



**Lake District
National Park**

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**Report from the Head of Development Management to the
Development Control Committee**

Application number:	7/2024/5655
Application type:	Full Planning application
Applicant:	Mr Derek Sweeney, Lake District Inns Ltd
Location:	Travellers Rest Inn, Grasmere, Ambleside, LA22 9RR
Grid reference:	333642 508993
Proposal:	Proposed staff accommodation (7no. single occupancy units) with associated infrastructure inclusive of bike and bin stores
Report prepared by:	Ben Long, Area Planner
Report agreed by:	Neil Henderson, Planning Manager
Recommendation:	APPROVE with conditions

1 About this report

- 1.1 The case planner has prepared this report, assessment and recommendation taking into account our policies (known as the Development Plan), written representations we have received, and any other material considerations.
- 1.2 Material considerations are things that are relevant to our decision making and which we are able to take into account – for example site specific factors, or Government planning policy (the National Planning Policy Framework) and Government planning guidance (the National Planning Practice Guidance).
- 1.3 The Development Control Committee will determine the application at its meeting having regard to the provisions of the Development Plan, representations we have received, and all other material considerations, following a verbal and visual summary of the application by the case

planner and, where applicable, after hearing any verbal representations made in accordance with our Policy for Public Speaking at Meetings.

- 1.4 Most applications are decided under powers delegated to the Head of Development Management. A small number of significant or more contentious applications are considered by our Development Control Committee as set out in our Scheme of Delegation.

2 Background and proposals

- 2.1 I am reporting this application to Committee because my recommendation to approve conflicts with the recommendation of Lakes Parish Council.
- 2.2 The Traveller's Rest is a Grade II listed inn located adjacent to the A591 on the Grasmere side of Dunmail Raise. The hotel has a tarmac car park to the north bounded by a belt of trees.
- 2.3 The premises offers ten letting bedrooms together with bar and dining space. The adjacent bungalow to the south of the inn is used to provide staff accommodation (four bedrooms).
- 2.4 This application proposes the erection of a new building to the northern portion of the car park to provide seven units of staff accommodation. The building would be L shaped, partly two storey and part one storey. It would be finished primarily in render with a stone gable elevation closest to the road, and slate roofed.
- 2.5 The applicant's supporting statement comments:

The business, because of the inability to attract and retain staff, is not operating at pre Brexit and Covid 19 pandemic levels. This is a situation compounded by the cost and lack of availability of housing that is pricing people out of the market. This is in a general business environment where there is a recognised shortfall in workers within the hospitality/tourism sectors. As a result, current staff are having to work long hours and agency staff employed to try to make up any shortfall. This situation is not operationally and economically sustainable.

It has, thus, become fundamental that the provision of subsidised accommodation to a high standard, is made as part of a package not only to attract and retain staff but also to appeal to the calibre of staff that are needed to properly serve the business.

3 Representations

- 3.1 Lakes Parish Council recommends refusal:

1. Inappropriate Siting and Design
- The proposed building is sited in open countryside approximately two miles from Grasmere,

- The design and siting are not in keeping with the character of Grasmere. As a result, the proposal fails to respect the architectural and historic importance of this area.
- The application does not exhibit the level of sympathy required for such a setting, particularly given the Grade II listed status of the Travellers Rest.

2. Impact on Landscape and Surroundings

- The design does not relate appropriately to the landscape in which it sits. Instead, it would detract from the spectacular natural surroundings that define the area, resulting in visual harm to the open countryside and the scenic approach to Grasmere.

3. Reduction in Parking Capacity

- The proposal includes additional staff accommodation, which would likely lead to an increase in staff vehicles. However, it also reduces the size of the existing car park. This raises concerns about parking overspill onto the A591, a busy and vital transport route, potentially causing traffic and safety issues.

3.2 In January, Westmorland and Furness Council as Local Highway Authority commented:

The proposal will involve a reduction of car parking spaces on site from 39 to 29, I note the comments raised by the Parish Council regarding the reduction of parking capacity, causing a potential overspill onto the A591.

The applicant needs to take into account other factors within the Cumbria Development Design Guide and provide a proposed layout of the site showing how the 29 parking spaces will be accommodated.

Upon receipt of the amended plans I shall be better placed to provide full response, otherwise I will have no other alternative as to recommend objection.

Following receipt of revised information including a parking plan, the Highway Authority comment that:

The applicant has shown how the 29 parking spaces will be accommodated, including a delivery space, cycle and motorcycle spaces and has shown 2 disability spaces. The applicant has calculated the parking space requirement based on the dining area for food and drink establishments using our Cumbria Development Design Guide, this equates to 22 parking spaces for guests using the restaurant, which have been shown as well as the 7 additional spaces for staff living on site (one for each staff accommodation unit, class A3). However, the applicant needs to take into account other criteria within our Design Guide (C1 - Hotels and Guest Houses).

