

Application No: 23/01027FULL Full Application

Site: Spot In The Woods, 174 Woodlands Road, Woodlands,
Southampton SO40 7GL

Proposal: Change of use to a residential dwelling and associated curtilage

Applicant: Hillbrooke Hotels Ltd

Case Officer: Liz Marsden

Parish: Netley Marsh Parish Council

1. REASON FOR COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

Contrary to Parish Council view.

2. POLICIES

Development Plan Designations

Conservation Area

Principle Development Plan Policies

SP15 Tranquillity

SP17 Local distinctiveness

SP19 New residential development in the National Park

DP2 General development principles

SP16 The historic and built environment

SP21 The size of new dwellings

NPPF

Sec 12 - Achieving well-designed places

Sec 16 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

3. MEMBER COMMENTS

None received

4. PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS

Netley Marsh Parish Council: Recommend Permission – concerns were expressed about the loss of an employment site. It was felt the heritage asset is important to the Parish.

5. CONSULTEES

Tree Officer: Mature trees are protected by reason of their location within the conservation area and no works are proposed as part of the application. No objection.

Conservation Officer: No objection in principle as proposals will help to safeguard and secure the long-term use of the historic building.

6. REPRESENTATIONS

Two letters from neighbouring properties commenting:

- The hotel was an appreciated and well-used community asset.
- There was no detrimental impact on amenity resulting from the hotel use and there has been no discernible improvement to tranquillity since it closed.
- No mention that they have tried to sell it as a going concern.
- Given the size of the proposed house there would be potential for multiple occupancy.
- Traffic is not a consideration as, even at its peak, the property had no impact on Woodlands Road.

7. RELEVANT HISTORY

5 no. shepherds huts; associated works (20/00047) granted on 31 March 2020

Erection of building to provide additional 5 bedrooms, office and meeting room (Extension of time limit to implement planning permission reference 94785) (13/9825) granted on 10 April 2013

Erection of building to provide additional 5 bedrooms, office and meeting room (09/94785) granted on 06 July 2010

Retention of Shed, Fence and Ducting; Proposed Air-Conditioning/Heating Unit; Acoustic Screen and Fencing (08/92734) granted on 23 May 2008

New pitched roofs; external cladding; verandah; first floor terraces; alterations to pool room (07/91411) granted on 29 May 2007

New pitched roofs; external cladding; veranda; first floor terraces (06/90833) granted on 13 December 2006

Ground floor addition (NFDC/96/60285) granted on 24 December 1996

Single storey extensions, conservatory & pool enclosure (93/51405) granted on 09 March 1993

Enclosing of swimming pool addition of games room/walkway/extension of dining room. (NFDC/87/35828) granted on 18 January 1988

Extension to dining room/lounge/en-suite shower room and office. (NFDC/87/33758) granted on 03 March 1987

Addition of Reception Room and Toilets. (74/01719) granted on 01 October 1975

2 storey extension to hotel and erection of double garage. (NFDC/74/00470) granted on 11 July 1974

8. ASSESSMENT

Application Site

- 8.1 The Spot in the Woods (formerly Hotel Terravina) is a well-established hotel sited within the Forest North East Conservation Area and has been identified as a non-designated heritage asset. It is set on a corner plot, the boundaries of which are lined with trees. The position of the main building is towards the north eastern corner of the site, close to the rear boundary, with a lawn area to its side extending towards Woodlands Road along the western boundary. The remaining land within the curtilage of the hotel is taken up with parking and a cluster of five shepherd's huts.

Proposed Development

- 8.2 The application seeks consent for the change of use of the property to a single residential dwelling. No alterations to the building are included within the application. The key considerations are:
- The implications for Policy SP46, which seeks to retain existing serviced visitor accommodation where it contributes to the sustainability of the community;
 - Whether a new dwelling of the size proposed would be justified in this location;
 - Any impact on the surrounding area; and
 - Any impact on neighbour amenity.

