HOTEL MEUDON

OUR PROPOSAL

What's being proposed

The proposed scheme comprises ***The Retreat:*** *a new* ***outdoor heated 20m swimming pool*** *with associated changing facilities, a four room* ***treatment spa*** *and a* ***poolside bar and casual dining eatery.*** *There are* ***six accommodation units*** *of varying sizes nestled within the eastern ridge, above the hotel gardens.*

The new units have been designed as a family of 'Residences'. They will be operated as an integral part of the hotel, providing high quality accommodation which meets the demands of luxury tourism, in today's evolved and international market.

Project Aspirations

- **Community benefits** will include new purpose-built amenities, recreational facilities, and food and beverage. Local school children will be invited to use the swimming pool for lessons. There will also be local leisure club memberships and other community outreach.
- The expansion of the hotel accommodation and associated facilities will deliver obvious **employment benefits,** and it is anticipated that the proposal will result in a further 31 employment opportunities (full time employees). The hotel will be a destination for guests throughout the year, rather than being subject to significant seasonal variation. This, in turn, provides career opportunities across a range of sectors rather than temporary jobs.
- The **long term legacy of the Fox gardens will be secured.** The cost of simply maintaining the gardens in their current state sits upwards of £100k per annum. To restore the gardens to their former glory will cost hundreds of thousands of pounds. Without the proposed development it is unlikely that the hotel will be able to continue to operate or maintain its role as stewards of this peerless historic sub-tropical paradise.

Changes implemented in the July 2024 submission

The following changes have been implemented in response to the November 2023 Planning Committee's reason for refusal:

- Plots 8, 9 (Bream House) and 10 have been omitted to ensure that the scheme is completely hidden from all public vantage points, including from out on the water
- Plot 6 has been omitted to principally address the concerns of the tree officer
- The site application boundary has been amended to exclude the majority of the adjacent agricultural field – apart from the extent needed to deliver the mandatory 10% Biodiversity Net Gain
- The buildings have been redesigned and the specification upgraded to significantly reduce energy demand, increase opportunities for renewable energy generation and ensure the scheme is net-zero

The gardens, landscape & AONB protection

Ecological and biodiversity enhancements will lie at the heart of the new landscape.

- The six accommodation residences will be situated along the ridge with openings onto the valley gardens. The sensitive siting takes advantage of views over the ornamental planting whilst allowing the enjoyment of the garden for hotel patrons, and others based in the existing property. The proposal also provides for a comprehensive new landscaping scheme designed for guests to enjoy alongside encouraging biodiversity.
- Twenty-six of the existing 937 trees (3%) will need to be removed, all of which have been surveyed of being of lower quality. But within the landscaping proposals, an extensive number of new native scrub trees and shrubs will be planted as part of the biodiversity enhancements and boundary screening. The required Canopy Cover Assessment confirms that the planting proposals will increase the canopy cover on the site by 5,945 sqm, effectively trebling the existing plant cover.

Wildlife

- The mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain assessment, using the statutory DEFRA metric, confirms that the scheme will achieve a 15.3% improvement in habitats on the site and a 13.6% improvement in hedgerows.
- The ecology report identifies that minor impacts to "low distinctiveness habitats" as well as impacts to reptiles and roosting bats will occur. Mitigation and compensation have been incorporated into the design to ensure that the proposal and work programme is designed to minimise adverse impacts on ecological features. Enhancement features have also been incorporated with the aim of providing an increase in wildlife opportunities on site post-development.
- Mitigation and compensation measures will include: Two compensatory barbastelle bat boxes will be tree mounted; All retained trees and woodland will be protected during construction through the use of Tree Protection Barriers; There will be habitat manipulation to avoid impacts to reptiles; Vegetation clearance will take place outside of the bird nesting season if possible, if this cannot be avoided a nesting bird check by an ecologist will take place, with nests buffered until all chicks have fledged; There will be a site walkover prior to construction to check for badger activity.
- Additional enhancements will include:
  - 24 tree mounted bat boxes
  - 3 tree mounted barbastelle bat boxes
  - 10 integrated bird boxes to be installed on the new buildings
  - 10 integrated bee bricks to be installed on the new buildings
  - 10 tree mounted bird boxes
  - 3 reptile habitat piles