
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 January 2024

by S Ashworth BA (Hons) BPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27 February 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/Q4245/W/23/3329281

Bollin Hotel, 58 Manchester Road, Altrincham WA14 4PJ

- 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 & Mrs Broadway against the decision of Trafford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 107278/FUL/22 dated 16 February 2022, was refused by notice dated 24 April 2023.
 - The development proposed is change of use and conversion of existing 10-bedroom hotel to six self-contained one-bedroom flats with associated car and cycle parking provision, including external alterations and demolition of the existing single storey rear extension and two storey side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the change of use and conversion of existing 10-bedroom hotel to six self-contained one-bedroom flats with associated car and cycle parking provision, including external alterations and demolition of the existing single storey rear extension and two storey side extension at Bollin Hotel, 58 Manchester Road, Altrincham WA14 4PJ, in accordance with the terms of application Ref 107278/FUL/22 dated 16 February 2022 and subject to the conditions set out in the attached schedule.

Preliminary Matters

2. Bollin Hotel is a substantial, extended semi-detached property which appears to date from the Victorian/Edwardian era. It currently accommodates 10 guest bedrooms with associated lounge, kitchen and dining rooms plus managers accommodation which includes bedrooms, a separate lounge, and an ancillary office and workshop. The accommodation is set over four floors including a basement and an attic. The site is accessed directly off Manchester Road and the grounds of the property, which are limited in size, are primarily used as parking and circulation space with a small area of open land at the rear.
3. The proposal is for the change of use of the property to six self-contained, one-bedroomed residential flats, following the demolition of the existing single and two storey extensions. The existing vehicular access would be retained, and six car parking spaces, one per flat, would be provided within the site.
4. Planning permission was granted for a similar proposal on 9 July 2015¹. That permission has lapsed and carries little weight in my determination of the case.

¹ Application no: 82944/FULL/2014

5. It is incumbent on me to determine the proposal in accordance with current local development plan policy and guidance, and the most up to date national policy as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (the Framework). The Local Development Plan includes the Trafford Core Strategy adopted in 2012, which includes Policy L7, referred to in the decision notice. In addition, I have taken into account the Trafford Planning Guidelines PG1: New Residential Development 2004 (the SPG). The emerging joint Development Plan Document 'Places for Everyone' is at an advanced stage of preparation. However, I am not aware of the extent to which policies relevant to this appeal may be subject to amendment and this limits the weight I can give them. Similarly, the Draft Trafford Design Code is at an advanced stage but has not yet been adopted. Nevertheless, I have taken these documents into account in my determination of the appeal insofar as they are relevant.
6. Whilst it is not currently being used to capacity, a hotel appears to have operated from the site for many years. There is no reason to consider it is not a lawful use. I have therefore taken the extant hotel use into consideration in my determination of the proposal.

Main Issues

7. The main issues in this case are:
 - Whether the proposal would provide a satisfactory standard of accommodation for future residents having particular regard to outlook, noise and disturbance, size, outdoor space and accessibility.
 - Whether the proposal would provide satisfactory off-street parking and turning provision.

Reasons

Living conditions

8. The proposed flats would be of various sizes and configurations, all with one bedroom. Flats 1,2 and 3 would be duplex apartments with bedrooms and bathrooms at basement level and living rooms and kitchens above. Flats 4 and 5 would be single level units and would occupy the first floor, and Flat 6 would occupy the attic.
9. The basement windows are positioned at a low level on the building but internally are at eye level such that they afford light into the rooms and a reasonable outlook from them. In terms of Units 1 and 3, outlook would be directly onto the occupants' designated car parking spaces and would therefore be limited in range when a car was parked in the space. Nevertheless, given the primary function of the rooms as bedrooms, and that occupants would be afforded surveillance of their own vehicle when they were inside, I am unconvinced such an outlook would be inadequate.
10. The side facing habitable room windows of Flats 2,4,5 and 6, would have an outlook directly towards the side gable of the adjacent property, No 60 Manchester Road. These windows would not be overlooked and would therefore afford occupants an adequate level of privacy but at a distance of 8-8.5m,

outlook would be restricted and would fall short of the SPG's recommended minimum distance of 15m.

