

## **Alnwick Town Council**

Written submission - Objection to applications 20/01238/FUL and 20/01239/LBC  
Former Duchess High School, 2-8 Bailiffgate, Alnwick

Alnwick Town Council welcomes the principle of development on this site to bring the disused former school buildings on Baliffgate back into use. A hotel should bring significant benefits to the town including employment both during the construction and use phases, and will enable tourists and other visitors to stay close to the amenities and attractions of Alnwick.

However, our objection to this proposal still stands for four substantive reasons, which have not been addressed through this planning process:

### **MASSING**

The new build section is simply too large to be accommodated on this sensitive site. It resides on the historic approach to the town from the north, over the Lion Bridge and adjacent to the Castle outer wall. The site is also raised up considerably above the road level, which exacerbates the issue. The combination of excessive height and breadth are just too much. Our Conservation Area designation area should be respected and protect the town from harm. This design will detract significantly from the present historic and protected inward view, and dominate the approach up the hill on The Peth towards the barbican of the castle. One story lower would be far less intrusive.

NCC Building Conservation ask for all harm to be avoided. 'There is no evidence that a building on the scale of the proposed hotel is necessary to bring about the reuse of 2-8 Bailiffgate' they state. A very successful local hotel on Baliffgate manages with just 11 rooms. Whilst it may run on a slightly different business model to that proposed here, we question the logic of needing all of the additional 33 rooms in the new build section to supplement the 14 in the older building to make this a viable project.

There is an obvious contravention of Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan policy HD1, which states 'Protecting Landscape Setting- Development proposals that would have an impact on the important views identified in table HD1 (includes the B6341 old A1 - Great North Road approach from the north) should demonstrate that they **do not harm the historic character of Alnwick**'

### **PARKING**

The proposal is to include 51 on-site spaces. The applicant admits to this being a shortfall of between 4 and 13 spaces and additionally fails to account for the non-residential use of the restaurant, bar and gym facilities. Clearly this will result in an overspill and consequential increase in on-street parking in an area with limited spare capacity. This must be addressed to protect the amenity of existing residents and for highway safety reasons. There is space within the site to do this.

### **ACCESS**

The entrance off The Peth will require visitors approaching by road from the north to execute a near 180 degree turn. This will be dangerous and should not be allowed.

The residents of Walkergate, in the vicinity of the proposed entrance / exit must not be imposed upon by removing their right to park outside their homes. Walkergate is narrow and if more width is needed for large vehicles to enter and leave the site, it should be by moving the entrance, not the amenity which residents have enjoyed, of their being able to park on the road outside their homes. It is unacceptable.

### **PEDESTRIAN SAFETY**

Hotel visitors will wish to see the castle and town. The pedestrian road crossing points (desire lines) in this vicinity are wide and difficult. No provision has been made to improve these crossings as a result of

this substantial development proposal. This fails to live up to the aim of NCC's recently adopted 'Vision for Cycling and Walking' - 'goal one, Sustainable Towns'. 'We will enhance the pedestrian.. environment in all our towns.' Clearly this is a missed opportunity.

**SUMMARY**

The new build section needs to be smaller, which would in turn solve the on-site parking issue. Entrance and exit concerns must be addressed and pedestrian safety should be substantially improved.

We request that you reject this application and give the applicant the opportunity to address these issues.