

PLANNING COMMITTEE

9th September 2020

**Planning Application
Consultation
Response**

**19/00615/OUT (Bromsgrove Planning Application
Number)**

Application for outline planning permission with all matters reserved, apart from details in relation to access, layout and scale for the partial demolition of the building and former walled garden on site and the conversion of the remaining pub building into 12no. apartments alongside the erection of 38no. dwellings, children's play areas, landscaping and circulation space (AMENDED DESCRIPTION).

Foxlydiate Hotel, Birchfield Road, Redditch, Worcestershire. B97 6PX

**Applicant: Whitbread PLC Ltd
Ward: Closest Redditch Wards; West and Batchley and Brockhill.**

(see additional papers for site plan)

The author of this report is Louise Jones, Principal Planning Officer, who can be contacted on Tel: (01527) 64252 ext: 3221 Email: louise.jones@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk for more information.

Redditch Borough Council has been invited to comment by Bromsgrove District Council upon a revised form of development associated with the above application. The Planning Application will be considered by Bromsgrove Planning Committee in due course and this response will inform their decision making.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Officer appraisal (attached at Appendix 1 and as summarised below) be endorsed by Members;

1. That the principle of housing on the site accords with both the BDP and BORLP4.
2. That Redditch Borough Council welcomes the element of conservation and conversion proposed through the revised scheme. It will be for the determining authority in consultation with the Conservation Officer to determine if this level of conversion is adequate.
3. That it is unclear if the site will allow for connectivity (vehicular, pedestrian or cycle) to the wider Foxlydiate site. If it is not the intention to allow for such RBC would not support this application.

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Background

Bromsgrove District Council received in May 2019 a Planning Application for the Foxlydiate Hotel site (Application number 19/00615/OUT). The site is on the edge of Redditch but lies in the administrative area of Bromsgrove. The planning application will be determined by Bromsgrove District Council.

As originally submitted the Outline Application sought to establish the principle for the demolition of the existing building on site and the erection of up to 46 houses and 24 apartments, a children's play area, landscaping and circulation space.

A consultation report was brought to Redditch Planning Committee for consideration on 17th July 2019. At that meeting members supported the principle of housing on the site. However, the application would have resulted in the loss of a non-designated heritage asset and a community facility, the loss of which did not appear to have been fully justified. Whilst the provision of housing was welcomed, the demolition element of the scheme however was not supported by Redditch Borough Council. These views were subsequently reported back to Bromsgrove District Council.

Since that time amendments have been made to the proposal, most recently in March 2020. These amendments include; the retention of the existing pubic house building (following the removal of the hotel extension to the rear) with its conversion to provide 12 apartments with associated amenity and parking. The revised proposal does not include the retention of the walled garden. Tree retention across the site has been facilitated; especially category 'A' trees. Two areas of public open space are provided alongside a children's play area. A total of 38 new residential units of two storey form are proposed. Vehicular access will be via existing points which will be modified and join to a shared surface home zone area in the south west corner.

The purpose of this report is to consider Redditch Borough Council's response to this amended planning application.

The Foxlydiate site is designated within the Bromsgrove Local Plan (2011 – 2030) as a housing allocation to meet some of the development needs of Redditch Borough. The Bromsgrove District Plan (BDP) was adopted in January 2017; at this point the Foxlydiate site was removed from the Green Belt and became an allocation for housing development. Policy RCBD1 'Redditch Cross Boundary Development' allocates the whole Foxlydiate site (of which this application site is part of) for up to 2,800 dwellings, a Local Centre, a First School and associated community infrastructure.

Policy RCBD1 is included in the BDP and as an appendix to the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.4 2011- 2030 (BORLP4) and states that Redditch needs to deliver 6,400 up to 2030. Around 3,000 dwellings are to be accommodated within Redditch Borough

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and therefore approximately 3,400 dwellings are to be accommodated at the Foxlydiate site and as an extension to the existing Brockhill site. Both sites are crucial to enable the delivery of the housing strategy for Redditch over the plan period.

It is essential that the proposed development is in accordance with all of the Policies contained within the BDP, in particular Policy RCBD1 which details the principles that the site must achieve to be sustainable. This policy was jointly prepared with RBC.

