



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 January 2023

by C Harding BA(Hons) PGDipTRP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17th February 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/Y2620/W/22/3301796

Dormy House Hotel, Cromer Road, West Runton NR27 9QA

- 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 Steven Brundle of Highview Properties (London) Ltd against the decision of North Norfolk District Council.
 - The application Ref PF/21/2593, dated 22 September 2021, was refused by notice dated 22 February 2022.
 - The development proposed is described as 'Removal of existing office building/beerstore and shed. Removal of existing raised paving and steps to rear of building. Two storey side extension. Beer Store (outbuilding). Potato store and preparation area and dry store (outbuilding). Pizza Cabin (outbuilding). Raised rear seating area and glass wind screen to rear of building incorporating ramp and steps. New fire escape stair. Landscaping, pergola and glass wind screen to front of building. Replacement of 2No. roof windows by dormer windows (room 19). Change window to bi-fold doors from restaurant to outside seating area. 2m high screen fence to eastern boundary.'
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for removal of existing office building/beerstore and shed. Removal of existing raised paving and steps to rear of building. Two storey side extension. Beer Store (outbuilding). Potato store and preparation area and dry store (outbuilding). Pizza Cabin (outbuilding). Raised rear seating area and glass wind screen to rear of building incorporating ramp and steps. New fire escape stair. Landscaping, pergola and glass wind screen to front of building. Replacement of 2No. roof windows by dormer windows (room 19). Change window to bi-fold doors from restaurant to outside seating area. 2m high screen fence to eastern boundary, at Dormy House Hotel, Cromer Road, West Runton NR27 9QA in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref PF/21/2593, dated 22 September 2021, and the plans submitted with it, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:
 - C412/SP/01 - Site Location Plan
 - C412/SP/02 - Proposed Site Plan
 - C412/PL/03 - Proposed Plans and Elevations of Outbuildings
 - C412/CO/02 - Proposed Plans
 - C412/TE/01 - Outside Raised Terrace Area
 - Beer Store Cooling Equipment Details.

- 2) Prior to the installation of any further equipment to control the emission of fumes and smell from the premises, details of such equipment shall be first submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. All equipment installed as part of the approved details shall thereafter be operated and maintained in accordance with that approval and retained for so long as the use continues.
- 3) Prior to the installation of any further external lighting to the external seating areas hereby approved, details of such lighting shall be first submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. All external lighting installed as part of the approved details shall thereafter be operated and maintained in accordance with the approved details and retained for so long as the use continues.

Preliminary Matter

2. At the time of my site visit the proposed development had already been carried out. Accordingly, I have considered the appeal on a retrospective basis.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development upon the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site relates to a two-storey hotel located on Cromer Road between West Runton and East Runton, with parking located to the rear. Previously extended, the building features a hipped roof design, and incorporates external terraced seating areas to front and rear. The appeal site is set at a lower level than the road which it addresses.
5. The appeal property forms part of a group of properties located on the northern side of Cromer Road and which are surrounded by agricultural land. Properties situated on the road are of a variety of design, scales and ages.
6. The two-storey side extension is timber clad and incorporates a flat roof design. The fire escape stair is located directly to its front. The flat roof design of the extension differs in form from the otherwise hipped roofs of the appeal property. Although, flat roofs are not a common design feature with the local area, the character of the area is mixed in nature, and there are a small number of flat roofs evident, meaning that it is not an entirely alien design feature.
7. I acknowledge that the North Norfolk Design Guide indicates that flat-roof extensions to residential properties will not normally be acceptable. However, it provides no specific advice in this respect with regard to commercial properties.
8. Furthermore, the side extension and staircase are not significant in scale and are set back substantially from the front elevation of the premises, which effectively screens these elements in views when approached from the direction of West Runton. Additionally, as the neighbouring property is set forward of the appeal property, they are also largely screened by this property when approached from the direction of Cromer.
9. Consequently, despite the roof design, the side extension and fire escape are only visible within a limited range of close views and are not prominent within

the overall streetscene. As a result, any harm to the character and appearance of the area that results from these elements of the proposal is adequately mitigated.

