

**COMMITTEE DATE:** 11/12/2018

**Application Reference:** 18/0653

WARD: Bloomfield  
DATE REGISTERED: 20/09/18  
LOCAL PLAN ALLOCATION: Defined Inner Area

APPLICATION TYPE: Full Planning Permission  
APPLICANT: Western UK Estates (NW) Ltd

**PROPOSAL:** External alterations and change of use of premises as altered from vacant guesthouse (Use Class C1) to student accommodation (Use Class C4).

**LOCATION:** FORMER SILVERDALE GUEST HOUSE, 75 PALATINE ROAD, BLACKPOOL, FY1 4BX

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**Summary of Recommendation:** Refuse

**CASE OFFICER**

Mr Gary Johnston

**BLACKPOOL COUNCIL PLAN 2015 -2020**

This application accords with **Priority one of the Plan** - The economy: Maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool but does not accord with **Priority two of the Plan** - Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience.

**SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION**

The property is within a Main Holiday Accommodation Area but has been vacant for a number of years and is in poor condition. The block in which it is situated does not exhibit a strong holiday character, being towards the eastern end of the section of Palatine Road between Central Drive and Park Road and hence its loss from holiday use would not detract from the character and appearance of the block and the re-use would upgrade the property.

On balance the viability information shows that continued use as a guesthouse/hotel would not be viable and use for other holiday uses such as holiday flats would not be viable. However there is no need for additional student accommodation to support Blackpool and the Fylde College or Blackpool Victoria Hospital and this weighs heavily against the proposal. The standard of accommodation would be appropriate but it would add to the existing student accommodation at this end of Palatine Road and there are issues with existing student accommodation in terms of conflict with the holiday accommodation uses at this end of Palatine Road which could be exacerbated by this proposal. The application is therefore recommended for refusal due to the lack of need and the potential to exacerbate existing

amenity issues. The proposal is considered to be contrary to paras 124-127 of the National Planning Policy Framework, Policies CS7 and CS13 of the Blackpool Local Plan Part 1 Core Strategy, Policies HN5, BH3 and BH24 of the Blackpool Local Plan and the Student Accommodation Advice Note.

## **INTRODUCTION**

This application follows on from a pre-application enquiry regarding the use of the premises as flats. The applicant has been advised that the property is within a Main Holiday Accommodation Area and hence there is presumption against permanent residential use except in exceptional circumstances.

## **SITE DESCRIPTION**

This application relates to a vacant guesthouse on the southern side of Palatine Road. The property is within the Main Holiday Accommodation Area 4 (MH4) as set out in the Council's Holiday Accommodation Supplementary Planning Document (2017). It is part of a group of eight properties on the southern side of the road. It is a mid-terrace property which is part rendered and part brickwork with an angled bay window at ground floor level and shares a decorative gable frontage with no 77 Palatine Road. The front garden area is enclosed by a low wall.

The eight properties in this part of the Main Holiday Accommodation Area are:

- 63-65 Palatine Road - Hazelwood Guesthouse
- 67 Palatine Road - no signage since 2009
- 69 Palatine Road - former Sancta Maria Holiday Flats (no signage since 2014)
- 71 Palatine Road - Glen Stuart hotel
- 73 Palatine Road - Brooklyn Hotel (no signage since 2017)
- 75 Palatine Road - application property
- 77 Palatine Road - no signage since 2009

So externally there appear to be only 2 trading hotels within the block. There is however a stronger presence of hotels and guesthouses on the northern side of Palatine Road

## **DETAILS OF PROPOSAL**

The application is to convert this disused hotel to student accommodation. It is proposed that the accommodation would house six students. The ground floor would accommodate the communal facilities with the first and second floors each containing three study bedrooms. Four of the bedrooms would have en-suites with two on the second floor sharing a bathroom. A single storey flat roofed extension would be demolished to provide a yard area incorporating cycle storage and bin storage

The application is accompanied by reports relating to the condition of the property and the non-viability of holiday use of the property (hotel and holiday flats) and a management plan.

## **MAIN PLANNING ISSUES**

The main planning issues are considered to be:

- principle of the development
- standard of accommodation
- impact on amenity
- impact on highway safety

These issues will be discussed in the assessment section of this report.

## **CONSULTATIONS**

**Head of Highways and Traffic Management:** No objection.

## **PUBLICITY AND REPRESENTATIONS**

Site notice displayed: 26 September 2018

Neighbours notified: 21 September 2018

Objections to the proposal have been received from the following-

### **Mr G Sheikh, 74 Palatine Road, Blackpool**

I received a letter from you to obtain comments about this proposed change of use of former Silverdale guest house. This property is situated right opposite to mine 74 Palatine Road, Blackpool FY1 4BY.

