



An
Bord
Pleanála

Inspector's Report PL61.247568.

Development

Construction of single storey rear extension, first and second floor extension, change of use from bar/restaurant to 13 ensuite bedrooms, and conversion of attic 6 ensuite bedrooms.

Location

Glen Oaks Hotel, Bishop O' Connell Road, Galway.

Planning Authority

Galway City Council.

Planning Authority Reg. Ref.

16/247.

Applicant(s)

Michael Mc Grath.

Type of Application

Permission.

Planning Authority Decision

Grant.

Type of Appeal

Third Party

Appellant(s)

Grainne O'Toole.

Observer(s)

None.

Date of Site Inspection

18th of January 2017

Inspector

Karen Hamilton.

1.0 Site Location and Description

1.1. The subject site is located to the west of Galway City and currently operates as the Glen Oaks Hotel. The site faces directly onto the Bishop O' Donnell Road which is a busy dual carriageway in Galway. The carpark for the hotel is accessed via a local road and it is located to the rear of the site. The site is surrounded by residential properties which are high to medium density and range in style and type.

2.0 Proposed Development

2.1. The proposed development includes for alterations and extension to an existing hotel as summarised below:

- Construction of a single storey rear extension (56m²)
- Change of use of basement for staff changing (20m²)
- Construction on enclosed rear yard (13m²)
- Change of use of ground floor bar and restaurant (357m²) to 13 bedrooms
- Construction of two storey extension (164m²)
- Conversion of attic for 6 bedrooms
- Extension of 2 no fire escape stairwells to the attic.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision

Decision to grant permission for the proposed development.

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

3.2.1. Planning Reports

The report of the area planner reflects the decision to grant permission and justifies the appropriate plot ratio/ site coverage and quantifies the required parking spaces.

3.2.2. Other Technical Reports

Drainage Section- No objection subject to conditions.

3.3. Prescribed Bodies

Irish Water- No objection.

Health Service Executive- No objection.

3.4. Third Party Observations

One observation received from the appellant which requested to be informed of the final decision.

4.0 Planning History

98/351

Permission granted for the redevelopment of overall site including the adjoining Ragoon flats and inclusion of a 36-bedroom hotel.

5.0 Policy Context

5.1. Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023.

The site is zoned as Residential; *“To provide for residential development and for associated support development, which will ensure the protection of existing residential amenity and will contribute to sustainable residential neighbourhoods.”*

- Uses which may contribute to the zoning objective include hotel, guesthouses and B&Bs.

Section 11.3.1 Outer Suburbs

- Non-residential development on distributor roads or other major access roads where commercial development will contribute to the quality of urban design and is otherwise acceptable will be considered for a plot ratio higher than 1:1.

Section 11.1.10.1 Parking Requirement.

- Hotel- 1 space per bedroom
- Bars and Lounges (including hotel bars) – 1 per 8m² GFA.
- Restaurant- 1 space per 15m² GFA.

5.2. Natural Heritage Designations

The site is located 1.8km from the edge of the Lough Corrib SAC.

6.0 The Appeal

6.1. Grounds of Appeal

The grounds of appeal are submitted from a third party residing more than 2km from the site and may be summarised as follows:

- The proposed development has a plot ratio of 0.84:1 which is outside the permitted plot ration of 0.46:1 on residential lands.
- The elimination of the restaurant and bar area will do little to increase the occupancy of the hotel.
- The proposal is consistent with a hostel and not a hotel as per the normal business of the applicant.
- There is a short fall of 10 parking spaces for the proposed development.
- The provided parking spaces are substandard and do not meet the minimum size. Compliance with the standard would further reduce the number of available spaces.

6.2. Applicant Response

A submission from the agent acting on behalf of the applicant has been received and may be summarised as follows:

- The plot ratio of 0.46:1 in the development plan refers to residential development and therefore there is no breach of permissible plot ratio. Most

proposed works are to the existing structure and the footprint is only increased by 56m².

- It is argued that the bar and restaurant has not been utilised in the past by the residents of the hotel and therefore is a waste of useable space.
- The proposed development is in accordance with “*Failte Ireland National Tourism Development Authority- Minimum requirements- 2-star Hotel Classification Assessment Form*” therefore is developed as a hotel. Reference to other business of the applicant is irrelevant.
- The provision of parking spaces is in line with the requirements of the development plan.

6.3. Planning Authority Response

The response from the planning authority may be summarised as follows:

- The third party submission did not raise any issues at planning application stage and therefore is only attempting to frustrate the planning system.

6.4. Observations

None received.

7.0 Assessment

7.1. The main issues raised in grounds of appeal may be summarised as follows:

- Principle of development.
- Parking Requirement.
- Appropriate Assessment.

