



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 September 2024

by Paul Cooper MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 1 October 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/J2373/W/24/3343013

Drumford Hotel, Queens Promenade, Blackpool FY2 9JS

- 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 Baalaji Limited (Colin Jones) against the decision of Blackpool Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 23/0450, dated 16 June 2023, was refused by notice dated 23 October 2023.
 - The development proposed is change of use from hotel to a self-contained holiday let.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Application for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Baalaji Limited (Colin Jones) against Blackpool Borough Council. This application will be the subject of a separate Decision.

Main Issues

3. The main issues in this appeal are:-
 - The effect of the proposal on the living conditions of neighbours.
 - The quality of living conditions for users of the accommodation.

Reasons

Living Conditions - Neighbours

4. The appeal property is a brick built three-storey hotel within a row of similar. I understand one of the properties adjacent has been utilised for residential apartments / flats for a number of years. There is parking for six vehicles on the frontage, and for two at the rear.
5. The appeal proposal seeks to convert the hotel to a single self-contained unit for holiday occupancy. It is proposed to make twelve bedrooms available, for a maximum of nineteen occupants. The basement would include a games room and cinema room, with a kitchen in the basement and at ground floor level. The rear yard area would be fenced off to be used for cycle storage and private amenity space but fitted with timber gates to allow use as additional off-street parking in times of need. The site is located within the Norbreck and Bispham Holiday Accommodation Area (the NBHAA)

6. The NBHAA is known for being a quieter, more family orientated than central Blackpool, close to the busier areas, but separated locationally. It forms part of a diverse range of accommodation for visitors to the area. Policy CS23 of the Blackpool Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy (2016) (CS) supports new or refurbished holiday accommodation in the Holiday Accommodation Areas providing that it is of a high standard and in principle, the proposal cannot be resisted subject to other policy tests being passed.
7. Whilst the proposal meets the principle of CS23, I find an issue with the format of the appeal proposal. To change the use from that of a hotel, with a similar number of bedrooms, admittedly with larger visitor capacity, to the proposal as one unit, opens up the potential for disturbance over and above that which could be expected of a hotel of this size.
8. It is likely that if booked, the unit would be occupied by a large group, likely to be a number of related families together, or a large group of individuals with similar social aims. There is no doubt in my mind that any of the above occupiers would generate considerable amounts of noise and disruption than would normally be expected, be it in the premises, or from their comings and goings. A hotel would have a management presence on site to deal with any potential issues; self-contained accommodation, by its nature, does not.
9. This raises the issue of material harm to the living conditions / amenities of adjacent properties, specifically the permanent residents. The noise report raises issues for potential noise transference between the properties; this could well be magnified by specific users internally. This has to be taken into consideration before the potential for external noise sources which is part of the cumulative issue. The NBHAA is not in the central area, it is separate, and has a different profile than the central area. Expectations of noise levels and disturbance would be considerably less than the central area.
10. As such, I find conflict with policy CS7 of the CS and policy DM36 of the Blackpool Local Plan Part 2: Development Management Policies (2023) (DMP) which, amongst other matters, expects development to ensure that amenities of nearby residents are not adversely affected and would not lead to adverse effects on the operation of surrounding uses.

Living Conditions – Users

11. The Council have supplied evidence to demonstrate the room sizes of the bedrooms, and in turn, indicated which are deficient, as well as amenity space and green infrastructure. I find these are not of sufficient shortfall to cause material harm to the living conditions of the potential residents.
12. My concern relates to the basement bedroom, which is poorly served by natural light, and given the Council's commitment to improve the quality of holiday accommodation, I find that this falls short of the standards expected. In addition, the relationships between bedrooms and bathrooms could be improved to ensure that rooms are suitable in terms of space standards, facilities, and natural lighting where appropriate.
13. I feel that given some alterations to interior layouts, and rationalisation of the bedrooms and bathroom / WC facilities, that an internal layout can be achieved that could address the concerns of the Council, who have alluded to the premise that an overall reduction in the scale of the proposal would be

conducive to a negotiated solution, but that is not an avenue for this appeal to consider, which must deal with the proposal as submitted.

14. In this regard, I find conflict with policy CS7 of the CS as it relates to the amenity of potential occupiers not being adversely affected.

Conclusion

15. The proposal does not accord with the development plan as a whole and there are no other considerations, including the Framework, that indicate I should take a different decision other than in accordance with this.
16. For the reasons outlined above, I conclude the appeal should be dismissed.

Paul Cooper

INSPECTOR