



Costs Decision

Site visit made on 14 January 2026

by Tom Bristow BA MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16th April 2026

Costs application in relation to Appeal A Ref: APP/Z2260/W/25/3370118

San Clu Hotel, Victoria Parade, Ramsgate CT11 8DT

- The application is made under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended, sections 78, 322 and Schedule 6, and the Local Government Act 1972 as amended, section 250(5).
 - The application is made by Ameeco Holiday Apartments Ltd. for a full award of costs against Thanet District Council.
 - The appeal was against the refusal of the Council to grant planning permission in relation to application ref. F/TH/24/0678 for development described on the application form as the 'erection of a five storey extension, opening up of existing basement, to provide 19 self-contained residential units, spa, coffee shop, function room and conference facilities, following the creation of a new entrance and demolition of an existing extension and out building'.¹
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Costs application in relation to Appeal B Ref: APP/Z2260/Y/25/3370119

San Clu Hotel, Victoria Parade, Ramsgate CT11 8DT

- The application is made under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended, sections 20, 89 and Schedule 3, and the Local Government Act 1972 as amended, section 250(5).
 - The application is made by Ameeco Holiday Apartments Ltd. for a full award of costs against Thanet District Council.
 - The appeal was against the refusal of the Council to grant listed building consent in relation to application ref. L/TH/24/0679 for works described on the application form as in respect of Appeal A.
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Decision

1. The application for an award of costs is refused.

Reasons

2. Parties to planning appeals normally meet their own expenses. The Planning Practice Guidance ('PPG') explains, however, that costs may be awarded against a party who has behaved unreasonably and thereby directly caused another party to incur unnecessary or wasted expense at appeal.² Although costs applications may relate to events before an appeal is made, an award cannot extend to costs incurred beforehand.³
3. The appellant's case for an award of costs is principally on the basis that it was unreasonable for the Council to have failed to 'consult its own tourism officer' during the determination of applications ref. F/TH/24/0678 and L/TH/24/0679, to which appeals A and B relate (both concerning extending the grade II listed San Clu Hotel). It appears initially that is a procedural concern, given the appellant notes that the tourism officer had been

¹ Alternatively on the Council's decision notice, the 'erection of a five storey extension and opening up of existing basement to provide 10 self-contained residential units and 9No aparthotels, spa, coffee shop, function room and conference facilities, following the creation of a new entrance and demolition of an existing extension and out building'.

² Reference ID: 16-028-20140306.

³ Reference ID: 16-032-20140306.

consulted on other schemes, which in their view indicates ‘an established practice or expectation of engagement on such matters’.⁴

4. Tangentially there is also the argument that the appellant themselves failed, despite various attempts, to establish the position of various individuals with a tourism remit in respect of the proposal (which, again the appellant contends, should have been inputted into the Council’s determination process).⁵ That is notwithstanding that comments from the Council’s Tourism and Culture Manager of 16 October 2025 were received (albeit post-dating the Council’s decisions in respect of applications ref. F/TH/24/0678 and L/TH/24/0679 by quite some time).
5. In the appellant’s view, the shortcomings above led to the Council only, and inappropriately, to accord ‘moderate’ weight to the tourism benefits of the scheme (thereby failing either to have regard to a material consideration, or to sufficiently justify their approach, with reference to the PPG).⁶ The application for costs is, however, without merit for 5 principal reasons.
6. Firstly, I am neither aware, nor have been pointed to, any document requiring that a tourism officer is to be consulted on certain types of application in Thanet (irrespective of any established practice). Insofar as planning is concerned, the approach of the Council to tourism is articulated through the Thanet Local Plan (adopted 9 July 2020), to which the Council evidently had regard.
7. Secondly, if it is within my remit to consider whether there is an established practice or expectation of engagement with a Council’s tourism officer, the examples of where that occurred provided by the appellant concern the application of Local Plan policy E09 ‘Protection of Existing Tourist Accommodation’. That policy was not at issue in the appeals to which this costs decision relates. Therefore, if there is an established expectation, that appears confined to where loss of tourist accommodation is proposed.
8. Thirdly, although I accept that the appellant appears to have been met with silence as to one perspective on the proposal until 16 October 2025 as set out in paragraph 4 of this decision, that cannot be said to be demonstrative of unreasonable behaviour given the foregoing reasoning (and given that, on the appellants own evidence, the Council gave weight to the tourism benefits of the scheme in reaching decisions in respect of the applications to which appeals A and B relate).
9. Fourth, the Tourism and Culture Manager’s comments of 16 October 2025, referred to at paragraph 81 of the associated appeal decisions, does not suggest that a particular weight be applied to the tourism benefits of the scheme. Instead it refers to support, in general terms, from a particular perspective, of what was proposed. Those comments also carefully distinguish between the role of the officer making them, and the nature of planning decision-taking.
10. Fifth, planning is reliant on judgement.⁷ Nonetheless I observed in paragraph 83 of the associated appeal decisions that there are risks of a reductionist approach to planning that weighs adverse and beneficial effects of a scheme, along with the use of words to connote weights, in the absence of a reasoned background to that approach.

⁴ Applications ref. F/TH/25/0915 in relation to 13 Eastern Esplanade at Broadstairs, and ref. F/TH/24/0979 in relation to the Bay Tree Hotel at Broadstairs also (comments from the Tourism and Culture Manager of 14 October 2025 and 15 November 2024 reproduced at appendices 1 and 2 of the appellant’s costs application).

⁵ Listing the Tourism and Culture Manager, the Head of Regeneration and Growth, Visit Kent, the Strategic Planning Manager and the Tourism Officer in that respect (with relevant correspondence appended to the appellant’s application for costs).

⁶ Reference ID: 16-049-20140306.

⁷ And it is, arguably, for the courts rather than me to determine whether that judgement was exercised appropriately in respect of material considerations.

11. In that context it does not appear to be unreasonable that the Council accorded moderate weight to the tourism benefits of the scheme; that judgement appearing fully within their ambit to take. More fundamentally, independent of the Council's decision, I weighed the negative and positive implications of the scheme and reasoned that the appeals should be dismissed. I cannot therefore logically support the appellant's position that something of such a degree of importance was omitted from consideration that would have either avoided the need for an appeal or necessarily resulted in a different outcome.
12. In short, it was not therefore unreasonable for the Council to reach the view that they did in respect of the scheme and to maintain that view at appeal. Their decision notices and statement of case at appeal holds the scheme up against relevant provisions of statute, the development plan and national policy. Any judgements seem rational.

Conclusion

13. In my view no action or inaction taken by the Council is either demonstrative of unreasonable behaviour or has resulted in unnecessary or wasted expense at appeal with reference to the approach in the PPG. I therefore conclude that an award of costs is not justified.

Tom Bristow

INSPECTOR