



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 December 2025

by **C Shearing BA (Hons) MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26 January 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/U2615/W/25/3373310

Vauxhall House, Great Yarmouth Station, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk NR30 1SD

- 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 Mrs Jane Zhang against the decision of Great Yarmouth Borough Council.
 - The application ref is 06/25/0158/F.
 - The development proposed is described as 'Proposed change of use from offices to combined use as Chinese takeaway/restaurant, children's party venue and retail unit (sui generis).'
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for change of use from offices to combined use as Chinese takeaway/restaurant, children's party venue and retail unit (sui generis) at Vauxhall House, Great Yarmouth Station, Great Yarmouth NR30 1SD in accordance with the terms of the application, ref 06/25/0158/F, subject to the conditions set out in the schedule below.

Preliminary Matters

2. The Council's emerging Local Plan is at an advanced stage in examination. The Council have provided details of the weight it considers should be afforded to its policies, based on outstanding issues, and I consider these emerging policies in my assessment below.
3. Notwithstanding the description of development set out in the banner heading above, which is taken from the application form, it is clear from the plans and accompanying details that the development also includes associated changes to the building. The Council dealt with the proposal on this basis and I shall do the same.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is whether the visual effects of the development would be acceptable, having particular regard to the site's gateway location and effects on heritage assets.

Reasons

Gateway Location

5. The site lies within the 'Great Yarmouth Waterfront' regeneration area and forms part of an area covered by a masterplan which seeks to enhance visitor arrivals into the town. Policy CS17 of the CS¹ states this area has the potential to become

¹ The Great Yarmouth Local Plan: Core Strategy 2015

a vibrant urban quarter. It sets criteria for development in this area, including that it should: transform Great Yarmouth's arrival experience by developing a network of attractive, vibrant and well-connected neighbourhoods to create a new gateway to the town; capitalise on the area's prime riverside location by creating strong urban form with distinct high quality architecture, and; enrich the quality of the public realm, ensuring that elements of the street scene contribute to the overall character and identity of each neighbourhood. The supporting text to Policy CS17 refers to the Great Yarmouth Waterfront Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to set out the instrument to delivering the ambitions of the policy. That document is not referred to further and the Council accept the site lies outside the area of the North Quay SPD.

6. The building to which the appeal relates fronts onto the forecourt of Great Yarmouth Station. It adjoins the station's entrance including taxi rank, drop-off areas and cycle racks, and as a consequence it is one of the first buildings experienced by those arriving into Great Yarmouth by train. The building shares its utilitarian design and flat roof forms with the station building, but it has clearly been vacant for some time since it is in a state of heavy disrepair and its windows and doors are boarded up. The Council accept the building in its current condition detracts from the area.
7. The appeal scheme would bring the existing building back into use, reintroducing activity and contributing to the vibrancy at this side of the station forecourt. It would reinstate windows and insert new windows to the elevations, bringing animation and visual interest to the building's frontages. Given the condition of the existing building and the period for which it has been vacant, I consider these to be entirely positive attributes of the proposal.
8. The retail element would be accessible from the rear side of the building. While this is not the main frontage, it would nonetheless front onto an existing paved area and car park where there would be a degree of activity. This side of the building also benefits from surveillance from the enclosing road and from the footway which connects the supermarket to the station and the rest of the town. Given these attributes, I similarly see no strong reason why the provision of a retail entrance in this elevation would contribute to poor legibility or a lack of visual connection with the surrounding area.
9. Given the site's restraints, bins are also intended be stored close to the retail entrance, where they would be enclosed by the building's T shape. It would, however, be visually prominent to those travelling around the building and using the retail entrance. Nonetheless, I consider that further details could reasonably be secured to demonstrate how the bins would be enclosed, to help reduce its visual prominence.
10. I appreciate the Council's concerns, that the vision created by Policy CS17 sets a high bar for development in this area. Nonetheless, there is not substantive evidence before me of other intentions for the site, or of the site otherwise being redeveloped, or the timescales in which this may occur. Based on the evidence before me, it is also not apparent that the appeal scheme would necessarily prejudice the delivery of the aspirations for the wider area.
11. For the reasons set out above, the proposal would play a role, albeit a small one, in enhancing the immediate area through bringing the building back into use and

improving the experience of those arriving into the station. While the drawings lack detail, I have no strong reason to doubt that the associated works to the building could appear attractive and improve the contribution of the building to the public realm, in line with the aims of Policy CS17. As below, details of the final facing materials and bin storage could reasonably be provided at a later date to ensure they are good quality and represent a cohesive palette of materials for the building and its setting.

