
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 August 2020

by Jonathan Price BA(Hons) DMS DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27 August 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/U2615/W/20/3247408

5 North Drive, Great Yarmouth NR30 1ED

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Janak Masrani against the decision of Great Yarmouth Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 06/18/0271/F, dated 4 May 2018, was refused by notice dated 21 October 2019.
 - The development proposed is change of use from hotel to 10 no residential flats, involving extensions, external alterations.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. Whether the proposal would be acceptable within the context of safeguarding the tourism sector of the local economy.

Reasons

3. The proposal is to redevelop part of the Sea Princess hotel. The business occupies a seafront site close to the main holiday attractions along the town's Golden Mile. The property is within a primary holiday accommodation area designated in the 2001 Great Yarmouth Borough-Wide Local Plan (LP), where permanent residential use is not permitted under saved Policy HOU22. The proposal relates to a three-storey annex that currently provides twenty bed spaces, with a first-floor link to the main hotel where there are a further 40 rooms along with the reception facilities.
4. The annexe building would be converted to 10 residential apartments and provided a more sympathetically designed façade onto the sea front. There are a further two quite substantial hotels immediately beyond the Sea Princess. The annexe building is to the side adjacent to Esplanade Court; a row of four three storey residential apartment blocks that run in the other direction. The proposal would therefore serve to extend a length of residential development at the expense of hotel frontage.
5. The Sea Princess hotel is evidently in need of refurbishment in order to carry on providing a good standard of holiday accommodation. However, the business profits have not been able to meet the costs of this. The residential change of use would fund re-investment in the remaining hotel to upgrade its facilities. The details of the hotel refurbishment are rather limited and do not

form part of this proposal. However, the planning submission refers to the addition of an already approved conservatory and improved landscaping and new fencing to the front of the building.

6. Great Yarmouth remains one of the nation's main sea-side holiday resorts and tourism plays a major role in the local economy. Policy CS8 of the Council's Core Strategy (CS), adopted in December 2015, seeks to ensure the tourism sector remains strong. This supports the upgrading, enhancement and safeguarding of the existing stock of visitor holiday accommodation, especially in primary areas. Criterion b of this policy resists the loss of visitor holiday accommodation here, unless the current use is demonstrated to be unviable or the loss of some bed spaces will improve the standard of the existing accommodation.
7. There is evidence that the existing hotel has not operated profitably. In locational terms the site is close to the main Golden Mile attractions where it might be expected that a hotel could be run viably. This would no doubt depend on adequate financial investment to maintain acceptable standards of accommodation. However, there is very little detail of what such refurbishment of the Sea Princess would entail and no means of securing this as part of the wider proposal. Therefore, I conclude that the loss of holiday accommodation within this primary area would be in overall conflict with LP Policy HOU22 and CS Policy CS8. This is insofar as these seek to safeguard the tourism sector of the local economy by preserving the stock of visitor accommodation in the primary holiday areas.

Planning balance and conclusion

8. The ten dwellings would provide quite small social benefits in helping to boost the delivery of housing sought by the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) where in Great Yarmouth there is a significant under supply. The potential of an improved façade to the building at No 5 would provide modest environmental benefits towards enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Area within which it is located.
9. However, there are no detailed specifications for the refurbishment of the remaining hotel, which falls outside this application with no mechanism for it to be secured through this development.
10. The adverse impacts to the local economy, caused through the loss of primary area holiday accommodation, would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the small social and environmental benefits identified. Therefore, giving significant weight to Government objectives as set out in the Framework, the proposal would not benefit from the presumption in favour of sustainable development this provides for. As a material consideration, this would thus not indicate this appeal be decided other than in accordance with the development plan where, as a whole, I find there to be conflict. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Jonathan Price

Inspector