

APPLICATION 14/0891 OBJECTION FROM CREWES ORIGINAL HOTEL

We wish to object to the planning application on the following grounds.

The Waverley Hotel @ 199 Promenade does not operate as a functioning Hotel . They decided to run a cafe serving food and alcohol to non residents in 1987. Planning permission was not sought. They did not seek a liquor licence to sell alcohol to non residents. They have not run the Hotel since we arrived in 2000. We spoke with Mr Johnson @ Blackpool Council in 2011 and he said he would investigate this disparity. No answers were provided. It was only when we contacted our MP, The Right Honourable Mr Marsden, in 2013, that Gary Johnston admitted;

"The council were aware of it in 1988 when an application for an ice cream kiosk was considered."

He also stated that;

"NO PLANNING APPLICATION WAS SUBMITTED FOR CAFE USE"

He also stated, in response to our letter to Mr Marsden;

"We have recently investigated the use of no 199 Promenade in response to allegations that it was being used as a separate cafe and dwelling. A visit in February 2013 revealed the ground floor and part first floor is the cafe and the remainder of the property (with the exception of the owners accommodation) is laid out as an unused/non trading hotel. As the Council determined in 1987 that the cafe could be used by residents and non residents and there was no evidence of the whole of the rest of the property being used as a dwelling the case was closed (12/8547).

One only has to check the Internet to see that The Waverley does not operate as a Hotel. There are no entries other than for the cafe. If it was operating as a Hotel there would be a website, entries in business listings and search engines. There is not even a phone number or e mail addresses for reservation enquiries. A Hotel cannot run like this. It would also have reviews on Trip Advisor.

The only listings for The Waverley are as a restaurant or cafe. All the reviews for the premises are for the food service.

We are still confused as to why the Waverley has been able to change its use without planning permission and with no satisfactory answers from Blackpool Council. It is simply unacceptable that planning permission can now be granted to greatly extend The Waverley cafe when no permission has ever been granted for it to be a cafe in the first place. The Waverley is still shown as a Hotel. Perhaps annual accounts may shed light on this.

We will also address the relevant issues in your letter dated 17.3.2015.

1. Impact on the character of the area and whether the use is appropriate.

Your letter says that objections will be considered based on policies of the Blackpool Local Plan and Government policy.

There are already a significant number of documents in existence which categorically state that the planning application is against local and national plans.

Mr Gary Johnston from Blackpool council stated on 19.12.2011 that;

" use of the ground floor of the premises as a restaurant/ cafe would conflict with policies BH17 and RR7 of the Blackpool Plan.... Property located within a terrace of hotels/ guesthouses which exhibit a strong holiday character and the aim of the policies is to consolidate this holiday function AND TO DIRECT RESTAURANTS AND CAFES TO EXISTING SHOPPING FRONTAGES where they will add vitality to the mix of retail and commercial uses.

The introduction of a restaurant/ cafe to this Promenade frontage would make it more difficult to resist other similar uses which would dilute the character of the hotel orientated section of The Promenade and detract from the vitality of existing frontages"

On 19.12.2011 the planning application 11/0809 was refused with the view that;

" The introduction of a cafe on the prominent hotel terrace is contrary to policies BH17 and RR7"
Mr Johnson also stated

" no need for the unit in this location has been demonstrated which would override the concerns for the holiday character of the area and the risk of setting a precedent. Given the extent of The Golden Mile, the Piers, existence of sporadic cafes along the Promenade, there is no shortage of choice for residents and visitors in the vicinity of The Promenade".

National, existing local and emerging local plan policies all indicate that new uses within A classes should be located in established Town, District and Local Centres in order to sustain these areas".

"Only if there is an over riding need. There are no suitable empty units in nearby shopping centres and that no harm to the character of the area or to residential properties"

He also stated that

"Any planning application for a cafe use at 201 or 203 Promenade now would be judged against the policies of The Local Plan. Hence the reason the application @ 201 Promenade was refused."

The circumstances relating to the cafe have not changed. Indeed, the new owners wish to significantly increase the size to accommodate 180 covers over two floors, including an outside area with 48 covers. This is totally inappropriate and contravenes several local and national policies.

2. The possibility of more noise or disturbance.

199 Promenade has been trading as a cafe, without planning permission or relevant licences for 28 years. The cafe @ 201 Promenade also ran without change of use/ planning permission for several years whilst the Hotel @ 201 remained derelict and in an extremely poor state of repair, since the fire in 2007.