In May, following receipt of a transport assessment, the Highway Authority withdrew their objections and concerns, commenting:

The applicant has provided a Transport Assessment explaining the different scenarios on parking demand on this site. It is deemed that the reduction of parking on this site in association with the proposal, based on the worst case scenario, is unlikely to have an effect on existing highway conditions.

4 Development plan policies and other relevant guidance

4.1 The relevant Development Plan comprises:

- The Lake District National Park Local Plan 2020-2035

4.2 The following Lake District National Park Local Plan policies are relevant to this application:

- Policy 01: National and international significance of the Lake District
- Policy 02: Spatial strategy
- Policy 05: Protecting the spectacular landscape
- Policy 06: Design and development
- Policy 07: Historic environment
- Policy 18: Sustainable tourism and holiday accommodation
- Policy 20: Renewable and low carbon energy

- Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Document

4.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

5 Main issues and assessment

5.1 The main issues in this assessment are:

- Principle
- Character and appearance of the area
- Impact on heritage assets
- Trees
- Parking and highway safety

The principle of the development

5.2 The Travellers Rest lies in open countryside and for the purposes of development plan policy is not within or well related to Grasmere as a Rural Service Centre. Policy 02 of the Local Plan supports new development in open countryside in defined circumstances including where the development helps to sustain an existing business.

5.3 The case presented by the applicant's agent indicates that the provision of the accommodation is very important to the sustainability of the business. I have no reason to doubt the veracity of the statement and it reflects what I have heard from other tourism businesses over recent years. I therefore

consider that the proposed development would be helpful to the existing business and as such the test of principle in Policy 02 is met.

The effect of the development on the character, appearance and heritage of the area

- 5.4 The importance of the National Park landscape is established through statute and legal duty, Development Plan policy and national planning policy as a material consideration.
- 5.5 The statutory purposes of National Parks are to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage and to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of those areas by the public. (National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949).
- 5.6 The Development Plan reflects the legal framework and affords great weight to the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty and landscape of the National Park. Local Plan Policy 01 indicates that development proposals will only be supported where they are consistent with National Park purposes and duty. Policy 05 expects that *'the type, design, scale and level of activity maintains local distinctiveness, sense of place and, where appropriate, tranquillity'* and seeks to *'ensure the highest level of protection is given to the landscape'*. Policy 02 similarly expects development to be (amongst other things) *"of a scale and nature appropriate to the character and function of the location in which it is proposed"* and Policy 06 requires development to *'be inspired by the natural environment and use innovative design and local materials to reflect local distinctiveness'*.
- 5.7 The National Planning Policy Framework (para 189) states that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. When considering the effect of development on landscape character and visual amenity we use the Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) for the Lake District that has been adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document.
- 5.8 The site lies within Area of Distinctive Character Area 31: Grasmere and Rydal. The characteristics of the area include:
 - The valley bottom has a strong feel of a designed landscape with a complex and varied pattern and a strong impact of seasonal change and colour;
 - Very fine vernacular rendered farmhouses and stone barns, contrast with ornate Victorian villas with mature designed grounds and woodland;
 - The character of the area changes towards the north, having a stronger upland and agricultural feel. Woodland diminishes and the surrounding high fells become more dominant in the landscape.
 - The valley bottom is characterised by significant areas of improved pasture surrounded by stone walls;

- A welcoming landscape for visitors, who can experience an intimate sense of tranquillity and calm. The area is bisected by the busy A591 which disturbs this.
- 5.9 The development, located on an existing car park would have little in the way of landscape effects. The impact of the development would be primarily visual effects, which in turn would be influenced by the tree cover.
- 5.10 The site is visible primarily from the A591 that passes directly by the site. The sensitivity of users of the road will be influenced by the purposes for their journeys, those using the road for commuting or deliveries will have a moderate sensitivity, visitors will have a high sensitivity. The site is also visible to different degrees from the minor road on the opposite side of the valley and from public rights of way and the surrounding access land. The sensitivity of recreational users of these locations would be high.
- 5.11 The development would viewed in the context of the inn and of scattered roadside buildings in the vicinity. The development would have a generally traditional appearance, size and proportions. In this location I consider that such development would not be out of context and would relate satisfactorily to the established pattern of development. The development would complement rather than impact adversely on the existing visual amenity of the area. The existing tree screen would help to soften the development.

