Responsible persons and lines of communication;
  - g) The role and responsibilities on site of an ecological clerk of works or similarly competent person; and
  - h) Use of protective fences, exclusion barriers and warning signs.

The approved CEMP shall be adhered to and implemented throughout the construction and demolition period strictly in accordance with the approved details, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure protection of the River Cam County Wildlife Site and Sheep's Green & Coe Fen Local Nature reserve.

6. Prior to commencement of the development hereby permitted, a surface water drainage scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. This shall:
- a) include the results of the assessment of the potential for disposing of surface water by means of a sustainable drainage system, in accordance with the principles set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and associated Guidance. The scheme should be designed such that there is no surcharging for a 1 in 30 year event and no internal property flooding for a 1 in 100 year event + 40% an allowance for climate change
  - b) provide information about the design storm period and intensity, the method employed to delay and control the surface water discharged from the site to achieve a 20% reduction in peak flows and the measures taken to prevent pollution of the receiving groundwater and/or surface waters; and

c) provide a management and maintenance plan for the lifetime of the development which shall include the arrangements for adoption by any public authority or statutory undertaker and any other arrangements to secure the operation of the scheme throughout its lifetime.

Prior to first use of the development hereby permitted, the surface water drainage scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the agreed details, and managed and maintained thereafter in accordance with the agreed management and maintenance plan.

Reason: In the interests of surface water management (National Planning Policy Framework 2012).

7. Prior to commencement of development, a scheme for passive flood resistant construction to a minimum level of 7.88m AOD and detailed construction drawings shall be submitted to and approved in writing with the Local Planning Authority. The development should be constructed following the principles detailed in the Campbell Reith Flood Risk Assessment (dated July 2017, Rev F1). The finished ground flood level should be constructed no lower than 7.63m AOD.

Reason: In the interests of flood risk management (National Planning Policy Framework 2012).

8. Before starting any external brick work, a sample panel of the facing materials to be used shall be erected on site to establish the detail of bonding, coursing and colour, type of jointing shall be agreed in writing with the local planning authority. The quality of finish and materials incorporated in any approved sample panel(s), which shall not be demolished prior to completion of development, shall be maintained throughout the development. Thereafter development shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed details.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenity and to ensure that the quality and colour of the detailing of the brickwork/stonework and jointing is acceptable and maintained throughout the development. (Cambridge Local Plan 2006 policy 3/14)

9. Prior to installation of non-masonry walling systems, cladding panels or other external screens, full details including structural members, infill panels, edge, junction and coping details, colours, surface finishes/textures and relationships to glazing and roofing shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. This may consist of large-scale drawings and/or samples. Thereafter development shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed details.

Reason: To accord with policies 3/4 and 3/14 of the Cambridge Local Plan 2006.

10. Prior to installation of window and doors as identified on the approved drawings, full details including materials, colours, surface finishes/textures shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. This may consist of large-scale drawings and/or samples. Thereafter development shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed details.

Reason: To accord with policies 3/4 and 3/14 of the Cambridge Local Plan (2006).

11. Prior to first use of the development hereby permitted, a hard and soft landscaping scheme shall be implemented in accordance with details that have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These details shall include:
  - a) proposed finished levels or contours; car parking layouts, other vehicle and pedestrian access and circulation areas; hard surfacing materials; minor artefacts and structures (e.g. furniture, play equipment, refuse or other storage units, signs, lighting);
  - b) boundary treatments indicating the positions, design, materials and type of boundary treatments to be erected;
  - c) full details of the bicycle store as shown on the approved plans, including elevations and materials;
  - d) planting plans; written specifications (including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment); schedules of plants, noting species, plant sizes and proposed numbers/densities where appropriate and an implementation programme;
  - e) a landscape maintenance and management plan, including long term design objectives, management responsibilities and maintenance schedules for all landscape areas; and

f) full details of green and/or brown roofs, including details of build-ups, make up of substrates, planting plans for biodiverse roofs, methodologies for translocation strategy and drainage details where applicable.

Development shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed details and retained thereafter. Any trees or plants that, within a period of five years after planting, are removed, die or become in the opinion of the local planning authority, seriously damaged or defective, shall be replaced as soon as is reasonably practicable with others of species, size and number as originally approved, unless the local planning authority gives its written consent to any variation.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity (Cambridge Local Plan 2006 policies 3/4 and 3/11).

12. Prior to commencement of use of the development hereby permitted, bird and bat boxes shall be installed in accordance with details that have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Authority prior to installation. These details shall include the proposed specification, number and locations of internal bird and bat boxes. The bird and bat boxes shall be retained thereafter in accordance with the agreed details.

Reasons: To provide ecological enhancements for protected species on the site (Cambridge Local Plan 2006 policy 4/3).

13. Prior to commencement of use of the development hereby permitted, an ecologically sensitive lighting scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The strategy shall:
  - a) identify those areas/features on site that are particularly sensitive for bat species and that are likely to cause disturbance along important routes used to access key areas of their territory, for example, for foraging; and
  - b) show how and where external lighting will be installed (through the provision of appropriate lighting contour plans and technical specifications) so that it can be clearly demonstrated that areas to be lit will not disturb or prevent the above species using their territory or having access to their breeding sites and resting places.



Thereafter all external lighting shall be installed in accordance with the specifications and locations set out in the strategy, and these shall be maintained thereafter in accordance with the strategy. Under no circumstances should any other external lighting be installed without prior consent from the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure the development does not harm protected species.

14. Prior to first use of the development hereby permitted, a Travel Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Travel Plan shall specify the methods to be used to discourage the use of the private motor vehicle and the arrangements to encourage use of alternative sustainable travel arrangements such as public transport, car sharing, cycling and walking. The Travel Plan shall be implemented as approved upon the commencement of use of the development and monitored in accordance with details to be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of encouraging sustainable travel to and from the site (Cambridge Local Plan 2006 policy 8/2).

15. Prior to first use of the development hereby permitted, a site-specific Flood Warning and Evacuation Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing with the Local Planning Authority. The risk of sleeping accommodation on the ground floor should be adequately considered and mitigated within this plan. Thereafter the Flood Warning and Evacuation Plan shall be implemented in accordance with the agreed details.

Reason: In the interests of flood risk management (National Planning Policy Framework 2012).

16. The leisure centre hereby approved shall at all times operate a membership system making available a minimum of 400 memberships to users of the facility other than resident guests of the hotel. The leisure centre shall be open to such members for a minimum of 14 hours per day on Mondays to Fridays and a minimum of 6 hours per day on Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays.

Reason: To guard against the loss of the leisure centre in accordance with Cambridge Local Plan (2006) policy 6/1.