USE OF ODSTONE HALL AS A SMALL GUEST HOUSE DESIGN & ACCESS & PLANNING STATEMENT

The Proposal

1. The proposal is to use Odstone Hall as a small licensed guest house with a maximum of 6 en-suite bedrooms. It will offer bed & breakfast with the option of an evening meal if required. In addition to use of the bedrooms, guests will have access to, and use of, the dining room and the drawing room.

Odstone Hall

2. Odstone Hall is one of the most significant historic listed buildings in the Hinckley & Bosworth area. The listing description describes the many seventeenth century timber framed internal elements, as well as the imposing eighteenth century symmetrical Georgian front façade.

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Odstone Hall today

3. Like many such buildings, the Hall deteriorated badly in the second half of the last century, to the extent that when it was bought by Mr & Mrs Woodward around nine years ago it was in such a poor condition that it was identified as a historic building at risk, and was in danger of being lost. Since then the new owners have restored the Hall back to its original splendour, only having achieved this through massive expenditure on their part, working in close association with the Council's Conservation Officer and with English Heritage.



Odstone Hall before WWII

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Odstone Hall in 2000

4. This is certainly not a unique situation, and many other listed buildings have benefited in the same way. Now it has been restored, however, it obviously requires constant work to maintain it in that first class condition. In short, it is now imperative to establish a new and acceptable use for the building, compatible with its important character and listed status, that is able to provide a source of income to contribute towards this ongoing maintenance work.



The rear in 2000



The rear today

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5. In researching possible alternative uses compatible with its historic character, the owners of Odstone Hall found there was a clear demand for small tailor made weddings in exclusive locations, and to this end an application for use as a low key wedding venue was submitted in January of this year. Despite its modest scale, this application generated considerable local opposition within the hamlet. Mr & Mrs Woodward have no wish to fall out with their neighbours and so they withdrew the application prior to any decision being made.

6. Meanwhile the importance of establishing a basis for generating income for the Hall is undiminished. One of the other findings of the earlier research was an unsatisfied demand for small and exclusive guest house accommodation, allied to the limited availability of such accommodation in the Hinckley & Bosworth area. Odstone Hall would compliment and not compete with the facilities provided in the larger hotels such as Bosworth Hall, Sketchley Grange and The Hinckley Island.

Design Impact

7. This low key use of the building will have no detrimental impact upon the character or structure of the listed building, because it is precisely the protection and preservation of that character that give the venue its attraction to visitors.

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External Impact

8. Odstone Hall is first and foremost a family home, and this is how it will remain. Guests will have access to the extensive gardens in fine weather, however there will be no noisy outdoor use whatsoever. The limited requirement for car parking will be accommodated in the existing forecourt. In simple terms, there is no possibility of any adverse impact upon the charm and character of the Hall or its grounds, or on neighbours, or on any other residents of Odstone..

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The Drawing Room



The Dining Room

9. Officers of the Borough Council have followed the progress of the Hall for a long time, and they have also been made aware of the present proposal. It is understood that there are no planning objections to what is seen as an ideal low key use for a listed building.

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Example of an upper floor room - Before & After



Access and Parking

10. The one known concern about this, or apparently any other, proposal at Odstone Hall is on the part of the Highway Authority. Odstone Hall is at the end of the Hall Lane cul de sac serving a limited number of properties, however the junction with Barton Road has restricted visibility. More significantly, there is a long planning history of concern in Odstone, generally relating to unauthorised activities at a property to the east of the Hall, and often referring to traffic and highway conditions.

11. In conversation and correspondence with the relevant officer at the Leicestershire County Council, he has indicated that "*In terms of consistency the Highway Authority will probably have to seek to resist the proposal on highway safety grounds linked to the Hall Lane/Newton Lane junction*" He said he was "*pretty much led*" by the position of the County to oppose a 1990 application for a barn conversion off Hall Lane, even though the Borough Council did not accept that advice and the application was approved.

12. The owners of Odstone Hall understand this situation, however they do suggest that different circumstances require different consideration. Essentially, a guest house with only six double bedrooms will only generate six car visits, and then only at times of maximum use. More likely, not all the rooms will be let consistently, and so the normal traffic implication will be even less than this.

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13. Hall Lane is a cul de sac and it is not a through route. The junction with Barton Road is not ideal, but then this is not a main road, but a very quiet country lane between Barton in the Beans and Newton Burgoland. What is more, the junction is in a 30 mph zone rather than the open countryside. Bluntly, even for a small hamlet like Odstone, the level of traffic movement associated with the guest house will be insignificant and "de minimis".

14. On site parking is absolutely no problem. There already is a hard surfaced area to the east of the Hall, and this provides more than enough space for the relevant six car parking spaces. In other words, there need be no change to the situation at the hall now.

Summary

17. In short, the proposal here is one where, in all considerations other than highways, it has advantages all round.

- It makes very satisfactory use of Odstone Hall in a manner that will facilitate continued maintenance without any compromise to its important character and listed status;
- It provides a new and welcome local facility to help serve the growing list of local tourist attractions in the Borough;
- The owners will work with neighbours to ensure the low key and intimate scale of the facility will not cause any local nuisance.

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Odstone Hall



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Aerial photograph showing the Hall, gardens, and the existing hard surfaced parking areas to the east of the Hall

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