Impact on heritage assets

- 5.12 The proposals are set a little apart from the inn as a listed building so there would be no direct impact on the building. In terms of listing building setting, I consider that due to their size, materials and appearance, that they would not cause harm. The Inn stands proudly, close to the road on a slight bend. The car park to the north side of the Inn does not contribute positively to the setting of the building, but is substantially screened by the stand of trees at the north end. The proposed building, set within this car park setting, smaller than the inn and set further back would be subservient to the host building and due to its traditional materials and appropriate design, would not be harmful.
- 5.13 As the development would not compromise the relevant components of the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site, relating to the extraordinary beauty and harmony pr the tradition of agro-pastoralism, I consider that the development would cause no harm to the WHS.

Trees and tree protection

- 5.14 The existing trees at the site are not protected by a TPO or Conservation Area status. They do however contribute positively to landscape character and help to contain, soften and screen development at this site, including the existing car park.
- 5.15 A tree survey was submitted in support of the application. The development is proposed within the root protection areas (RPAs) of several of the trees.

The development would affect the RPAs of several trees (T1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and T13) and most of these would also require a crown lift to accommodate the development. The tree survey proposes specialist foundations within the RPAs.

5.16 The applicant's agents have set out the applicant's intention to retain the trees, and proposes a raft foundation for the development, working on the basis that the raft would not go below the depth of the existing car park sub base. Or alternatively to use a condition requiring preliminary investigation work followed by the design of specialist foundations (potentially using piles or screw piles).

5.17 Since we do not know how deep the car park sub-base is, I would recommend using the applicant's proposed conditional approach. Subject to such a condition, I am content that the development would be acceptable with regard to its effect on trees and their landscape and screening value.

Access, car parking and highway safety

5.18 The site is accessed off the A591, the existing car park having two entrances from the road. The existing car park provides 39 spaces to cater for the 10 letting bedrooms, bar and restaurant space, staff and delivery parking.

5.19 The proposed development would take up 10 of these spaces. The remaining space would amount to 29 spaces, this would allow for seven spaces for the staff housing and 22 for the inn.

5.20 The parish council has a legitimate concern that a shortfall of parking at this site could give have highway safety implications as there is little alternative off-road, or on-street parking in the vicinity. Parking on the road or verge outside the premises is likely to be dangerous. We therefore need to carefully consider whether the proposed parking is sufficient.

5.21 The applicant has provided a layout plan to show the available parking and have subsequently provided a transport assessment. The parking plan shows that the car park has the capacity to accommodate the number of cars expected by a combination of provision for staff, resident guests, and users for the bar/restaurant provision, accepting that there will be some overlap between the resident guests and those dining at the premises, together with adequate space for deliveries and other users.

5.22 The Highway Authority have now withdrawn their previous concerns and reservations and have no objections. I am therefore satisfied that the development would have adequate car parking provision to serve the existing and proposed development, and that the development has now been demonstrated to be acceptable with regard to highway safety.

Other matters

5.23 The proposals include provision for solar panels to be installed on the rear (east facing) roof slope. The Heritage, Design and Access Statement

supplied with the application states that the scheme will include the installation of energy efficient heating, low energy lighting, low flow showers and water saving sanitary ware, high levels of insulation and air tightness. Subject to a suitably worded condition, I am satisfied that the development would satisfy the requirement of Policy 20 that 30% of its energy needs can be met from renewable or low carbon sources.

- 5.24 The site is proposed to be drained to the mains. Surface water run off should be no greater than as existing since the site is currently hard surfaced.
- 5.25 The proposals do not materially affect existing habitat and therefore fall within the 'de minimis' thresholds in respect of biodiversity net gain. The development is exempt from the requirements of mandatory national requirements in this respect.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 The provision of good quality staff accommodation is recognised as being an important part of ensuring the well-being of hospitality businesses in the Lake District. The proposals would help to sustain an existing business in the countryside of the National Park and therefore the principle of the development would be compliant with Policy 02.
- 6.2 I disagree with the Parish Council's views regarding the effect of the development on the character of the area or the setting of the listed building. I consider that, subject to the retention of trees as proposed, the development is acceptable in terms of its appearance and suitably located within an existing business premises and is compliant with policies 02, 05, 06 and 07 in this respect.
- 6.3 The applicant has now demonstrated, to the satisfaction of the local Highway Authority that the development would be provided with adequate parking space. I am satisfied that the development would not cause harm to highway safety.

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE with conditions

Conditions/Reasons

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be commenced before the expiration of THREE years from the date hereof.
- REASON: Imposed in accordance with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990.
- 2 The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out otherwise than in conformity with the following submitted plans and details:
- Drawing nos. 2507-01 Location plan; 2507-02 Block plan (as proposed); 2507-04 rev B Site plan (with parking layout); 2507-05 Plans and elevations; 2507-10 Foundations as proposed

- Heritage Design and Access Statement (November 2024)
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment
- iTransport Planning Technical Note

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt.