It is worth noting at this point that it has been determined that BORLP4 and the BDP are fully in accordance with the policies set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG).

As stated above it is not the intention of RBC to consider the merits of the application with a view to its determination, however as the site is adjacent to the administrative boundary of Redditch, and falls within an area that is designated to meet the housing needs of Redditch; there are some aspects of the application RBC considers the need to comment upon.

RBC considers the building a non-designated heritage asset, this importance has also been acknowledged by BDC (see previous comments submitted by Bromsgrove and Redditch Conservation Officer in relation to this application) that the building is of local importance, and thus would be considered as a candidate for the Bromsgrove Local Heritage List and is being treated as a non-designated heritage asset. The two heritage assets include the pub and hotel building, and the large walled garden which was part of Foxlydiate House. The building as a community and a heritage asset will be considered in turn below.

To deal with the community asset consideration first. RBC feels that the applicant has gone some way to justify the loss of the Public House due to viability reasons. It is considered that the future of a community asset such as this is likely to change with the allocation of a significant housing site in close proximity. RBC recognises that the Public House is a community facility and as such would be considered against Policy BDP12 '*Sustainable Communities*' of the Bromsgrove District Plan (Adopted January 2017). In particular point c) i) should be carefully considered, as the future prospects of the Public House are likely to be considered favourable in light of the allocation and therefore the viability issues may not be a concern long term. RBC acknowledges the revised planning application includes an updated Marketing Statement (2020) which sets out at page 8 the offers which have been received since the previous application was submitted. The statement sets out that these offers are unviable. It is not for the Redditch Strategic Planning Team to consider the viability of this evidence but would highlight it is for Bromsgrove to consider its robustness in their determination of the application.

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RBC agree the need for housing and considers that if BDC accept the loss of the community asset this should not give automatic rise to the heritage asset being lost. It is acknowledged the revised planning application has explored the opportunity to convert part of Pub building to apartments, this is welcomed. This building is considered by RBC to be an example of a landmark, distinctive historical asset which provides an opportunity for high quality conversion; making the building a desirable place to live, rather than being considered a constraint. Its designation provides an opportunity to design a distinctive, unique place to live, which should be maximised. It will be for the determining authority guided by the Conservation Officer to consider whether this element of proposed partial conversion is adequate. As stated previously it is considered that the walled garden could also be utilised as a feature of the design and layout of the development. It is not clear from the revised plans what the intention is for this aspect of the setting.

The Planning Application site is located on the North East edge of the Foxlydiate site and therefore is the interface between the wider Foxlydiate development site and the Redditch urban area. It is considered that the layout of the scheme still has potential to link these two areas. The site should not be considered in isolation from the wider area both in design or connectivity terms; in particular it is not clear from the plan whether the Home Zone located in the South West corner of the site will allow for connectivity (vehicular, pedestrian or cycle) to the wider Foxlydiate site. It is considered there are opportunities with this site to make walking and cycling an attractive option for future users.

Officers consider that with regard to the technical points of the planning application such as means of access and landscaping officers at Bromsgrove District Council have consulted and fully engaged with the Council's technical experts who will in turn inform their consideration of the planning application and ultimately their decision.

Procedural Matters

This matter is reported to members because the Scheme of Delegation to planning officers requires that:

All planning decisions, actions or advice/responses on behalf of the Local Planning Authority cannot be dealt with under delegated powers (so must be reported to committee) where:

- The application is for major development (more than 100sqm of commercial/industrial floorspace) where the recommendation is for approval
- Any application where the Council will be required to become a part to a s106 agreement

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- Any application where two or more individual letters of objection from separate addresses raising material planning considerations are received from separate members of the public and the officer recommendation is for approval

Officer Appraisal

A full Officer appraisal of the application can be read at Appendix 1.

Conclusion

1. That the principle of housing on the site accords with both the BDP and BORLP4.
2. That Redditch Borough Council welcomes the element of conservation and conversion proposed through the revised scheme. It will be for the determining authority in consultation with the Conservation Officer to determine if this level of conversion is adequate.
3. That it is unclear if the site will allow for connectivity (vehicular, pedestrian or cycle) to the wider Foxlydiate site. If it is not the intention to allow for such RBC would not support this application.