Following several years of trading @ 201 Promenade and numerous appeals, the case was finally dismissed by the Secretary of State reference J2 373/a/12/2169717. The reasons were;

"Customers using the appeal site frontage late at night, when the surroundings are otherwise likely to be relatively quiet, are likely to cause a noticeable increase in the levels of noise experienced by residents of neighbouring properties, conflicting with the aims of LP RR7, BH17 and BH3.

Policy BH3 states;

" development would not be permitted which would adversely affect the amenity of those occupying visitor accommodation by such things as scale, design and use of purpose".

Interestingly, The owners of The Waverley who are seeking to run a similar operation, appealed against the previous owners activities, citing;

"the premises @ 201 is operating at night and this causes nuisance to the residents of The Waverley and Crewes Hotel"

It is incredible to believe that despite their acceptance of the noise disturbance caused to our guests, The Waverley now seek to run the cafe themselves. Not only that, but they wish to quadruple the size of their existing cafe to 180 covers!!! This is a huge cafe and the propensity for disturbance is considerable.

They also seek a non residential alcohol licence from 10 am all until 11 pm.

In addition the proposal includes 80 covers in a proposed dining area adjacent to our own owners accommodation bedrooms. The buildings are Victorian and the potential noise levels could be extreme. If the cafe closed at 11, activities could continue into the early hours and would adversely affect our ability to sleep. Our own property shuts at 11 pm and no noise is heard from outside the premises after this time.

The Crewes Original Hotel and The Earlsway Hotel to our left , are both quiet Hotels and we do not have noisy residents sitting outside or in our bar late at night. The proposal for a huge, late night cafe serving alcohol is totally inappropriate. If we are trying to enhance the perceptions of Blackpool as a premier visitor destination, then this can only have a detrimental effect.

Similarly, 48 covers on the outside patio area are totally unacceptable at any time of day. Our guests cannot sit on our patio area and relax with a fast food cafe directly next to them. The Waverley have already doubled the size of their outside patio area. They already obstruct our signage and place a large ice cream kiosk directly next to our patio, so that all our guests can see is queues of people lining up to buy goods from the vendor. Hardly a relaxing atmosphere and hard to enjoy the view.

We also have twelve guest bedrooms to the front of the Hotel, many of which are family rooms. By allowing this enormous cafe, our guests will be adversely affected by increased noise disturbance, caused by the sheer scale, coupled with an alcohol being freely served all day. There is very little difference between this and a public house with an external patio area, except that a public house has clear legislative guidelines and door staff.

In one of the council e mails to the applicants, a question was asked as to how the cafe would be managed. There are already serious questions about the management of the current establishment. One only has to check Trip advisor to see the common thread of poor management. The following are direct quotes from Trip Advisor,

"The manageress was obnoxious, rude and arrogant"

"Bad management, rude management, what a shame!!!"

" the manager is the most rude and obnoxious person I have ever met. We have always experienced her lack of people skills and her rudeness to staff.. I am surprised she has never had a tribunal case against her for bullying"

" The staff ... Always seem to be looking over their shoulder for the bullying manageress who clearly needs re training in people skills and customer skills and customer service"

"A note to the manageress, you are rude, ignorant and unprofessional"

non starter... I still cannot believe they do not accept credit card payments or anything other than cash".

"Don't bother, over paid rubbish".

Historical evidence is always the best indicator of future performance. These reviews are the unbiased views of patrons. Clearly there are already management issues which can only be exacerbated by a larger operation.

3. Effect on highway safety and Parking:

By introducing a 180 seat cafe, there is the potential for chaotic parking implications. There are already drastic reductions to parking areas for our guests due to the new Foxhall Village Development, which is immediately behind the Hotel. Parking is already at a premium and any additional pressures would have an adverse effect on holiday makers. The only car park in the Area which was at Blundell Street has also been demolished and parking is very difficult.

There is also a loading bay outside the properties on The promenade. This is the only place that our guests can stop to unload their luggage. During last season we were forced to contact Parking Enforcement on a number of occasions when vehicles relating to The Waverley were parked there indefinitely. This problem can only get worse with the proposed cafe and could cause huge problems on a busy stretch of the Promenade.

4. Additional Factors For Consideration

A. Why was a revised alcohol licence not requested or enforced?

The Waverley cafe only has an alcohol licence for a residential Hotel, and for serving guests only. They have been able to serve members of the public with alcohol without the correct licence for 27 years. We have questioned both the planning and licence issue many times and are frustrated by the lack of straight answers.

When we sought to serve food and alcohol to non residents we had to change our licence and present a case to a team of Magistrates, Police, Council members and the fire Service. They, clearly, did not.