- 3 The accommodation hereby approved shall not be occupied otherwise than by the proprietor/manager or members of staff of the Traveller's Rest Inn together with any dependants living with such persons.

REASON: In accordance with Policy 02 and Policy 18 of the Lake District National Park Local Plan 2020-2035 and the National Planning Policy Framework, as permission would not be granted for residential accommodation in this location for occupation by persons unconnected with the business

- 4 The external walls of the building hereby granted permission shall be completed with a finish of roughcast in which the final coat contains a preparation of fairly coarse aggregate thrown on as a wet mix and left rough.

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure a satisfactory standard of appearance of the development in accordance with the provisions of Policies 05 and 06 of the Lake District National Park Local Plan 2020-2035.

- 5 The roof of the building hereby permitted shall be covered and maintained in local green or blue/grey slates which have been mined or quarried in Cumbria. Such slates shall be riven not sawn, and shall be laid in diminishing courses from eaves to ridge.

REASON: To ensure a satisfactory standard of appearance of the development by the use of traditional materials in accordance with Policies 01 and 06 of the Lake District National Park Local Plan 2020-2035.

- 6 Prior to the first use of the development hereby permitted, at least a 30% reduction of the predicted CO2 emissions of the development shall be secured from decentralised and renewable or low carbon energy sources. Details and a timetable of how this is to be achieved, including details of any physical works on site, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved details shall be implemented in accordance with the approved timetable and retained as operational thereafter, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In the interests of increasing the proportion of energy generated through renewable and low carbon sources in accordance with Policy 20 (Renewable and Low Carbon Energy) of the Lake District National Park Local Plan 2020-2035.

- 7 Prior to commencement of development an investigation using hand tools and/or an "air" spade to identify where the roots of trees T1, T2, T3, T4 and T13 (as specified in Dwg. AIA/Traveller's Rest/28-10-24) extend into the application site shall be carried out and the foundations of the hereby approved staff accommodation designed to avoid any main roots (i.e. larger than 25mm in diameter) and in full accordance with Part 7.5 of BS 5837:2012. Details of the proposed foundations shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of any further work. The development shall thereafter be carried out fully in accordance with the approved design of the foundations.

REASON: To ensure adequate protection of the trees adjacent to the site in the interests of the appearance of the development in accordance with Policies 05 and 06 of the Lake District National Park Local Plan (2020-2035).

- 8 No external lighting shall be installed other than in accordance with details having been previously submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Lighting installation shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details, and no additional lighting shall be installed without the prior written approval of the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In the interests of local amenity and to minimise light pollution in accordance with Policies 05 and 06 of the Lake District National Park Local Plan (2020-2035).

NPPF decision notice requirements

Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 Article 35(2) statement.

The Local Planning Authority have worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner by seeking solutions to problems arising in relation to dealing with the application by seeking additional information and liaising with consultees, in particular the Local Highway Authority.