There are already lot of student accommodation properties in this area. My very next door property is a student accommodation and we suffer the nuisance and disturbance all the time. These people are young, more energetic, less considerate and do whatever they want at any time without giving any regard to their neighbours. They arrange frequent parties which usually last until dawn.

Having one more property right in front of me where all this would happen is strongly against the interests of this community.

Therefore I am writing to oppose this planning permission.

If it stays the same (guest house), although it would increase the number of competitors that I am facing but I believe it would still be better for a community.

Please note that if a bad guest comes to a guest house, he is gone in a day or two. However if a bad student comes in a student accommodation, the minimum his neighbours would suffer the torture is six months.

Therefore, please be considerate about the local community and do not give permission for this proposed change of use.

**Mr Stuart King, 3A Palatine Road, Blackpool**

I object for two reasons, student saturation and the fact the property is in the holiday zone.

Student Saturation - the college has an oversupply of accommodation. All proposals for student accommodation must be accompanied by a letter from Blackpool and the Fylde College to confirm that the accommodation proposed would be included on its property register. No such letter accompanies this application.

Student SPD states: In these areas holiday accommodation is still viable and, as such, the change of use to permanent residential accommodation, including student accommodation, is not permitted.

Holiday Zone - Unlike other developments within the holiday zone no attempt has been given to produce a business plan to argue the case for unviability. The surveyors report does nothing other than highlight the costs involved in refurbishment to function as a guesthouse which arguably would be more or less the same for conversion to students.

No cash flow forecast has been produced.

No Viability template (Council's own template) which the Council insisted with Hornby Road and all further holiday zone applications.

No financial viability assessment has been completed.

There is no history of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) at the property.

Refuse is also stored out the front of the property and will be of detrimental impact to the street scene.

Bedroom 2 and 5 are undersized for a study bedroom of 12sqm and with the pitched roof on bed 5 it is very undersized. Policy states: The provision of bedrooms or main living areas in the roofspace of properties will only be permitted where at least half of the floorspace has a head height of 2.14 metres or more. Floorspace with a head height of 1.52 metres or less will not be counted towards the calculation of floorspace and study bedrooms will be 12sqm.

One cycle per bedroom but only four are detailed.

Because of all the above I object to this proposal and seeing as it does not conform to policy I'm sure the Council will have no issue with refusing permission. A guesthouse, residential house or potentially two flats would be a far better development proposal for the local community and Blackpool.

A letter of support has been received from -

**Mrs McGrath, 73 Palatine Road, Blackpool**

With regard to the above planning application. As the next property we have had several issues with the empty property. Environmental health is coming out tomorrow. We have just paid to have their gutters cleaned as the balcony was leaking because of this. We have no objection to the property being changed for student use. Provided there will be no DHSS residents as has happened in other properties on this road.

The issues raised will be discussed in the assessment part of this report

**NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK**

The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) retains the key objective of achieving sustainable development and hence there is a presumption that planning applications proposing sustainable development will be approved. It provides advice on a range of topics and is a material planning consideration in the determination of planning applications. The parts most relevant to this application are -

- 5. Delivering a sufficient supply of homes**
- 8. Promoting healthy and safe communities**
- 9. Promoting sustainable transport**
- 11. Making effective use of land**
- 12. Achieving well-designed places**

**BLACKPOOL LOCAL PLAN PART 1: CORE STRATEGY**

The Blackpool Local Plan: Part 1 - Core Strategy was adopted by the Council in January 2016. The policies in the Core Strategy that are most relevant to this application are -

- Policy CS1 - strategic location of development**
- Policy CS2 - housing provision**
- Policy CS7 - quality of design**
- Policy CS12 - sustainable neighbourhoods**
- Policy CS13 - housing mix standards and density**
- Policy CS23 - managing holiday bed spaces**

**SAVED POLICIES: BLACKPOOL LOCAL PLAN 2001-2016**

The Blackpool Local Plan was adopted in June 2006. A number of policies in the Blackpool Local Plan (2006) have now been superseded by policies in the Core Strategy (these are listed in Appendix B of the Core Strategy). Other policies in the Blackpool Local Plan are saved until the Local Part 2: Site Allocations and Development Management Policies is produced.

