

Officer comment

As a point of clarification, I would advise Members as follows

- The width of the accommodation section would be approximately 16m.
- As stated in the report, the two plant rooms would each be approximately 7m x 9m in area and are located at opposite ends of the roof and combined would comprise approximately 23% of the area of the roof of the accommodation section.
- The two meeting rooms and gym would each be approximately 45m² in area and the function room as set out in the report would be approximately 300m² in area.

Members will have noted from the report that a key consideration in relation to the determination of this application is the impact on the Kent Downs AONB

PPS7 states the following at paragraph 21 in relation to nationally designated areas including AONBs.

21. Nationally designated areas comprising National Parks, the Broads, the New Forest Heritage Area and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), have been confirmed by the Government as having the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation of the natural beauty of the landscape and countryside should therefore be given great weight in planning policies and development control decisions in these areas. The conservation of wildlife and the cultural heritage are important considerations in all these areas. They are a specific purpose for National Parks, where they should also be given great weight in planning policies and development control decisions. As well as reflecting these priorities, planning policies in LDDs and where appropriate, RSS, should also support suitably located and designed development necessary to facilitate the economic and social well-being of these designated areas and their communities, including the provision of adequate housing to meet identified local needs.

Paragraph 23 states

23. Planning authorities should ensure that any planning permission granted for major developments in these designated areas should be carried out to high environmental standards through the application of appropriate conditions where necessary.

PPS7 does not specifically advise that local planning authorities should preserve the setting of AONBs (or other designated areas).

The impact of development on the setting of an AONB is a requirement of policy C3 of the South East Plan 2009.

The Kent Downs AONB Management Plan 2009 which the Council is a signatory to, encourages the promotion, retention or restoration of prominent views and viewpoints and also states that 'Proposals which negatively impact on the distinctive landform, landscape character and identified special components of

natural beauty, the setting and views to and from the AONB will be opposed and resisted.'

The application proposals have been carefully considered in terms of their impact on the setting of the AONB. I consider that the additional information supplied does, for the reasons set out and analysed in the report, show that the development will not adversely affect the setting of the AONB. In my view there is no conflict between the proposals and the aspirations of the AONB management plan.

Appropriate conditions relating to the scale and impact of the development are recommended. However, I wish to further amend those set out on the papers relating to site levels, relationship of the proposed building to known fixed points, and the scale of the building, to provide a greater degree of clarity to guide any future reserved matters submission to ensure the setting of the AONB is not unacceptably compromised.

Amendments to recommendation

Renumber condition 11 to condition 10 and amend to read;

10. The development shall not commence until, details of the proposed slab levels of the buildings and the existing and proposed site levels including scaled cross-sections, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The submitted details shall clearly show the following

(i) The Ordnance Datum points on which the existing and proposed site levels are based.

(ii) A significant cut into the land.

(iii) The internal finished floor level of the ground floor of the hotel no higher than 1m above the level of the existing Eclipse Park estate road at the point adjacent to the site ingress point.

The development shall thereafter be completed strictly in accordance with the approved levels;

Reason: In order to secure a satisfactory form of development having regard to the topography of the site and the proposed reductions in land levels within the site pursuant to policy CC6 of the South East Plan 2009.

Renumber condition 10 to 11 and amend to read;

11. The details submitted pursuant to condition 1, in conjunction with the details submitted pursuant to condition 10 above, shall show;

(i) A building with a maximum height of 15m above the adjacent M20 motorway embankment and 12.5m to the highest part of the accommodation levels above the motorway embankment as indicated on drawing no. DHA/6806/03/A.

(ii) A building with a maximum height of 21.8m above proposed external ground levels with the accommodation levels being no higher than 18.6m above proposed external ground levels as indicated on drawing no. DHA/6806/03/A.

(iii) A building orientated as shown on drawing nos. DHA/0686/02revA and 279/PL/200A.

(iv) A building with accommodation levels being no greater than 16m in width as shown on drawing nos. DHA/0686/02revA and 279/PL/200A and comprising no more than 150 bedrooms.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory visual impact to the development and to reduce the visual impact on the Kent Downs AONB pursuant to policies CC6 and C3 of the South East Plan 2009 and to accord with the parameters set out in the application.

Amend condition 17 to read

17. The details of the reserved matters of scale and appearance submitted pursuant to condition 1 above shall show a hotel with small ancillary fitness, meeting/function and restaurant facilities of the scale indicated in the Design and Access Statement received 02/10/2009.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory visual impact for the development pursuant to policy CC6 of the South East Plan 2009, the advice in PPS4 and to accord with the parameters set out in the application.

Add additional condition 19

19. The design and materials of the hotel shall be of a high architectural standard and be guided by the design parameters set out in the Design and Access Statement received 02/10/2009 and include the use of ragstone to the ground floor and above ground floor level, the use of timber cladding, extensive areas of glazing and metal rainscreen cladding.

Reason: To ensure a high quality design and to achieve a satisfactory visual impact for the development pursuant to policy CC6 of the South East Plan 2009, the advice in PPS4 and to accord with the parameters set out in the application.