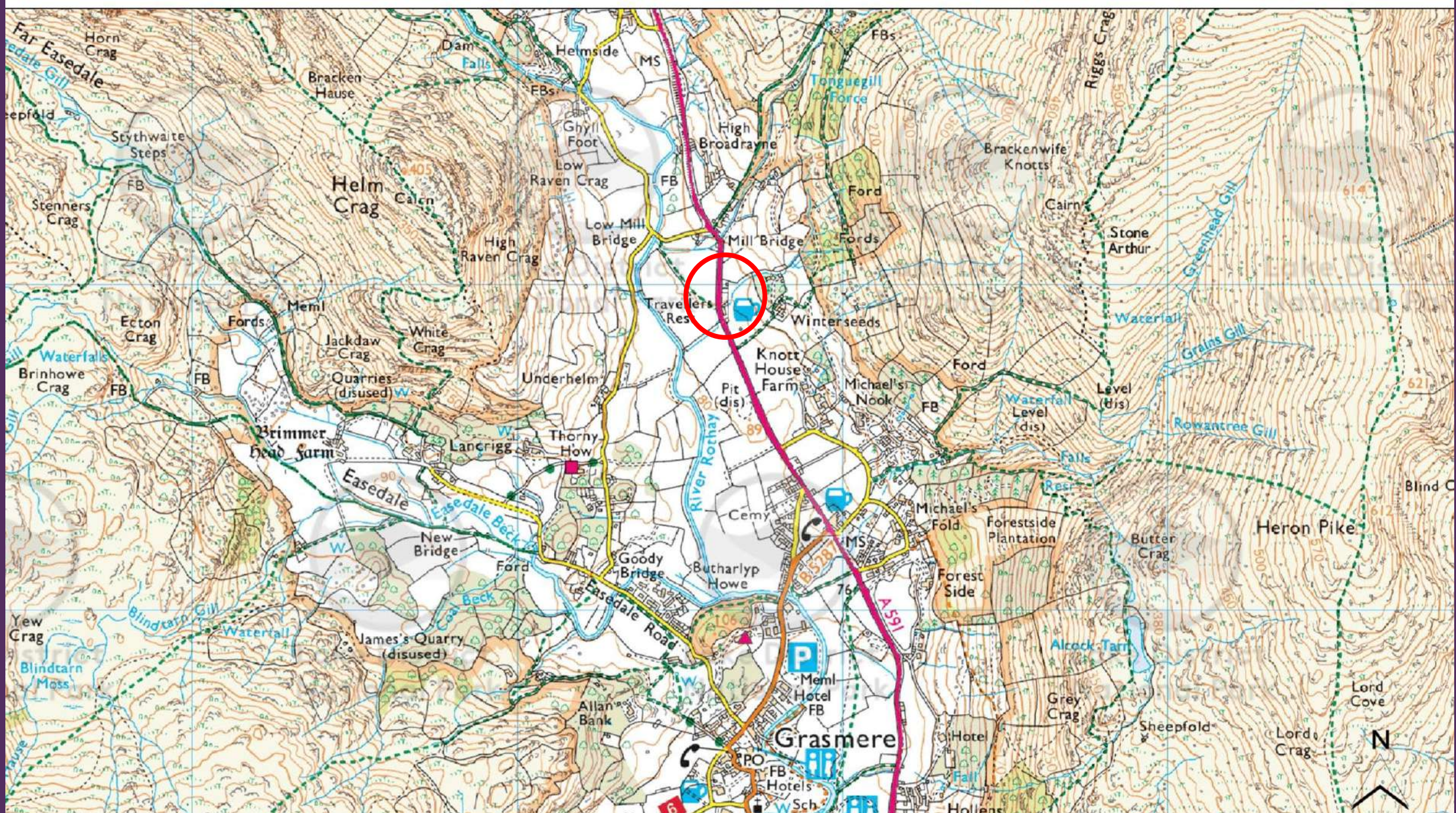
Background papers

Background papers are available for inspection on the planning application file unless otherwise specified on that file as confidential by reasons of financial/personal circumstances in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985.

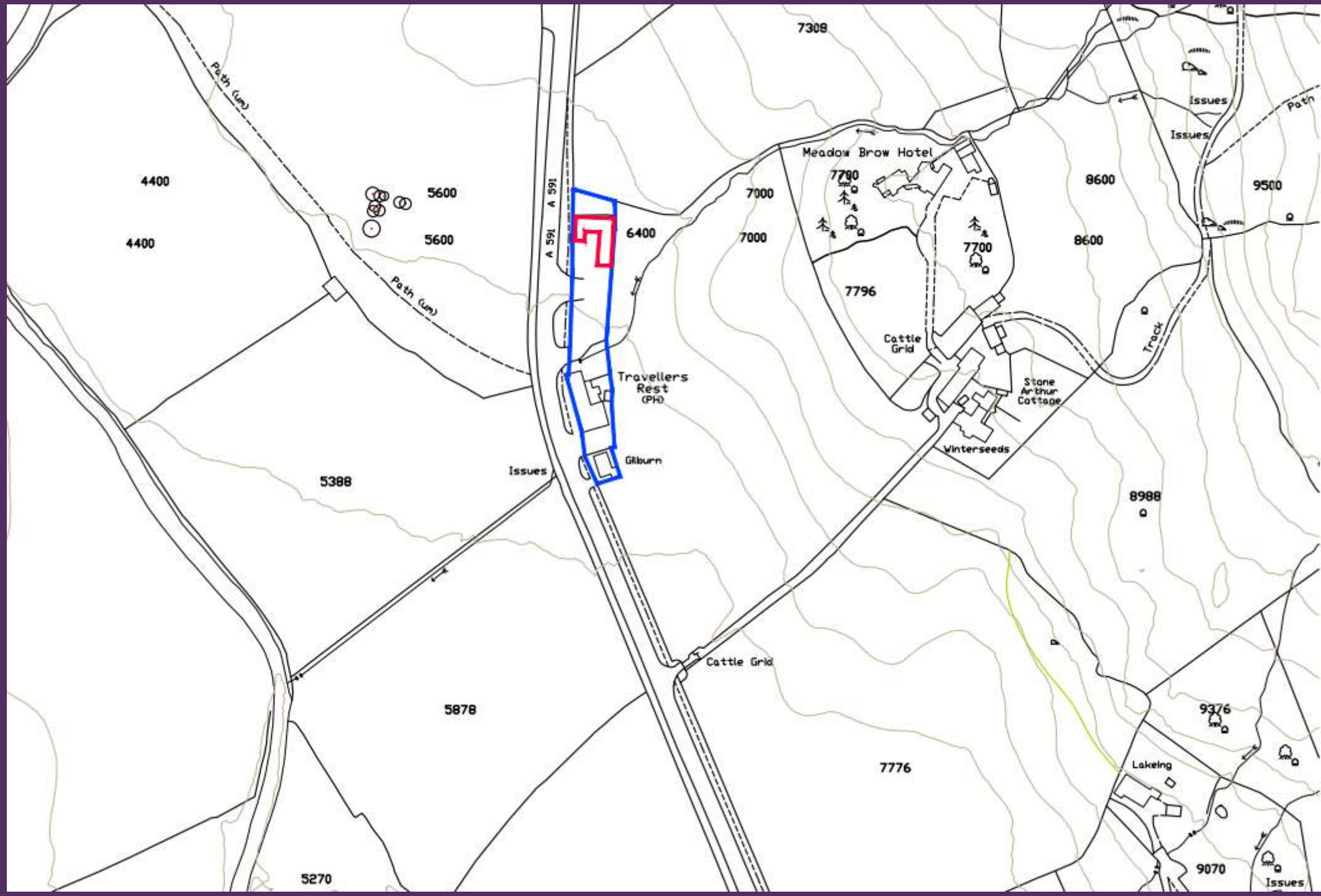
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Travellers Rest Inn, Grasmere, LA22 9RR

