



Architects

The Manor Hotel

Hever Court Road, Gravesend, Kent
DA12 5UQ

PLANNING, DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

November 2024

DAC Architects
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Introduction

This Planning, Design & Access Statement has been prepared by DAC architects on behalf of Mr M Rossi for development at The Manor Hotel, following a recent planning refusal (ref 20240831).

The revised planning application is for alterations to the existing hotel to change the conference room into a business hub (office use) providing offices for rent, ~~the development of surplus land (overspill car park) to provide 58 no self-storage containers~~, and alterations to the existing car park and entrance including the removal of the existing central island.

The delegated report prepared in support of the refused planning application objected to the original proposal which included a self-storage facility, however, the report concluded 'it is considered that the proposed business hub would be acceptable and would not have a detrimental impact on the design and amenity'.

The self-storage facility has been removed from this proposal.

~~This proposal follows a previously approved application (ref. No: 20200105) to provide a significantly larger B8 storage facility on the overspill car parking area.~~

This statement should be read in conjunction with the drawings submitted by DAC Architects.

Site Context

The Manor Hotel is situated on the south side of Hever Court Road near the junction with Miskin Way.

To the north of Hever Court Road lies the residential suburb of Singlewell. Immediately to the south is a public bridleway and area of green landscaping, and beyond that the A2. To the east, Hever Court Road joins the A2 via the roundabout at Valley Drive / Nells Café. To the west lies a Premier Inn (hotel), The George (pub).

The site occupies approximately 0.68 ha and includes The Manor Hotel, car park and overspill gravel car park.

There is a single point of access for vehicles and pedestrians from Hever Court Road, with 2 pedestrian gates and a central island with 2 entrance barriers for vehicular access (in/out). The speed limit on this part of Hever Court Road has recently been reduced from 40mph to 30mph.

Above: Aerial view showing The Manor Hotel (centre) with car park and overspill car park to the east

Above: Street view showing The Manor Hotel from Hever Court Road

Planning History

Recent planning applications:

[Alterations to the existing hotel to create a business hub \(office use\) providing offices for rent, and the development of the existing overspill car parking area situated to the east of the existing hotel to provide a B8 storage facility.](#)

Ref. No: 20240831 | Status: Application Refused

[Redevelopment of the site for a residential development comprising 12 new houses with associated access, private amenity space, vehicle parking provision, refuse and cycle storage.](#)

Ref. No: 20230757 | Status: Application Refused

[External alterations and reduction in car parking from 100 spaces to 20 spaces.](#)

Ref. No: 20230756 | Status: Application Withdrawn

[**RECONSULTATION** Redevelopment of existing overspill car parking area situated to the east of existing hotel to provide a B8 storage facility](#)

Ref. No: 20200105 | Status: Application Permitted

[**RECONSULTATION** Minor external alterations to existing hotel including reduction in car parking area.](#)

Ref. No: 20200104 | Status: Application Permitted

[Erection of part single storey, part 2/3/4 storey extension on eastern elevation to provide additional guest accommodation on first, second and third floors with coffee/games room, dining room, tv room, kitchen, lobby, wc accommodation and reception on ground floor with a link above functions room to additional rooms.](#)

Ref. No: 20100854 | Status: Application Permitted

[Display of internally illuminated free standing pole sign to replace existing.](#)

Ref. No: 20100882 | Status: Permitted

[Partial demolition and erection of part four, part three, part two and single storey extensions to provide additional guest rooms \(to make a total of 89 rooms\), kitchen, brasserie, cafe/bar and offices with associated alterations.](#)

Ref. No: 20090027 | Status: Application Permitted

[Partial demolition and erection of part two store, part three storey extension to form 22 guest rooms, kitchen, cellar, bar, function room entrance hall, maintenance room, staff car parking and canvas entrance canopy with associated alterations.](#)

Ref. No: 20080423 | Status: Application Permitted

Planning Appeals:

[Redevelopment of the site for a residential development comprising 12 new houses with associated access, private amenity space, vehicle parking provision, refuse and cycle storage.](#)

Ref. No: 2024/00014/REF | Status: Appeal In Progress

Background

The Manor Hotel currently comprises 48 bedrooms and suites (20 at ground floor and 28 at first floor), and a small range of ancillary rooms.

Due to its highly accessible location, the hotel's clientele is predominantly made up of commercial clients such as tradespeople and the overnight traveller.

As such the hotel is at its busiest Monday to Friday, and guests tend to arrive late in the evening and leave early in the morning. The current maximum expected occupancy is typically no higher than 68%.

The hotel has been in operation since 1991 and has provided employment opportunities for local people ever since.

Historically, the hotel also catered to the general public for stand-alone events in its large conference room / dining room. Due to changes in the market sector, and changes resulting from the recent covid pandemic, the conference room currently suffers from a lack of demand, and remains unused.

The introduction of nearby budget hotels in recent years combined with increased operational costs has also impacted the overall market demand.

The redevelopment of the hotel has been explored previously, with successful planning applications in recent years for a storage facility on the overspill car park, however, due to rising costs and lack of demand for the hotel's existing function suites, our client wishes to explore the redevelopment of the existing building further, to use the facilities in a more efficient manner.

The aim is to safeguard existing local employment, whilst creating opportunities for new enterprise and employment, and securing the hotel's long-term viability.