11. However, in Flat 2 the substantial side facing bay window serving what would be the living room would afford some outlook to the front and rear of the site. Moreover, I noted that this is a spacious airy room with a high ceiling, and I am unconvinced the restricted outlook would make the room oppressive to be in. The side facing windows in Flats 4 and 5 would serve bedrooms. They are tall windows and would provide oblique views to the sides. Taking into account the that the bedrooms are most likely to be used at night, albeit not exclusively, the restricted outlook from the two bedrooms would cause a limited degree of harm. The side facing windows to Flat 6 would serve the living room and dining/ kitchen. Again, these are tall windows facing the gable of No 60, and therefore a more limited amount of masonry. I noted that the elevated position of these windows allows very good long-range outlook from the rooms towards distant hills.
12. I acknowledge that there is some restriction on outlook from habitable rooms due to the proximity of the building to the neighbouring property or to parking space. However, whilst the proposal does not meet the requirements of the SPG in that regard, any harm to future occupiers from the shortfall would be limited.
13. The grounds of the property would be used as parking and circulation space and as such noise from comings and goings would be evident within the flats, particularly those at ground floor/basement levels. However, although there is no specific evidence on background noise levels before me, Manchester Road is a heavily trafficked road, and the grounds of both immediately neighbouring properties are in use as multi-space parking areas. Accordingly, the area did not seem to me to be a particularly quiet residential environment. Vehicles being manoeuvred within the site are unlikely to be driven at speed and where parking spaces are directly adjacent to windows their use is within the occupiers control. Accordingly, whilst there is likely to be some noise and disturbance associated with the parking area, as would be the case at similarly converted properties nearby, I am satisfied that it would not result in substandard living accommodation.
14. It is the Council's contention that Flats 5 and 6 do not meet the Nationally Described Space Standard² (Space Standard). It appears from all I have seen that Flat 5 is constrained both in terms of its overall floorspace and in terms of the size of its bedroom although there would be adequate circulation space and space for essential furniture. Whilst the flat might be appropriate for a single person it may not meet the standards for two-person occupancy, although the shortfall in space would be limited.
15. Flat 6 would span the whole of the attic and all the habitable rooms, given the form and height of the roof, would include areas of sloping and low headroom. Whilst the gross floorspace of the flat would be generous, the bedroom would be constrained by a significant area of lower headroom. Similarly, a large proportion of the kitchen would be of a low height. There is no evidence before me, including any calculations, to demonstrate that, taking into account these constraints, the proposal would meet the Space Standard. Accordingly, I

² DLUCH and MHCLG Technical Housing Standards- Nationally Described Space Standard 2015

cannot be certain that all the proposed units are of an adequate size in accordance with the Government's current guidance.

16. No outdoor space would be provided at the property as the grounds would be used to provide parking and turning space. The SPG advises that for flats, 18sqm of adequately screened communal area per flat is generally sufficient for functional requirements. However, the SPG also acknowledges that there may be a limited number of exceptions, such as where conversion to residential use is desirable but provision of garden space is not possible. Given the age and style of the property and its limited curtilage, I am not persuaded that an alternative scheme would provide any degree of meaningful outdoor space. I note that similar constraints exist at No 60 also in use as flats, which is a similar building and plot size, which does not appear to have any outdoor space.
17. The SPG indicates that flats are required to be accessible. In this case, as a result of the level of the ground floor being above ground, there are steps up to the external entrance doors at the front and rear of the building. There are also various changes in levels internally and no lift access. As such the building, and the extant hotel use, is not currently accessible. No change to improve accessibility is proposed and it follows that no accessible car parking spaces are proposed either. There is nothing before me to demonstrate that consideration has been given to the adaptation of the building to provide accessible units. Therefore, whilst I have taken into consideration of the age of the building and its suitability for adaptation, I cannot conclude that the building could not be made accessible.
18. To conclude on this main issue, taking all these matters into account, the proposal has a number of deficiencies relating to outlook, the size of some units, and the lack of outdoor space and accessibility. Accordingly, although these deficiencies are limited, the proposal would fail to comply with Policy L7 of the Core Strategy which requires that development must not prejudice the amenity of the future occupiers of the development and must be fully accessible and useable by all sections of the community.

Parking Provision

19. The residential units would each be served by one car parking space, two at the front of the building and three at the rear. There is no dispute between the parties about the amount of parking provision proposed. Concern appears to relate to manoeuvring space and service arrangements, a drafting discrepancy between drawings and lack of detail regarding the size of the spaces. I have taken the Local Highway Authority's comments into account in that regard.
20. There is a similar tight layout of spaces at neighbouring properties No 60 and No. 56 which is in use as offices. At these properties there are 2 spaces at the front close to the access, in a similar arrangement to the proposal before me, and a number of spaces at the side/rear. There is no evidence of any issues in terms of highway safety arising from these specific car parking areas. I note the Highway Authority accepts that vehicles would be manoeuvred within the site and leave in a forward gear. Moreover, I note that if allowed, the main parties would accept a condition requiring details of the layout to be submitted and agreed by the Council.

21. Furthermore, notwithstanding the Council's concerns, the property has been used as a hotel with 10 bedrooms plus a large residential flat for a very considerable length of time. The application form indicates there have historically been 11 spaces within the site, which would have meant there was very little manoeuvring space within the site. On that basis it seems to me that the proposal represents an improvement over the current situation.
22. Accordingly, I am satisfied that the proposal would provide satisfactory parking and manoeuvring space and would thereby be in accordance with Policy L7 of the Core Strategy in so far as it relates to highway safety.