Consideration

- 8.3 It is noted that the building was originally a single private dwelling. However, given the length of time that has elapsed (approximately 100 years) since it has been in that use, it is not considered that this fact is a material consideration in the determination of the application which is assessed against currently adopted policies. In this case, the site is located within the open countryside where the provision of new residential properties is restricted by the criteria of Policy SP19 and the proposal does not fall within any of these criteria (it is not within a housing allocation or defined New Forest village and is not for affordable housing or required for agricultural,

estate workers or New Forest Commoners). The size of the dwelling would also be larger than would be acceptable under Policy SP21 for a new dwelling (a maximum of 100 sq. m). Furthermore, Local Plan Policy SP46 relates to sustainable tourism development and seeks to retain existing serviced accommodation, where it contributes to the sustainability of the local community.

- 8.4 In the light of the above, there is no policy support for the proposed change of use and it must therefore be assessed whether there are any circumstances that would provide justification for a departure from these policies. A significant amount of information has been provided to demonstrate that the former owners of the site were unable to operate the hotel as a viable operation due to the restricted size of the hotel, a change in the requirement of guests and increased competition from alternative forms of tourist accommodation. However, this is not to say that it would not be possible to run it as a going concern with a different business model. Additional details were sought as to whether the property had been marketed as a hotel and the level of interest that had been expressed. As a result of this the authority was made aware that the property had in fact been sold as a hotel and the new owners hoped to run it as such. This fact would seem to negate the basic premise of the application in that the hotel was capable of being sold as a going concern.
- 8.5 It is understood that, from the time that the property was purchased, the new owners have identified a number of problems relating to the building with water damage resulting from leaks in the roof and rotting timbers. Extensive work is being carried out to the interior of the building and to secure the roof, which are considered to be repairs that do not require planning permission. The current owners have concluded that, as a result of the cost of these works, it would not be possible to run the building as a hotel and therefore wish to continue with the application for a change of use to a single dwelling. However, this evidence cannot be used to support the original application which was based on the experience and costs of the company that actually ran the hotel. There has been no effort made to either run the hotel or to market it for that purpose. In these circumstances, it cannot be concluded that there is sufficient justification to outweigh the policy objections to the change of use which would result in the loss of well-established serviced visitor accommodation that is sought to be retained by Policy SP46.
- 8.6 With regard to potential impact on the surrounding area or neighbour amenity, the lack of any physical alteration to the building would ensure that it would have no increased impact through loss of light, outlook or privacy. Rather, it is possible that the change of use to a single residential property could reduce the level of activity on the site and hence the potential for adverse impact through noise and disturbance. Similarly, the application proposal as submitted would not have had any adverse impact on potential bat roosts or other adverse impacts on ecology.

- 8.7 The proposal would result in a new residential dwelling and therefore would usually require the inclusion of measures to mitigate the recreational impacts of the development on the New Forest and Solent protected area (Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation and Ramsar sites). However, as the proposal would result in a single dwelling, albeit sizeable, there would be a reduction in the overall level of occupation and consequent recreational impact and it is not therefore considered that there would be any increase in harm to the ecological interest of the nearby New Forest and Solent protected sites or conflict with the Habitats Regulations. In addition, the potential impact on the water quality through an increased nutrient load would need to be considered, though, as the number of bedrooms is not to increase (and with the removal of the shepherd's huts would actually decrease) the impacts relating to nutrients do not require further assessment.

Conclusion

- 8.9 Insufficient evidence has been provided to demonstrate that the property is not capable of being used as a hotel or that there are other benefits that would derive from the change of use to a dwelling that would outweigh the policy objections to the proposal. In these circumstances, it is not possible to support the development which would be contrary to Policies SP19, SP21 and SP46 of the Local Plan.