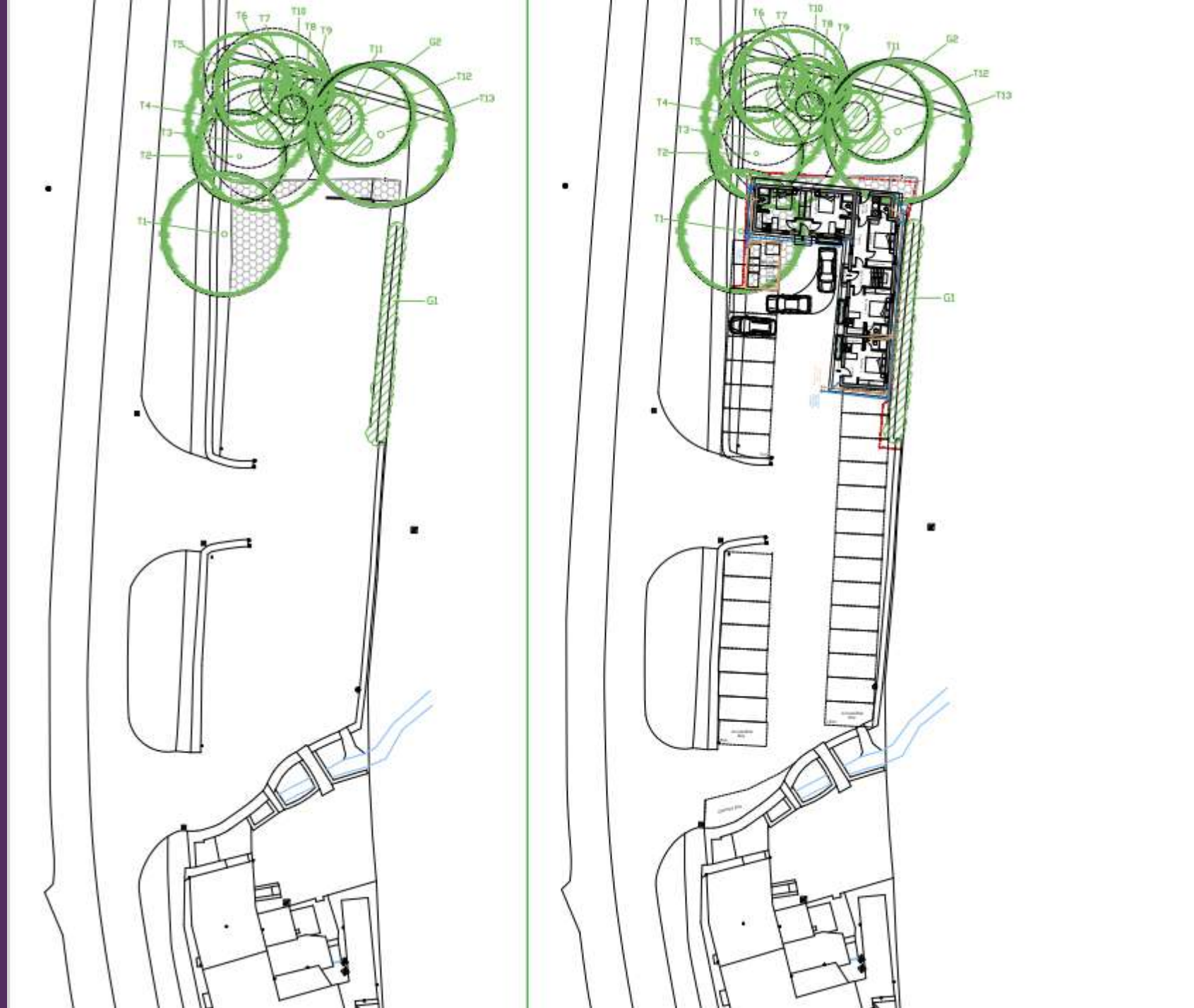
Proposed staff accommodation (7 no. single occupancy units) with associated infrastructure inclusive of bike and bin stores