The Proposal

It is proposed to introduce a 'business hub' (office use) within the now redundant conference area of the hotel building, providing offices for rent, ~~and additionally to provide a self-storage facility on surplus land (overspill car park).~~

Business Hub

The existing conference room and kitchen will be replaced with a 'business hub' providing offices to rent.

This will enhance the hotel's current operation, safeguarding existing employment whilst providing additional local employment opportunities.

The existing conference room occupies a floor area of 216sqm and the existing kitchen 101sqm. The proposed internal alterations will enable the provision of 12no. offices to rent.

Offices of varying size are proposed, from 7.5sqm to 46.4sqm. These may either be let individually or collectively, to offer flexibility for local businesses and new business start-ups. A communal room for tea & coffee is to be provided whilst the existing toilet and reception facilities will also be used.

The business hub will have its own independent entrance from the car park at the front of the hotel, and will also be accessible from the hotel reception area.

Above: Existing Ground Floor Plan showing the large conference room

Above: Proposed Ground Floor Plan showing the proposed offices to rent

Minor changes are proposed to the south elevation. Two sets of patio-doors serving the existing conference room are to be replaced with six windows which will serve the new offices (no.1-5 and 11).

Above: South Elevation, As Existing. Showing 2no. patio doors to be replaced

Above: South Elevation, As Proposed. Showing 6no. new windows for new offices

Minor changes are also proposed to the east elevation. Two additional windows will serve the new offices (no.6 and no.7).

Above: East Elevation, As Existing

Above: East Elevation, As Proposed. Showing 2no. new windows for new offices

Self Storage Facility (in overspill car park)

~~As Existing:~~

~~The hotel currently has a large car park, providing 78 car parking spaces, and an overspill car park affording up to 22 additional spaces.~~

~~The entrance to the car park is from Hever Court Road. The vehicular entry is barrier controlled with a central island separating the entry and exit lanes.~~

~~As Proposed:~~

~~It is proposed to redevelop the overspill car park and part of the main car park, to provide 58no. storage containers for use by local businesses and individuals, providing ideal starting points for small emerging businesses and traders working from home, thereby helping to create indirect employment.~~

~~The proposed facility will provide secure storage space in a highly accessible location, suitable for a wide range of enterprises.~~

~~The containers will be located within a secure compound in the area currently used for overspill parking.~~

~~The facility will be accessed from the hotel car park via a secure gated entrance, with access to this area managed by hotel staff.~~

~~Sufficient space has been allowed for larger vehicles to turn within the compound and for users to park adjacent to their unit when in use. It is not proposed to allow users to park within the compound at any other time.~~

~~The existing main car park will be reconfigured to provide a sufficient level of parking for use by the hotel (guests and employees) and the business hub. 45no. car parking spaces are to be provided, along with 3no. motorcycle spaces and 12no. bicycle spaces.~~

~~The central island within the entrance will be removed and a replacement barrier entry provided to allow for turning of refuse and emergency vehicles on site.~~

~~A transport statement has been submitted with this application.~~

~~The proposed containers will be 20ft long 'high cube' shipping containers (height 2.9m).~~

~~The containers will be dark green in colour and cohesive in appearance to minimise any visual impact.~~

~~From Hever Court, the proposed containers will be well screened by the existing trees and hedges, and the existing palisade security fence. The containers will have minimal impact on street scene.~~

~~The proposed containers will be well screened by the existing trees, fences and hedging both to the north (Hever Court Road) and to the south (public bridleway and A2).~~

Accessibility and Parking

The Manor Hotel is considered to be in a highly accessible, sustainable location.

Pedestrians and Public Transport

The site is accessible by pedestrians from the suburb to the north of Hever Court Road, and from Gravesend town centre beyond.

It is also accessible by public transport, with bus stops nearby on Hever Court Road. The 455 service from Gravesend to Singlewell and the 490 from Gravesend to McKenzie Way enables linked journeys to the site from Gravesend Railway Station and further afield.

Bicycles

The site is also considered to be highly accessible to a range of users by bicycle from throughout Gravesend and by those further afield such as the nearby villages. Bicycle parking is to be provided for use by the hotel and business hub.

Car

The speed limit on Hever Court Road has recently been reduced from 40mph to 30mph which will make access to the site safer for all road users.

The site is well connected to the wider highway network. It is in close proximity to the A2 between London and Kent, making this site highly accessible for vehicular traffic.

Conclusion

The proposed redevelopment of the Manor Hotel to provide a business hub ~~and self-storage~~ will support local employment and provide additional opportunities for local enterprise and employment.

The site is considered to be in a highly accessible location for pedestrians, cyclists, public-transport users and drivers. It is considered to be beneficial for the promotion of sustainable travel, particularly for office workers and staff.

The alterations to the appearance of the hotel are considered minor. There is no increase in the size of the hotel building.

~~The self-storage units will be well screened by existing fencing and planting on Hever Court, and from the public bridleway and A2 to the south.~~

~~The redevelopment of the main car park and overspill car park to provide self-storage is considered to make efficient use of available land, and will be safe and secure.~~

~~In terms of bulk and scale, the proposal will have significantly less impact than the previously approved scheme. The development is considered to have little impact on street scene.~~

We refer to the delegated report prepared in support of the previously refused application which concluded 'it is considered that the proposed business hub would be acceptable and would not have a detrimental impact on the design and amenity' and kindly ask that this reduced scheme is granted approval.