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Branch Chair
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Authority: Middlesbrough Council

Type of consultation: Planning Consultation

Full details of application/consultation: 21/0304/RES - 48 Bed Hotel Adjacent to Acklam Hall

At land at: Acklam Hall, Hall Gardens, Middlesbrough

Type of response: Objection

Date of Submission: 7th July 2021

All responses or queries relating to this submission should be directed to the Secretary for the Trustees at the contact details shown above on this frontispiece.

All CPRE North Yorkshire comments are prepared by the charity using professional planners whose research and recommendations form the basis of this response in line with national CPRE policies.

External planning consultant used in this response:



KVA Planning Consultancy
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Comment

The North Yorkshire County branch of CPRE the Countryside Charity ('CPRENY') welcomes the opportunity to provide Middlesbrough Council ('MC' / 'The Council') with comments in response to the public consultation on the above-mentioned application at Acklam Hall.

It is understood that this application details those matters reserved by an outline application M/FP/0866/15/P which established the principle of development at this site. CPRENY were not involved at that time having recently adopted the Middlesbrough area into the North Yorkshire County group of CPRE, therefore, this application shall focus on the details of the application.

Planning Context

The National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') was updated on 19 February 2019 and sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The NPPF is, therefore, a material consideration which should be taken into account when plan-making and determining applications.

It is understood that the Council are in the process of preparing a new Local Plan which will replace a number of existing adopted planning policy documents. The Local Plan was due to be submitted to the Secretary of State for examination in the summer of 2019, however, following the decision of the full Council in July 2019, the planning authority were directed to re-start the process of preparing a new Local Plan. The preferred options for which were due to be published for consultation in January 2012, however, there appears to be some slippage. As a result of the fact that the Council are at an early stage in plan preparation, no weight can be attributed to the new Local Plan in the planning process in accordance with guidance set out in the NPPF. Currently, therefore, the relevant Development Plan in force for Middlesbrough Council consists of a number of adopted documents, including:

- Housing Local Plan (adopted 2014);
- Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD) (adopted 2008);
- Regeneration DPD (adopted 2009);
- Tees Valley Minerals and Waste Core Strategy DPD (adopted 2011);
- Tees Valley Minerals and Waste Policies and Sites DPD (adopted 2011);
- Middlesbrough Local Plan 1999 (saved policies)
- Proposals Map.

Further material considerations are section 66 (1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This requires proposals to pay special attention to conserving or enhancing the special interest or a listed building or conservation area. Acklam Hall is a Grade 1 Listed Building and the Acklam Hall Conservation Area extends to the hall and remains of the historic gardens and park, despite the fact it has been altered over the years, and includes important views including those to the south covering the approach to the Hall and its setting.

CPRENY are aware that the applicant has considered the Council's Architectural Design Guide (2012) and as such follows the 'contemporary style' advocated within. However, CPRENY are of the opinion that the style of the proposed extension is too modern and bland in its modular form. The proposed material to the extensions and finished design aspects (i.e. timber batons to windows and doors) and the concrete finish to the buildings itself do not sit sympathetically with the existing Hall. Whilst contemporary and historic elements often do sit well together it is thought that this is just too much of a clash of both styles at this specific location.

Furthermore, the narrow courtyard design of the greenspace located between the two extensions is not aesthetically appealing or of sufficient green space to reflect the important heritage aspects attributed to the

Listing and Conservation Area. It is also thought that a blank elevation would not be particularly attractive to future guests and is a missed opportunity for either living walls or the provision of natural light. The green roof element of the design, however, is welcomed by the charity.

National Planning Policy is very clear that proposals should demonstrate a measurable net gain in biodiversity (paragraph 175d) and the emerging Environment Bill is expected to set out a requirement for all proposals to achieve a net gain of 10% in biodiversity, which is already being rolled out as good practice across the country. Given the nature of the Conservation Area and landscaping associated with the proposal, it is considered that a minimum of 10% biodiversity net gain should be required to be demonstrated across the site.

This reserved matters application should deal with aspects of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale in accordance with the application form. CPRENY welcome the retention of the existing mature tree within the proposed car parking area. However, no detailed landscaping plan appears to have been submitted and the illustrations within the supporting Design Statement is not sufficient to be considered a 'landscaping plan'.

The Design Statement shows that the existing residential properties will be located some 21m from the nearest external wall to the proposed extension. The gardens for the residential properties however will be located much closer to the proposed extension. CPRENY would be concerned that second floor hotel guests would be able to look directly into residential living space and garden area and loss of privacy and residential amenity could become an issue.

In conclusion, CPRENY support the numerous residents who have expressed concerns about the proposals at this location in terms of imposing a detrimental impact on the character and heritage of the Grade 1 Listed Acklam Hall and the potential detrimental impact on residential amenity to existing residents adjacent to the proposed extension and as such endorse their objections.

As such CPRENY believe the proposals are contrary to MC Core Strategy Policy CS5 and DC1 alongside NPPF paras: 175, 193, 194 and the Planning Act 1990.

CPRENY reserve the right to comment further should additional information be consulted upon in support of the development at this location.