

Highway Response

Ref: 23/703
Case Officer: Jacob Cooke

Date: 21/08/23

PROPOSAL: CONVERSION OF THE UPPER FLOORS OF EXISTING HOTEL TO CREATE 10NO. RESIDENTIAL APARTMENTS AND ASSOCIATED EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL WORKS

SITE: West of England Hotel 42 Mill Parade Newport NP20 2JS

Highway Officer: Kevin Jackson

Highway Recommendation:

Objection on grounds of parking and sustainability policies.

Highway Comments:

The key issues in terms of highways are car and cycle parking.

The cycle parking shown on the plans is impractical and inadequate in terms of volume and quality. The requirement would be 1 space per flat plus (separate) provision for staff and visitors.

Sheffield style racks are required for inclusion and security. Wall brackets do not serve all abilities or bike types and do not offer adequate security.

Furthermore, the space dedicated to cycle parking is insufficient to manoeuvre bikes in.

In terms of parking, the plans show a car park set out for approximately 22 spaces. One of these appears to be intended for disabled users, but no dimensions are given for any spaces and would be required to establish if they are acceptable. The disability space must have a 1.2m aisle for loading/safety to one end and side. This is not provided, so there is no disability provision.

The aisle for manoeuvring in/out of spaces must be a minimum of 6m to allow for reversing etc and those at the ends would not be usable at all.

There is no proposal for electric vehicle charging which would be required with some full provision and potential for all units to be provided for in due course.

The submission suggests that there should be a reduction in parking provision and makes reference to Newport's standards. It is not clear exactly what standard has been applied and Highways do not accept the sustainability assessment.

The site falls within zone 3 for parking (not 2 as the D&A suggests).

The submitted assessment states:

"This parking assessment has been prepared to support the application of change of use from A3 with residential above to apartments and bedsits to dwellings at the former West of England public house site. The existing combined space on the first and second floor is 117m² entertainment/ events which requires 4 parking spaces as per the Newport Parking Standards SPG (1 space per 35m²) and 6 rooms for letting or management 1 space per room another 6. (total 10 spaces) The proposed change of use will create x 2 no. studio apartments, and 8 no. 1 bed flats. This will require the need for 12 parking spaces (1 per bedroom + 1 per 5 units for visitors) When adjusted for sustainability therefore the proposed apartments will require 1 less space than the existing use. A parking sustainability assessment has been carried out below that justifies a further reduction of two parking spaces required bringing the total down to 7 spaces resulting in a net reduction in parking demand by 3 spaces from the existing use."

To establish the "existing requirement" we would assume a combination of hotel and public house standards. To do this we would need to understand staffing levels and public areas. Both require a commercial space, but we would assume that is one commercial space; not one each.

For the hotel 1 per 3 non-resident staff plus 1 per room is needed. We would estimate 6 spaces for the existing element.

For the pub' we would assume 1 for staff and 1/3sqm of public areas. For simplicity we would assume both bars and the function room and dining room. These appear to have been reduced by 250sqm, but it is not clear how much of this was public areas.

It is not clear why the applicant has adopted a standard of 1/35sqm for the upper floors.

All we can say at this stage is that there will be 12 residential spaces needed where there had been 6 residential spaces. The worst case then is 6 additional spaces required (pending information detailing other changes).

The existing car park does not appear to have been marked out so it is not clear what the existing off road provision was. The information provided with the application suggest there would only be parking for around 12 vehicles. This would suggest that the "existing provision" was already heavily dependant on on street parking. This should be taken into account if there is a reliance on on street parking. On this basis we could not accept that there is parking available on street to make up any shortfall. It does appear however that there would be some capacity in the adjacent public car park.

Should the applicant wish to rely on the public parking an assessment /survey would be needed to support the application.

The sustainability assessment does not include information regarding the locations of facilities or bus service information. It includes 2 points for a health facility that is outside the parameters and 1 point for a cycle route that is not identified/known. Three further points for the frequency of buses, with nothing to support this.

If the applicant wishes to rely on a sustainability assessment it must be fully supported with relevant information, but it is clear that the calculation is currently wrong anyway.

The applicant has suggested that there is a discrepancy in terms of site boundary/car park area and that there's additional space within ownership that is not surfaced. We would suggest that if the car park is enlarged it would help to provide additional spaces. It could (subject to confirmation of dimensions) be sufficient to provide the 22 spaces previously suggested (ref dwg SD72 01).

In summary, Highways do not accept that there is sufficient parking, but there is potential to extend the car park and provide sufficient space (subject to confirmation of dimensions and changes in parking demand). Infrastructure for electric vehicle charging will also have to be provided to remove further objection.

In addition, cycle parking must be provided to an acceptable standard and quantity to remove the other objection. This requires additional space and changes to the layout.