



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 June 2024

by L J O'Brien BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26th June 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/V1260/W/24/3338441

Cumberland Hotel, East Overcliff Drive, BOURNEMOUTH, BH1 3AF

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by The Cumberland Hotel against the decision of Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole Council.
 - The application Ref is 7-2023-1670-W.
 - The development proposed is retrospective application to install 6 x external air conditioning units to rear of hotel.
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Preliminary Matter

1. At the time of my site visit works had commenced to install the external air conditioning units at the Cumberland Hotel. I noted that the works appear to have been constructed in accordance with the submitted plans and I have determined the appeal on this basis.

Decision

2. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for retrospective application to install 6 x external air conditioning units to rear of hotel at Cumberland Hotel, BOURNEMOUTH, BH1 3AF in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 7-2023-1670-W, subject to the following condition:
 - 1) The development hereby approved shall be maintained and operated in accordance with the Noise Impact Assessment prepared by ISVR Consulting dated December 2023 reference 11598-R01.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area; including whether or not the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the East Cliff Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is located in the eastern seafront area of Bournemouth known as East Cliff. The site itself is occupied by a substantial flat-roofed hotel building. The building has a clear "front" which faces the sea and East Overcliff Drive. This elevation of the building is finished in white render and has an attractive, stepped, symmetrical form with balconies with black stripe detailing. The ground floor of the building has a different appearance with large areas of glazing opening onto a swimming pool area. The front boundary treatment

comprises a fairly low-level stone wall with planting behind allowing clear views towards the front of the building from the road.

5. The rear elevation of the hotel facing Grove Road has a different character. The rear elevation is a rendered wall of significant size with a functional character and appearance. This is reinforced by the presence of items such as a large, full height, metal flue and a number of somewhat piecemeal single storey projections which include a double doored, wooden clad section. Though the elevation is broken up by regularly spaced windows of a reasonable size it, nevertheless, lacks the articulation or detailing which is present at the front. The building is separated from Grove Road by a large tarmac area which appears to be largely used for parking. The property is well screened from the road by a number of mature trees and a fairly low-level fence.
6. The appeal site is situated within the East Cliff Conservation Area (CA) which, in the vicinity of the appeal site appears to be broadly characterised by a row of hotels of a similar scale, though designs differ which, similarly, present a front elevation towards the sea with a more functional rear elevation facing Grove Road. The attractive front elevation of the Cumberland Hotel makes a positive contribution to the significance of the CA. However, the evidence before me indicates that both parties agree that the existing rear elevation of the building does not make a positive contribution.
7. The proposal is for six air conditioning units affixed to the rear and side of the main hotel building. The units are double fan condensing units in a pale grey colour. Four of the units are bracket mounted on the walls of single storey elements of the building above head height. The other two are mounted on the roof of a single storey area which wraps around the corner of the building.
8. The air conditioning units are visible in close-up views of the rear of the building from the car park and the hotel grounds. However, when viewed from Grove Road to the rear and from more distant view points the units are oftentimes screened from view by surrounding boundary treatments and planting. Most significantly, they are not readily apparent from the front of the building or in views of that principal, aesthetically pleasing, front elevation. Rather, they are seen in the context of the functional elevation of the building where they form a part of an area with a utilitarian character and appearance.
9. The host building is large and consequently, given the substantial scale and proportions of the hotel, the air conditioning units do not appear unduly prominent or of particular note. Furthermore, in the context of the functional rear elevation the air conditioning units do not appear visually jarring, unsympathetic or incongruous. Rather, the units sit comfortably within what is clearly the rear of the hotel amongst other utilitarian elements of this commercial building. Indeed, commercial paraphernalia of this type is to be expected on the functional elevation of such buildings.
10. Accordingly, I consider that the development does not cause harm to the host building or the wider area and preserves the significance and character and appearance of the CA.
11. The proposal therefore meets the aims of Policy 4.4 of the Bournemouth District Wide Local Plan (2002) and Policies CS39 & CS41 of the Bournemouth Local Plan: Core Strategy (2012). Amongst other things these policies seek to ensure that development proposals in conservation areas

preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area and seek high quality design.

Other Matters

12. I note that concern was raised regarding the impact of the proposal on the living conditions of nearby residents with regard to noise and disturbance. However, the Council's Environmental Officer has stated that they are satisfied that there should be no significant adverse impact. A Noise Impact Assessment supports this assessment and I have no evidence before me to lead me to conclude otherwise.

Conditions

13. As the development has been carried out, it is not necessary for me to impose the standard time limit or plans condition in this instance. However, in the interests of protecting the amenity of nearby residents I have imposed a condition requiring the development to be maintained and operated in accordance with the Noise Impact Assessment prepared by ISVR Consulting dated December 2023 reference 11598-R01.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons set out above and having considered all other matters raised I allow the appeal.

L J O'Brien

INSPECTOR