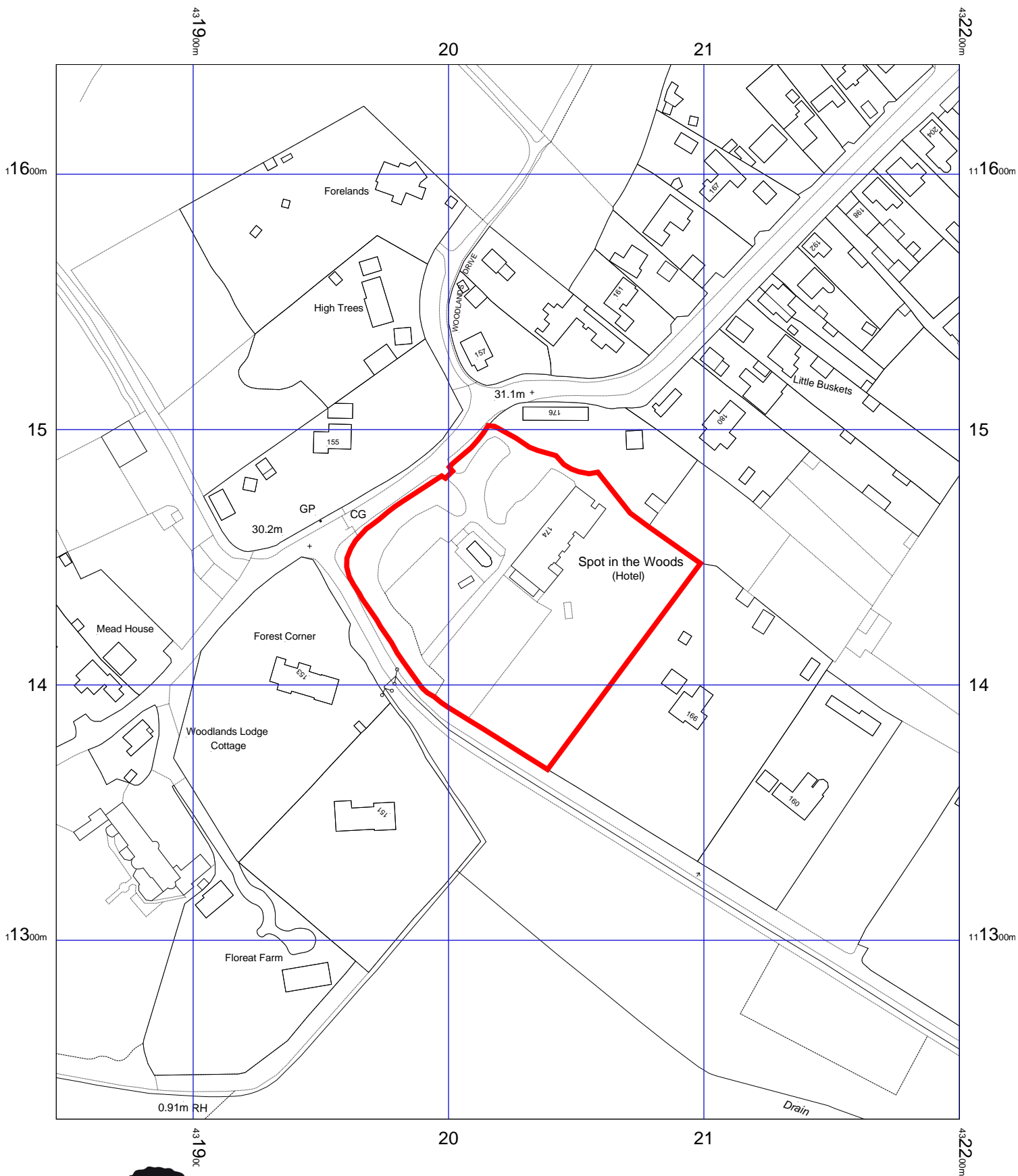
9. RECOMMENDATION

Refuse

Reason(s) for refusal:

1. The proposed development would result in the introduction of a new residential unit of accommodation in the New Forest National Park, outside any of the defined New Forest villages. The dwelling would not be a rural exception site, housing for a New Forest Commoner, Estate worker or a tied agricultural dwelling. The justification set out is not considered to outweigh the clear conflict with Policies SP4, SP19 and DP49 of the adopted New Forest National Park Local Plan 2016- 2036 (August 2019)
2. The proposed conversion to a single residential unit would result in the loss of a hotel, contrary to the provisions of Policy SP46 of the New Forest National Park Local Plan, which seeks to retain existing serviced tourist accommodation and the associated benefits to the local economy derived from it. The information provided with the application is insufficient to demonstrate that the hotel use could not be operated as a viable business or provide other development opportunities for business and employment purposes.
3. The proposed development would result in a dwelling that is significantly in excess of the limit set out in Policy SP21, which

seeks to restrict the size of new dwellings in order to ensure that the dwelling stock of the New Forest as a whole is balanced.



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