

Albert, Martin

From: derek wright [dertine@hotmail.com]
Sent: 07 June 2005 08:49
To: Dobson, Andrew; Culbert, Martin; Sherlock, Roger; Quinton, Patricia; Airey, James
Subject: Melling Hall Hotel Planning Applications 04/01357/CU & 04/01383/LB

Dear Mr Dobson.

Re Planning Applications 04/01357/CU & 04/01383/LB

Below, I set out a number of quotes from the Officers Report, and comments/questions upon them, relating to agenda item A14 which was deferred from the Planning Committee meeting of May 23rd 2005. The application number is 04/01357/CU **A14**.

I am particularly concerned that our members have found the report confusing and are fearful that members of the Lancaster City Council's Planning Committee may inadvertently be misled.

Please be advised that Parish Councillors JAC Beeson and Jean Ann Naylor would like to address the Planning Committee on June 27th. If you could notify the appropriate people and confirm this to me I would be grateful.

Please can you respond to these points most urgently so that our members can be fully prepared.

"This site is closely surrounded on all sides by residential properties." We have written to the Planning Committee in the past, pointing out that this is incorrect and it gives a misleading impression. The site is surrounded on three sides by roads, and on one side by two residences.

"Committee will recall that it previously refused permission for the conversion of the hotel into two dwellings (application No 03/00871 applies) but that the development was subsequently allowed on appeal. That scheme which specifically involved the separation of the west wing to form a separate unit was followed by a Listed Building application (No. 04/ 981/ LB) setting out the details of that conversion."

This is factually incorrect. The "scheme" which was allowed on appeal, did not specifically involve the separation of the west wing to form a separate unit. The separation only came about as a result of the *amendment* to 03/00871/CU which was applied for in August of 2004, approximately 6 months after the Planning Inspector had identified two dwellings, *of unspecified dimensions*, within the whole building. The Officer's report may mislead members into thinking that the Planning Inspector had adjudicated on the boundaries of the two dwellings which is simply not the case.

"This proposal is a full application to separate the east wing from the central part of the building to effectively form a third separate dwelling unit". This may be the intention of the application but the Ordnance Survey map supplied with 04/1357 clearly shows that only the East Wing is included in the application. Therefore this application appears to seek to sub-divide the East Wing into two dwellings. This needs clarification, otherwise members of committee may be asked to vote for something which may not be absolutely clear.

"SPG16 allows the creation of residential unit where they provide the means to restore and bring into beneficial use important historical buildings at risk; or proposals that would enhance conservation areas. It is considered that this proposal would satisfy both of these requirements". There is no attempt to explain the risk which was created by the creation of the current situation. Presumably Officers would not have recommended 03/00871 for acceptance by members had they felt it posed any unacceptable risks. Similarly there is no evidence offered in respect of the enhancement to the conservation area which this application represents when contrasted to 03/00871 or 04/981/LB. This statement by Officers might be misconstrued into suggesting that there is some risk or loss of benefit in the existing agreed plans. Perhaps there is but Officers are not sharing these with members of committee or other interested Authorities.

"The details of the scheme are generally acceptable and will still produce a large, 6 bedroom dwelling, whilst leaving the central self-contained unit intact." Careful examination of all plans past do not show that the central wing is 'self-contained'. The Officers statement might be misconstrued into suggesting that there are

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three distinct and separate wings to the building. The West wing was only ever linked to the main building on ground level and that was by a single door, the purpose of that wing was for service to the main house. The East wing however, was always fully connected to the Central wing, both physically and in use. Separating the two integral parts of the whole could, in fact, be interpreted as altering the historic character of the building.

"It is considered that; on balance, this proposal combined with the previously approved scheme, provides the most appropriate subdivision of this building and will best facilitate its continued maintenance and can therefore be supported." What has changed about the building or its' ownership or its' situation since the Planning Officers wrote their report A14 for the planning committee meeting in September 2003., "Its division into two units is the most logical way forward and the most appropriate from the listed building point of view."

If the division into two units was the most appropriate from the listed building point of view in 2003, and the planning inspector clearly agreed to this, then some explanation of the change of circumstances which led to the change of mind by Officers since then, is merited.

Many thanks

Yours sincerely

Derek Wright, Clerk to Melling with Wrayton PC