Mr a Johnston stated in his letter to Mr Marsden dated 30 July 2013:

"They have a licence for alcohol consumption on the premises."

C. Poor condition of property @ 201 Promenade.

The property has been in a poor state of repair since the fire in 2007. Nothing has been done to repair the internal structure of the building. The party wall between the two properties has never been fixed and still causes us problems with extreme dampness in poor weather, to the extent that several rooms are out of action in winter months.

We have tried to get this remedied but without success. On 16.4.13 Ms Greenway wrote,

"The new owners do not wish to use the ground floor of the property as a cafe but may use the forecourt only as extra seating for the existing cafe @ 199 Promenade. Colleagues in the Planning dept do not have any issue with this as it is seen to be enabling money to be raised to carry out

work to The Manor and refurbish the Hotel. The decision will be reviewed in twelve months as it is only deemed to be acceptable as a temporary measure and if no works are carried out to refurbish the Manor back to a functioning Hotel, we would seek to cease the use of the forecourt for this use".

Nothing has been done since April 2013 to restore the property. Indeed our own Hotel has suffered considerable damage due to their inaction. In December 2013 we contacted Mr Steve Flint and explained our concerns. Due to the decrepit state of the gutters to the rear of the Manor our owners accommodation has suffered from damp, to the extent that two of the bedrooms could not be used. We paid over £1000 to have the walks re plastered and for damp proofing to the walls. Mr Flint visited our Hotel and saw the damage. We also raised our concerns re planning permission, lack of refurbishment and licensing concerns. We explained that we had already met with Gary Johnston and Doug Garrett and that nothing had been achieved. Mr Flint said that he would investigate and get back to us. Despite e mails and phone calls he never responded.

We have also placed two footballs into large holes in the side wall of 201 Promenade to stop pigeons going in. The extraction system pipes are still hanging out of the side wall next to our property.

We also sent photos to Blackpool Council when we were on the roof and saw dangerous slates hanging precariously over the edge of 201 Promenade. If we had not contacted Environmental Services and had the slates removed, somebody on the forecourt below, could have been killed.

Mr Flint did inform The Waverley to repair the gutter. They did not. A handyman was instructed to clear the gutter but not repair it. Lack of proper repairs has led to damp continuing to affect our accommodation. This is simply unacceptable.

It is clear from historical evidence, that the only viable asset to our neighbours is the cafe.

E. Environmental concerns.

There is a small alley way which runs along the back of 199 to 205 Promenade and services four Hotels. This is accessed by way of a gate by the Waverley. This area is supposed to be a thoroughfare for stock to be delivered and as an additional exit in the event of fire. Clearly this should be kept clear and unobstructed. In their submissions, the Waverley claim refuse will be removed daily. The cafe is only open at weekends currently but they store a large refuse bin in the alleyway. The area around the bin is strewn with litter, food cartons and beer kegs. This is clearly both a health hazard and a fire safety issue. If they are unable to contain their refuse at the moment it is questionable whether they would bother to do so with a considerably larger operation.

There are also serious concerns re allowing holiday accommodation guests access to the rear alleyway. This causes security and fire concerns to neighbouring residence. The gate at the end of the alleyway needs to remain shut. If it is not then drug addicts use the area.

Conclusion.

The owners of 199 Promenade did not have permission to change from an A1 Hotel to a C3 cafe. They do not trade as a Hotel and have not for many years. They now seek to massively expand their current operation, and if this is granted it is surely against all legal processes in place. The scale of the project is totally inappropriate. The impact on neighbouring properties with regard to noise and disturbance are significant. The quality of our guest experience will be greatly impeded.

The impact on parking in the vicinity is great cause for concern and will exacerbate an already dire parking problem.

Your letter asking for our views says that the most important consideration is what Blackpool Local Plan states. As we have shown, decisions to refuse the cafe, let alone expand it, are based on local and national plans. The Secretary of State has also refused an application for the same premises.

If this application is granted it will be a perverse decision. The Waverley do not have permission for the existing cafe or the relevant alcohol licence. They cannot simply be allowed to continue to undertake illegal procedures without any ramifications. To grant this planning permission would be unjust and we would seek further recourse.

The owners of The Waverley have done nothing to the existing premises for two years and have caused us duress and significant damage to our property. We are Former winners of Hotel of the Year , are three star quality accredited and always seek to do things properly.

We will fight any actions to allow planning permission for the cafe.

We would like confirmation of receipt of our objections. We would also like to be informed of the date, time and location of the Planning Committee meeting as we wish to attend.

William and Debra Laws
Crewes Original Hotel
203 Promenade,
Blackpool.
Sent from my iPad