Site location



Site plan
with car
parking, as
existing and
proposed



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A591

The TRAVELLERS REST
Rooms, Bar & Restaurant

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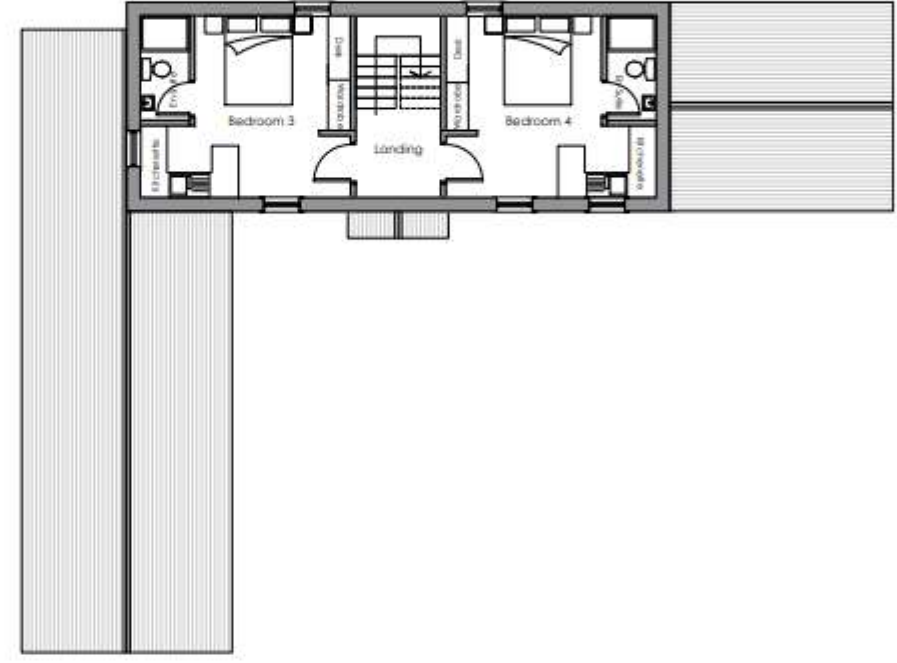
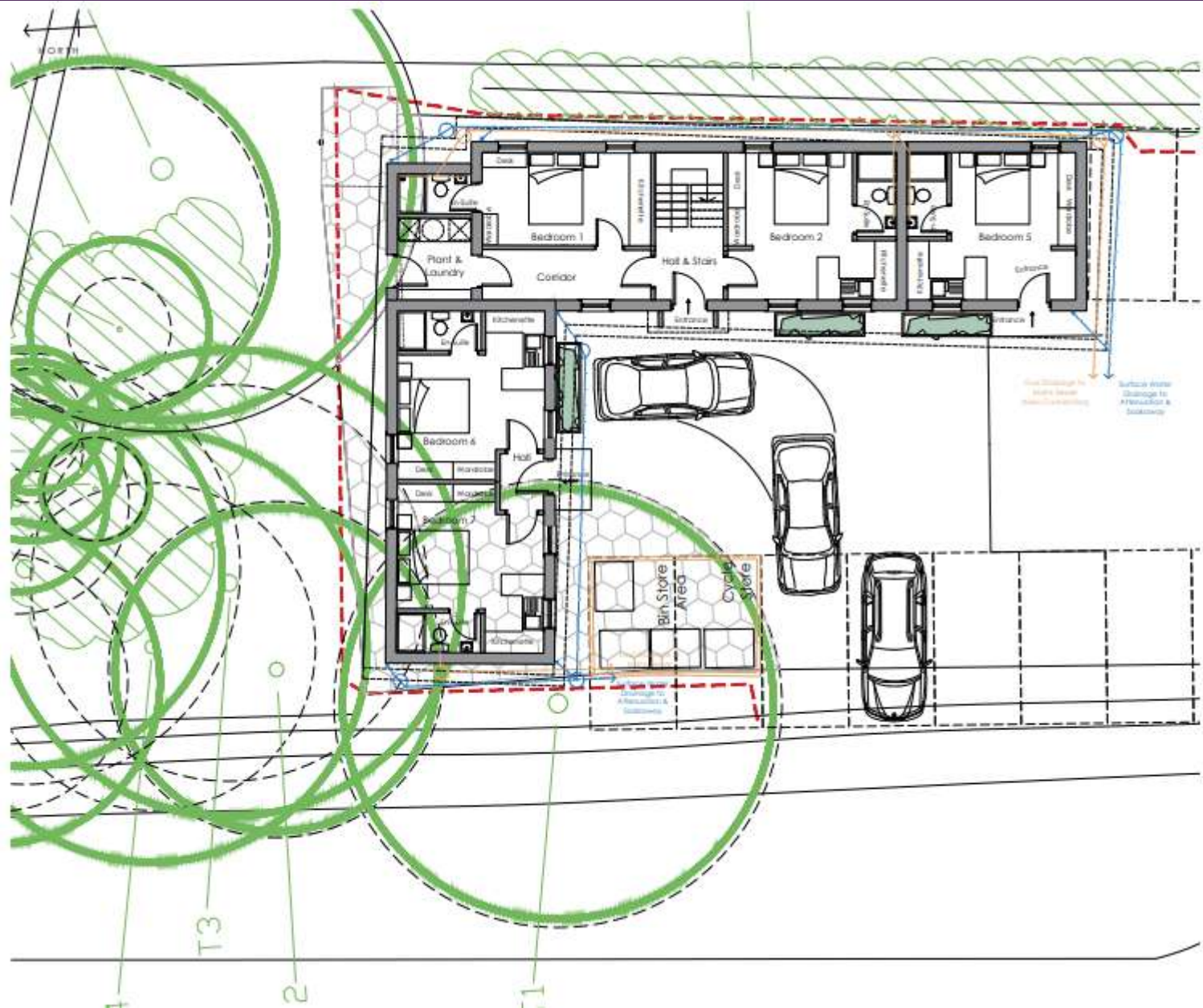
PARKING FOR PATRONS OF THE
TRAVELLERS REST INN ONLY
AUTHORISED VEHICLES ONLY