12. For the reasons given, I find the visual effects of the development on this gateway location would be acceptable. The proposal would not be in conflict with Policy CS17 summarised above, or Policy CS9 insofar as it requires development to promote positive relationships between buildings, street and well lit spaces. For the same reasons, and as the proposal would present an improvement to the existing situation, neither do I find conflict with policies UBR1 or UBR2 of the emerging Local Plan insofar as they relate to the regeneration objectives for the area, or DHE1 which requires, among other things, development to respect its context and existing characteristics. I do not consider the proposal to conflict with the Shopfront Guide 2022, since it includes consideration of the individual identity of each building. Neither would the proposal conflict with the cited policies of the Design Code 2024 for the reasons given.

Heritage Assets

13. The site lies close to the grade II listed Vauxhall Bridge and the northern edge of the 'Market Place, Rows and North Quay Conservation Area' (the CA). Accordingly, the statutory duties² require special regard to be had to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting, and special attention paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA.
14. I observed the setting of the Bridge and the CA here to comprise a variety of predominantly low level structures of varying use. Given the proximity of the appeal building to those heritage assets, it forms a part of their setting and how they are experienced. The Council set out that the existing building has a negative impact on the setting of the Bridge and views of the CA. For the above reasons, by bringing the dilapidated building back into use and entailing positive alterations to its façade, I consider the proposal before me would preserve and provide a modest enhancement to the setting of the heritage assets.
15. The proposal before me does not include any external extraction, nor is any shown on the drawings. The appellant has also stated this is not intended to form part of this proposal, since they may not install any. However, given the existing context of the building, which includes vertical elements or varying scale and design, together with the utilitarian character of the appeal building, the station forecourt and surrounding areas, I am not convinced that, even if it was required, that any such equipment would necessarily give rise to harmful effects on those designated heritage assets. Overall, I am not convinced that the potential need for extraction equipment would amount to a reason to withhold planning permission here. Given it does not form a part of the development for which planning permission is sought, and given the uncertainty surrounding its necessity, neither do I consider a condition in this regard would be necessary. As such this would be a matter for the

² Section 66(1) and Section 72(1) of the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

appellant to rectify, and see the relevant permissions for, if it were to become necessary in the future.

16. In conclusion on this main issue the proposal would preserve, and provide a modest enhancement to, the character and appearance of the CA and the setting within which the listed Bridge is experienced. The proposal would not conflict with Policy E5 of the LP2³, Policy CS10 of the CS or emerging Policy DHE2 which require development to conserve and/or enhance the significance of the Borough's heritage assets.
17. For the same reasons set out above, I find the proposal would also preserve the setting of the nearby Broads Authority Executive Area which the Council set out has a status equivalent to the National Park.

Conditions

18. The Council have suggested conditions which should be imposed if planning permission were granted and I have considered these in light of the relevant tests. To provide certainty I have conditioned the statutory timeframes and the approved drawings. To ensure a high quality design, details of the refuse area and the facing materials will need to be submitted for approval by the Council.
19. Given the existing circumstances and based on the information before, conditions relating to the parking layout and a Flood Response Plan would not meet the tests of necessity. Neither would a condition regarding extraction for the reasons above.

Conclusion

20. For the reasons set out, the proposal would comply with the development plan and the appeal is allowed.

C Shearing

INSPECTOR

³ The Great Yarmouth Local Plan Part 2 2021

Schedule of Conditions

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with drawing nos: 1945/1, 1945/2.
- 3) The use of the building shall not commence until details of the refuse storage area have been installed in full accordance with details which have first been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. That area shall be secure, covered and maintained in accordance with those details thereafter.
- 4) Alterations to the facades of the building shall not occur until the detailed design of those alterations, including their materials and finishes, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out only in accordance with the approved details.

End of Schedule