Planning Balance

23. The Council accepts that it cannot currently demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply. On that basis the Framework indicates that planning permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.
24. In this case the proposal would provide 6 units of residential accommodation, a net increase of 5 units, in an accessible location, close to a range of amenities and public transport links. It also represents the re-use of a brownfield site. These benefits carry moderate weight in favour of the proposal.
25. As set out above, the proposal would include the demolition of existing extensions including a two-storey, flat roofed side/rear extension set on piers which is thought to have been constructed around the 1970s. The extension fails to respect the building in terms of its form, massing and design and is in a deteriorating condition and appearance. The extension is clearly visible from both Manchester Road and Barrington Road, its adverse visual impact exacerbated by its bright colour. Consequently, the extension detracts significantly from the character and appearance of the property and the wider area. It follows that the removal of this extension would significantly enhance the character of the site and the wider area. Such benefit carries additional weight in favour of the scheme.
26. The Framework requires amongst other things that development creates places that are safe inclusive, and accessible, which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users. As set out above the proposal would fall short of current requirements relating to living conditions. Taking into account the proximity of the building to the town centre and its recreational opportunities, the age, character and extant use of the existing building, for reasons set out above the harm caused by the proposal attracts moderate weight.
27. On that basis the adverse impacts of granting permission would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the Framework taken as a whole.
28. Accordingly, even though the proposal would be contrary to the development plan taken as a whole, material considerations in this case, including the Framework, indicate that permission should be granted.

Conditions

29. The Council has suggested a number of conditions which I have considered and adapted where necessary, in the light of advice in the Planning Practice Guidance.
30. In order to provide certainty and in the interests of proper planning I have imposed the standard time condition and plans conditions. In the interests of highway safety and satisfactory living conditions, conditions requiring the submission and agreement of a parking and turning layout, cycle storage and boundary treatments, are reasonable and necessary.
31. In order to preserve the character and appearance of the building and wider area, a condition requiring agreement of the details of all external materials to be used following the demolition of the building is necessary. In line with the requirements of the Framework of a scheme of biodiversity enhancement measures is also necessary.
32. Give the proximity of the site to neighbouring residential and commercial properties, a condition requiring agreement of a construction management plan is necessary to prevent undue noise, disturbance and issues of highway safety. By its nature, the condition is a pre-commencement condition. The appellant has indicated their agreement to the terms of this condition.

Conclusion

33. Taking all matters raised into account, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed and planning permission granted subject to conditions.

S. Ashworth

INSPECTOR

SCHEDULE OF CONDITIONS

1. The development must be begun not later than three years beginning with the date of this permission.
2. The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out except in complete accordance with the details shown on the submitted plans, numbers:
 - ☐ Dwg.2613-PL01 Ordnance Map (received 21 March 2022)
 - ☐ Dwg. 2613-PL04 – Proposed basement and ground floors (received 18 February 2022)
 - ☐ Dwg. 2613-PL05 – Proposed First and Second Floors (received 18 Feb 2022)
 - ☐ Dwg. 2613-PL07 – Existing and Proposed Principal Elevations (received 21 March 2022)
 - ☐ Dwg. 2613-PL08a – Existing and proposed rear elevations (received 12 March 2022)
 - ☐ Dwg. 2613-PL09 Existing and Proposed Elevations (received 21 March 2022)
 - ☐ Dwg. 2613-PL09 Proposed Elevations (received 18 Feb 2022)
3. No development shall take place, including any works of demolition and site preparation, unless and until a scheme and site layout to detail car-parking, cycle parking, refuse and recycling facilities and landscaping has first been submitted to

and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall be implemented before the development is occupied and shall be retained at all times thereafter for the duration of the use.

4. The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied until boundary treatment has been provided to all perimeters of the site in accordance with details that have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Details shall include the design, materials and visibility splays. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and retained thereafter.

5. The development hereby approved shall not be occupied unless and until a scheme for secure cycle storage has first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall be implemented before the development is occupied and shall be retained at all times thereafter.

6. No works involving the use of any materials to be used externally on the building shall commence on site until a detailed schedule, specifications and samples of all external materials and finishes to be used on the building have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details

7. No occupation of the development hereby approved shall take place unless and until a scheme for ecological enhancement measures, together with a timetable for their provision has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The bird/bat boxes shall be provided in accordance with the approved scheme and timetable and retained thereafter.

8. No development shall take place, including any works of demolition and site preparation, until a Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The CEMP shall address, but not be limited to the following matters:

- i. the parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors
- ii. deliveries to site
- iii. loading and unloading of plant and materials
- iv. storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development
- v. measures to control the emission of dust and dirt
- vi. a scheme for recycling/disposing of waste resulting from demolition and construction works
- vii. days and hours of construction activity on site (in accordance with Trafford Council's recommended hours of operation for construction works), and
- viii. contact details of site manager to be advertised at the site in case of issues arising.

The development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved CEMP.

END OF SCHEDULE