Principle of development

7.2. The proposed development includes extension and alterations to an existing hotel. The site is zoned as “residential” in the current development plan which includes hotels as permissible uses dependant on the location and scale. The grounds of appeal argue the principle of extension of the hotel is not permissible as the

proposed plot ratio of 0.8:1 is not within the acceptable limit allowed in the development plan. Section 11.3.1 of the development plan prescribes a density of up to 1:1 for non-residential development acceptable where it adjoins a major access road and contributes to the overall urban design. The subject site faces onto, and is accessed via Bishop O' Donnell Road, a busy bypass in Galway City. I consider the design of the frontage onto the road contributes positively to the overall character of the area.

- 7.3. In addition to the plot ratio the grounds of appeal submit the proposed development is more in line with a hostel rather than the existing hotel. I note the information submitted from the applicant in relation to compliance with Failte Ireland guidance for 2-star accommodation and I note the design of the bedrooms to accommodate two and three beds and I consider the proposed development is in keeping with the characteristics of a hotel.
- 7.4. Therefore, subject to complying with other planning requirements as addressed in the following sections, the principle of the proposal is acceptable.

Parking Requirement

- 7.5. The proposed development includes change of use a bar area to bedrooms and extension of the hotel to accommodate additional bedrooms. The report of the area planner refers to the requirement for 47 car parking spaces for the bedrooms and 10 for the dining/ common room but concludes that as these facilities are for use of the residents they would not generate additional parking requirement. I note the grounds of appeal argue that the planners' assessment is incorrect.
- 7.6. Table 11.10.1 Parking Space Requirement, of the development plan, requires one space per bedroom for a hotel and includes a requirement for a bar, restaurant and function room in a hotel. Based on the size, location and layout of the proposed common room I do not consider the use is intended for visiting members of the public and therefore a parking requirement of one space per bedroom (47) is sufficient. I consider a condition restricting the use of the common room for residents of the hotel reasonable to ensure traffic safety.

Appropriate Assessment

- 7.7. The subject site is located 1.8km from the edge of the Lough Corrib SAC although, having regard to the nature and scale of the proposed development within a serviced

urban area, no Appropriate Assessment issues arise and it is not considered that the proposed development would be likely to have a significant effect individually or in combination with other plans or projects on the conservation objectives of any European site.

8.0 Recommendation

- 8.1. I recommend that planning permission should be granted, subject to conditions, as set out below.

9.0 Reasons and Considerations

Having regard to the zoning objective, the nature and scale of the proposed development, the current use on the site and the policies of the current Galway City Development Plan it is considered that subject to compliance with the conditions below, the proposed development would not seriously injure the residential or visual amenity of the area or endanger public safety by reason of traffic hazard. The proposed development would, therefore, be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

10.0 Conditions

1. The development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the plans and particulars lodged with the application, except as may otherwise be required in order to comply with the following conditions. Where such conditions require details to be agreed with the planning authority, the developer shall agree such details in writing with the planning authority prior to commencement of development and the development shall be carried out and completed out in accordance with the agreed particulars.

Reason: In the interest of clarity.

- 2 The common room shall be used for the exclusive use of the residents of

the hotel and shall not be used for visiting members of the public

Reason: In the interest of traffic safety

3. Details of the materials, colours and textures of all the external finishes to the proposed buildings shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority prior to commencement of development.

Reason: In the interest of the visual amenities of the area.

4. Site development and building works shall be carried out only between the hours of 0800 to 1900 Mondays to Fridays inclusive, between 0800 to 1400 hours on Saturdays and not at all on Sundays and public holidays. Deviation from these times will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances where prior written approval has been received from the planning authority.

Reason: In order to safeguard the [residential] amenities of property in the vicinity.

5. Details of all external shopfronts and signage shall be subject of a separate planning application

Reason: In the interest of the amenities of the area/visual amenity.

6. Water supply and drainage arrangements, including the disposal of surface water, shall comply with the requirements of the planning authority for such works and services.

Reason: In the interest of public health

7. The developer shall pay to the planning authority a financial contribution in respect of public infrastructure and facilities benefiting development in the area of the planning authority that is provided or intended to be provided by or on behalf of the authority in accordance with the terms of the Development Contribution Scheme made under section 48 of the Planning

and Development Act 2000, as amended. The contribution shall be paid prior to commencement of development or in such phased payments as the planning authority may facilitate and shall be subject to any applicable indexation provisions of the Scheme at the time of payment. Details of the application of the terms of the Scheme shall be agreed between the planning authority and the developer or, in default of such agreement, the matter shall be referred to An Bord Pleanála to determine the proper application of the terms of the Scheme.

Reason: It is a requirement of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, that a condition requiring a contribution in accordance with the Development Contribution Scheme made under section 48 of the Act be applied to the permission

Karen Hamilton
Planning Inspector

20th of February 2017