HOTEL RESERVOR'S PLEASE PRESENT YOUR VEHICLE
REGISTRATION AT RECEPTION
BAR AND RESTAURANT PATRONS PLEASE PRESENT
YOUR RESERVATION WITH ORDERING

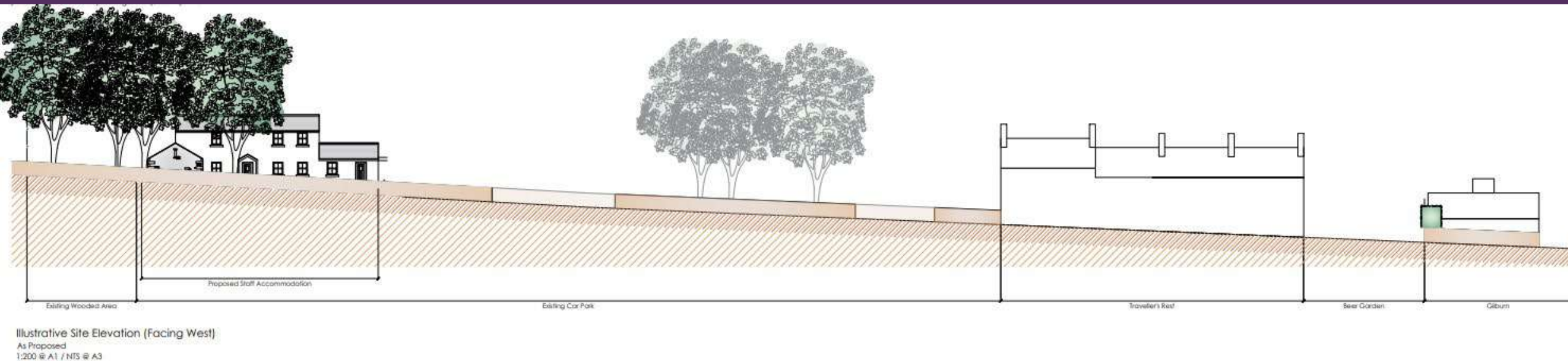
NON-AUTHORISED PARKING CHARGES APPLY



BAR
—
FOOD
—
ROOMS



Proposed elevations and context



View from road



Approach from north



Site plan
with car
parking, as
existing and
proposed

