

Jobs boost as Kinver hotel at Dunsley Hall is given go-ahead

by **Mike Lockley**, Birmingham Mail | Jul 30 2011

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THE number of jobs in a picturesque Black Country village is set to double after planning chiefs gave the green light to a major new hotel.

Proposals to revamp Kinver's Dunsley Hall – parts of which dates back to the 15th century – will create 182 new jobs.

But conservation watchdog English Heritage lashed the design, saying it would harm the significance of the listed building.

Coun Brian Edwards, leader of South Staffs Council, told a packed meeting the blueprint represents a massive boost to Kinver's economy.

Coun Edwards, who lives in the area, said: "We have at least doubled the number of jobs – full stop. Up to 200 new jobs is a substantial increase. I welcome it."

Dunsley Hall – former stately home of famed sausage makers the Marsh and Baxter family – was turned into a 11-bedroom boutique hotel in 2007.

Owner Teri Beardsmore was given permission at South Staffs Council regulatory committee to turn the building – dubbed 'remarkable' by planning officers – into a 34 bedroom hotel, with spa. Outbuildings will be converted and the main hall extended.

Mr Richard Waltho, of architects Marsh Associates, spoke of his excitement over the project.

He said: "It is going to tick a number of boxes in terms of tourism and the local economy. It is something that is putting Kinver on the map, South Staffordshire on the map, the West Midlands on the map."

Mr Waltho described the scheme as challenging, but stressed the hard work will be worth it. "The problem has been that it has been in green belt and it is a Grade II listed building, both of which are difficult issues."

He said the project would enhance "what is already a unique building in a unique setting. We are doing something that will safeguard it for the future".

English Heritage, in a report to the meeting, opposed the move.

The organisation said: "While we recognise that recent amendments to the submitted design for extensions to the house have improved its appearance, the proposals are still out of scale and inappropriately sited and would cause substantial harm to the significance of the building."



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