



Planning Committee
Monday, 2nd March, 2020 at 9.30 am
in the Assembly Room - Town Hall, Saturday Market
Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ

Reports marked to follow on the Agenda and/or Supplementary Documents

1. **Receipt of Late Correspondence on Applications (Pages 2 - 4)**

To receive the Schedule of Late Correspondence received since the publication of the agenda.

Contact

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SUMMARY OF ADDITIONAL CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED SINCE THE
PUBLICATION OF THE AGENDA AND ERRATA

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Agent: The Agent has submitted a paper to address Cllr Joyce's queries as set out below:

The town council are objecting due to loss of a community facility, namely loss of hotel accommodation which it is claimed will adversely affect the vitality and viability of the town centre. Has there been an independent valuation of the hotel? If so how does it compare with the asking price?

The property was independently valued by 3 commercial estate agents (Fleurets Leisure Property, Christie and Co and KSA Commercials) considered to be experts in their field at an average of £545,000 (see attached from Fleurets).

The property was first put on the market on the 19th of January 2016 with Fleurets at an asking price of £545,000. The property remained on the market with them for 14 months, which time no offers were made.

The asking price was reviewed on a number of occasions and reduced to £540,00, then to £515,00 and again to £495,00. The final asking price is with Christie and Co, which is £475,00 a reduction of £70,000 off the original asking price.

We must reiterate that in the four years the property has been on the market there has been little interest and no offers. The hotel continues to stay on the market during this application, but no further viewings have been forthcoming.

We are of the view that the asking price has not only been well informed by three independent appraisals, but also the market.

If the hotel were to be rented what would be a fair and reasonable rent?

This was considered however if the hotel were to be leased there would be an ingoing of at least £100,000 and a rent of £36,000 p/a. Therefore, this is not a viable option.

Has there been an independent assessment of the need for hotel accommodation in Downham Market? The application says there is accommodation in Tottenhill and the Timbers. Both of these are at least 5 miles away. Andel Lodge Tottenhill advertises as a King's Lynn venue and the Timbers is a country lodge, not a hotel.

There is alternative holiday accommodation in Downham Market, including the Crown Hotel (18 bedrooms), the Swan Hotel (6 rooms), Style Cottage B&B, Chestnut Villa Guest House and the Dial House Guest House (6 rooms). There is also Pilots Retreat which offers a three bedroomed holiday home.

We also consider the accommodation at the nearby Cherry Tree Air BNB, Andel and the Timbers Hotel, which has approximately 40 rooms, to be a reasonable distance.

It is understood that the Crown has 18 rooms and the Castle has 12 rooms. Which means there is a loss of 40% of hotel accommodation should this application be approved. But the Swan has recently reopened. How many rooms does the Swan have available?

See above. Please also note the rooms available at Style Cottage B&B, Chestnut Villa Guest House and the Dial House Guest House. We also think a radius of 3-5 miles for holiday accommodation is reasonable.

The turnover figures are not consistent in rising or falling. Is there a consistency when the figures are broken down into wet and dry sales and accommodation?

The percentages are 50% accommodation, 30% food and 20% drink. Therefore turnover relates principally to the number of guests staying in rooms. Food and drink remain consistently low and are directly reflective of numbers of guests. The locals do not frequent the hotel for food and drink as much as previous years.

You should also note that within the last 3 months the Castle Hotel has had an occupancy percentage of only 24%.

Third Party: The CASTLE HOTEL contributes in a unique way to the economic activity in the heart of a small town which is slowly becoming a retirement town. It provides employment, facility and a place to meet. Unfortunately it is a fact that licenced premises, pubs, hotels, etc, have a far greater value as residential accommodation, even when the cost of conversion is taken into account, than as "assets of community value", a criteria I am surprised has not been applied to this business. This is in large part due to the reluctance of banks to lend upon 'hospitality' businesses. I have part owned and run two hotels, each larger than this and am interested in coming out of retirement to buy this business, if a deal is possible. The accounts show it is commercially viable, and I am told there has been other interest. The Castle Hotel is uniquely placed in the commercial centre of Downham Market and upon planning criteria I would question the placing of residential flats in the middle of a business area where 'creeping' residential use will reduce the viability of other businesses.

Assistant Director's comments: Cllr Joyce has also raised queries regarding the provision for cycle storage and electric charging units.

Bin and cycle storage is shown as being contained within the main building at ground floor shown on Drawing No. 19082 10-1.

Whilst the NPPF encourages the provision of policies to include electric charging points for motor vehicles, we presently do not have such. This does not prevent the provision if required by residents, but being a listed building, the location and appearance of these points would need careful consideration. Bearing in mind the hotel is in a sustainable location, to seek the provision of these charging points by condition would be disproportionate and unreasonable.

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Agent: Amended site plan (drawing no. H6725/01) submitted to show the garden shed that is located behind the garage.

Assistant Directors' comments: The existing garage has an internal measurement of 3 metres by 6 metres, which is less than the 3 metres by 7 metres usually recommended to accommodate a car and small amount of storage; however, the applicant has a garden shed to the rear of the garage that provides additional storage room.

The Highways Officer has commented that, although the garage is less than the recommended size, the garage is existing and the parking to the frontage of the site is enough.

Given the Highway Officers' comments, the additional storage room available and the fact that there have been no objections from neighbours on parking grounds (or any other matter), the slight shortfall in the size of the garage would not warrant a recommendation of refusal in this instance.

AMENDED CONDITION:

2. Condition The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

DWG H6725-01A Proposed plans and elevations (received 26th February 2020).

2. Reason For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

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CORRECTION

P63 - Should read:

West Walton Parish Council: REFUSE – supports Walsoken Parish Council's reason for refusal.