The following policies are most relevant to this application:

**Policy AS1 - general highway considerations**

**Policy BH3 - residential and visitor amenity**

**Policy LQ14 - extensions and alterations**

**Policy HN5 - conversions**

**Policy BH24 - homes/institutions**

**Holiday Accommodation SPD**

**Student Accommodation Advice Note**

## **ASSESSMENT**

### **Principle of the development**

There are two components to this - the property is within a Main Holiday Accommodation Area and there is the question of whether there is a need for additional student accommodation. In terms of the property being within the Main Holiday Accommodation Area MH4, Policy CS23 of the Core Strategy and the Holiday Accommodation Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) are relevant. The SPD states that change of use will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances where:

- 1) Suitable evidence is provided to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Council that the business is no longer viable and has no reasonable prospect of continuing as holiday accommodation; and*
- 2) The proposed use is compatible with the holiday accommodation uses in the street and provides regeneration benefits to the immediate area.*

In this case the property has been vacant for some time - around five years - and in that time it has deteriorated. The current owner purchased the property approximately 12 months ago. As part of this application a Surveyor's Report has been submitted and it has been undertaken by independent property surveyors Duxbury's Commercial. The report details the state of deterioration of the building, which is not habitable at present, and the significant cost of the renovation needed to bring the building back into an operational guest house use. It is also clear from the report that to simply reinstate the former configuration would not reflect the expectations of present day holiday makers and therefore make it difficult to attract guests. It would need to be reconfigured to provide en-suite accommodation which would add to the cost of refurbishment.

The Surveyor's Report also includes viability information relating to the property. In the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) it is recognised that the level of information needed for a viability case should reflect the scale of the loss of holiday accommodation (in this case assumed to be four-five guest rooms, allowing one bedroom for on-site management). The Report identifies a total cost of refurbishment back into a useable guest house as £113,500. This cost does not take into account the cost of the asset itself, in its current form. The total value of the asset, following a refurbishment programme and the guest house being operational, is estimated at £110,000-£115,000. This, it is suggested, is not a viable

proposition. The applicant's agent was asked to provide information on alternative forms of holiday accommodation as this did not feature in the original report. The addendum to the report considers conversion to holiday flats and also conversion to a single dwelling. It suggests that holiday flats would not be viable as the conversion costs would exceed the value. A similar case is suggested for conversion to a dwelling although it is felt that the conversion costs quoted are high when compared to conversion to a guesthouse. On balance it is felt that the viability argument has been demonstrated.

The second criteria in the SPD is that the proposed use would be compatible with the holiday accommodation uses in the street and the proposal would provide regeneration benefits. The visual assessment of the uses in the block containing 75 Palatine Road is as follows:

63-65 Palatine Road - Hazelwood Guesthouse  
67 Palatine Road - no signage since 2009  
69 Palatine Road - former Sancta Maria Holiday Flats (no signage since 2014)  
71 Palatine Road - Glen Stuart hotel  
73 Palatine Road - Brooklyn Hotel (no signage since 2017)  
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This part of Palatine Road is close to the College and other permissions for student accommodation have been granted for properties between this block and Park Road to the east. It is considered that a non-holiday accommodation use would be compatible with the uses in this block on the southern side of Palatine Road but not necessarily in terms of both sides of the road and this is covered in more detail in the amenity section of the report.

In terms of the need for student accommodation, the two key sources are Blackpool and the Fylde College (Palatine campus) and Blackpool Victoria Hospital. Contact has been made with both. The College no longer places students, it provides them with a list of landlords who manage properties that the College has vetted in terms of the quality of the accommodation. In terms of the Hospital it has medical students (in the region of 30-40) who are at the hospital for 10 month periods. These can be accommodated on site. The evidence appears to suggest that there is not a strong demand for accommodation. This is borne out by the number of planning applications and enquiries for student accommodation. Since 2011 when the Holiday Accommodation SPD was first adopted the position has been as follows -

2011 - six applications and one enquiry  
2012 - four applications  
2013 - six applications and one enquiry  
2014 - no applications or enquiries  
2015 - one application  
2016 - one enquiry  
2017 - no applications or enquiries  
2018 - one application (75 Palatine Road)

The lack of need for additional student accommodation weighs against the proposal.

## **Standard of accommodation**

The accommodation would comprise a lounge/dining room (28 sq metres) and kitchen/diner (20 sq metres) on the ground floor, three en-suite study bedrooms on the first floor (11, 18 and 19 sq metres in size) and one en-suite study bedroom (18 sq metres) and two study bedrooms (11 and 12 sq metres) and a shared bathroom on the second floor. In terms of the 2007 Student Accommodation Advice Note on the Council's website the six study bedrooms are the maximum which could share the communal facilities. The communal facilities would exceed the floorspace requirements in the advice note by some margin and the bedrooms would meet the standard. There would be external amenity space at the rear including cycle storage. Bin storage is shown at the front but could be relocated to the rear yard.