10. The use of dark coloured cladding is not wholly reflective of the existing building, which is of a traditional brick construction painted in a lighter colour. However, the colour used is muted in tone and reflects the colour scheme evident in signage at the site and this element of the development forms only a limited part of the overall building and is set out above, is not prominently situated. Accordingly, I conclude that it would not result in harm to the character and appearance of the area.
11. To the front of the premises, a number of outbuildings have been erected. These include a beer store which is compact in scale and set no further forward than the front elevation of the existing premises and a potato preparation and storage area that is set forward of the existing building but is not excessive in scale. The pergola is a larger structure and is set well forward within the external area seating to the front of the premises.
12. Whilst all of these structures are of a simple timber design, the difference in levels between the front of the appeal site and the road means that they are not prominent. Furthermore, they are located close to a boundary of the appeal site, and are positioned behind each other. This results in the pergola screening the other two outbuildings to a large extent. The wind screen is transparent in nature and as a consequence also does not form a prominent feature. Overall, the scale, design and positioning of the elements of the development which are located to the front of the appeal site does not result in harm to the character and appearance of the area.
13. To the rear of the appeal property, a raised external seating with pizza cabin and transparent wind screen has been formed overlooking the existing car park at the premises. This element is predominantly screened from wider views by the existing building and forms a logical and appropriate expansion of the premises in design terms. Other alterations are proposed to the appeal property, including the introduction of bi-fold doors to the rear elevation, and two dormer windows into the roof slope. These elements are appropriate to the appeal property, and in the case of the dormer windows, located in a roof valley which predominantly screens them from view.
14. The Council has indicated that since the appeal was received, that planning permission¹ has been granted for an alternative scheme of development that incorporates a hipped roof to the proposed two-storey side extension. Furthermore, it is also highlighted that a further previously approved scheme² also proposed a hipped roof to a side extension. However, I have considered this appeal on the merits of the scheme which is in front of me, which I consider does not constitute a development that is materially diminished in design terms from any previously permitted scheme, such that it would be rendered unacceptable.
15. The development does not harm the character and appearance of the area. It therefore accords with North Norfolk Local Development Framework Core Strategy Policy EN4 and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework

¹ PF/22/0605

² PF/19/1682

(‘the Framework’) which together, and amongst other factors, require new development, to have regard to local context, and preserve the character and quality of an area. It would also accord with the North Norfolk Design Guide which states that commercial buildings should be compatible with their surroundings.

Other Matters

16. I have had regard to representations received from a local resident in relation to potential access issues and loss of car parking. However, the Council have indicated that they consider the proposed development to be acceptable in this regard, and I have not been presented with substantive evidence, nor did I see anything at my site visit that would lead me to reach a different conclusion.
17. I also acknowledge that the part of the development is located close to the shared boundary with a neighbouring property, however access to this element for construction or maintenance purposes, along with potential undermining of the shared boundary are matters that fall outside the scope of this appeal. Accordingly, I have not afforded these matters weight in reaching my decision.

Conditions

18. The Council has provided a list of suggested conditions upon which the appellant has had opportunity to comment. I have attached a condition specifying the approved plans in order to provide certainty to all parties.
19. I have also included conditions relating to details of any further ventilation, air conditioning or refrigeration systems to be installed, and details of any additional lighting in the interests of the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring properties.
20. As the development has already been carried out, I have not attached conditions relating to the materials to be used, or that building work be carried out in accordance with the provided ecological report as such conditions would be unnecessary and would not meet the relevant tests set out in the Framework.

Conclusion

21. The development accords with the development plan as a whole, and there are no material considerations, including the Framework, that would lead me to conclude that a decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan.
22. For the reasons given above, and having had regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

C Harding

INSPECTOR