One of the objectors refers to the accommodation not meeting the standards in the Student Accommodation Advice Note. He is referring to an updated version which has not been published on the Council's website and hence the application has been assessed against the website version which was used to assess his application for student accommodation at 13 Reads Avenue.

## **Impact on amenity**

The application is accompanied by a management plan which should ensure that the premises are maintained in a clean and tidy condition. The management plan would not control the activities of the occupants of the property. One of the objectors refers to issues with student accommodation on the opposite side of Palatine Road. The northern side of Palatine Road exhibits a stronger holiday accommodation character and it could be argued that the lifestyle of students is not necessarily compatible with the needs of holidaymakers. It is felt that an additional six students could exacerbate existing issues of conflict and would not assist in creating a balanced community. It is therefore felt that this weighs against the proposal.

## **Impact on highway safety**

The application site is within walking distance of the College and four cycle parking spaces would be provided in the rear yard. Although no off street car parking is proposed, it is not considered that the use of the premises would have a detrimental impact on highway safety.

## **CONCLUSION**

The property is within a Main Holiday Accommodation Area but has been vacant for a number of years and is in poor condition. The block in which it is situated does not exhibit a strong holiday character, being towards the eastern end of the section of Palatine Road between Central Drive and Park Road and hence its loss from holiday use would not detract from the character and appearance of the block and the re-use would upgrade the property.

On balance the viability information shows that continued use as a guesthouse/hotel would not be viable and use for other holiday uses such as holiday flats would not be viable.

However there is no need for additional student accommodation to support Blackpool and the Fylde College or Blackpool Victoria Hospital and this weighs heavily against the proposal. The standard of accommodation would be appropriate but it would add to the existing student accommodation at this end of Palatine Road and there are issues with existing student accommodation in terms of conflict with the holiday accommodation uses at this end of Palatine Road which could be exacerbated by this proposal. The application is therefore recommended for refusal due to the lack of need and the potential to exacerbate existing amenity issues. The proposal is considered to be contrary to paras 124-127 of the National Planning Policy Framework, Policies CS7 and CS13 of the Blackpool Local Plan Part 1 Core Strategy, Policies HN5, BH3 and BH24 of the Blackpool Local Plan and the Student Accommodation Advice Note.

### **LEGAL AGREEMENT AND/OR DEVELOPER FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION**

None

### **HUMAN RIGHTS ACT**

Under Article eight and Article one of the first protocol to the Convention on Human Rights, a person is entitled to the right to respect for private and family life, and the peaceful enjoyment of his/her property. However, these rights are qualified in that they must be set against the general interest and the protection of the rights and freedoms of others. It is not considered that the application raises any human rights issues.

### **CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998**

The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the Council's general duty, in all its functions, to have regard to community safety issues as required by section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Planning Application File(s) 18/0653 which can be accessed via the link below:

<https://idoxpa.blackpool.gov.uk/online-applications/search.do?action=simple>

**Recommended Decision:** Refuse

## Reasons for Refusal

1. The proposal would introduce further student accommodation to Palatine Road and there is no demonstrable need for such accommodation. As such the proposal would be contrary Policies CS12 and CS23 of the Blackpool Local Plan Part 1 Core Strategy 2012-2027 and Policies BH24 and HN5 of the Blackpool Local Plan 2001-2016 and the Council's Student Accommodation Advice Note.
2. The proposal would introduce further student accommodation into Palatine Road to the detriment of the amenities of the occupiers of the remaining hotels and guesthouses in the road through increased noise and disturbance. As such the proposal would be contrary to paras 124-127 of the National Planning Policy Framework, Policies CS7 and CS12 of the Blackpool Local Plan Part 1 Core Strategy 2012-2027 and Policies HN5 and BH3 of the Blackpool Local Plan 2001-2016 and the Council's Student Accommodation Advice Note.
3. **ARTICLE 35 STATEMENT (NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK para 38)**

The Local Planning Authority has sought to secure a sustainable development that would improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of Blackpool but in this case there are considered factors which conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework and policies of the Blackpool Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy 2012-2027 and the Blackpool Local Plan 2001-2016 and the Council's Student Accommodation Advice Note, which justify refusal.

## Advice Notes to Developer

Not applicable