

**Application Number**

P/2012/0647

**Site Address**Headland Hotel  
Daddyhole Road  
Torquay  
Devon  
TQ1 2EF**Case Officer**

Mrs Ruth Robinson

**Ward**

Wellswood

**Description**

Excavation of land up to a depth of a metre to create a 19 space car park in the Daddyhole Plain public open space opposite the Headland Hotel and to include coach parking facilities

**Executive Summary/Key Outcomes**

The proposal involves the excavation of an area of Daddyhole Plain to create a 19 space car park and coach parking to serve the Headland Hotel. The site is sensitive. It is Urban Landscape Protection Area, Conservation Area, within an Area of Great Landscape Value, Coastal Preservation Area and County Wildlife Site. It abuts a SSSI. It has generated objections from residents concerned about its impact on the quality of the natural landscape.

There may, however, be some merit in the proposal if it a) demonstrably underpins the future viability of the hotel, b) delivers an adequate and appropriate mitigation strategy to upgrade the coast path network and the quality of adjacent 'higher value' landscape on the headland, and c) delivers replacement public parking and achieves some resolution of the ongoing problems of coaches reversing down Daddyhole Road.

As it stands, these objectives are not delivered. It is therefore recommended for a refusal of planning permission. Members are requested to offer guidance in relation to a revised scheme that does deliver a more suitable package of improvements.

**Recommendation**

Site Visit; Refusal: due to adverse impact on landscape character and parking in the absence of an agreed mitigation strategy. Members are requested to provide a steer as to the likelihood of support for a revised proposal that delivers items 1-5 at the end of this report.

**Site Details**

Comprises an area of land approximately 44m long and 6m wide located opposite the Headland Hotel, within Daddyhole Plain. The application site is within the Lincombes Conservation Area, it is an Urban Landscape Protection Area, an Area of Great Landscape Value and it is within a County Wildlife Site. It abuts a SSSI which is designated for its vegetation which is mainly unimproved grassland. The South West Coast Path [SWCP] passes the eastern boundary of the site. It currently has an attractive landscape character with scrub, grassland trees and hedges. Public car parking is currently available along the public highway which forms the northern boundary of the site. The land is Council owned.

### **Detailed Proposals**

Is to excavate the area of land to create car parking for 19 cars and to include an area for coach parking. The depth of excavation varies from around a meter at the western end of the site to some infill at the eastern end. It is proposed to enclose the car parking area with a bank of varying height and to surface it with 'grasscrete' or similar. There is some loss of planting including a Larch tree. There is some minor demolition of the front boundary wall of the Headland Hotel to facilitate coach turning and loss of a short extent the public footpath.

### **Summary Of Consultation Responses**

*English Heritage:* Does not wish to comment.

*Natural England:* Obs. awaited.

*Torbay Coast and Countryside Trust:* Offer support subject to a range of works to be carried out to the SWCP and adjoining landscape and have been involved in discussions to negotiate a package of mitigation.

*South West Coast Path:* As Above. European funding is apparently available to match fund the contribution derived from the hotel.

*Torbay Development Agency:* Support the principle as it would support the future viability of the Hotel.

*Drainage:* Want details of drainage system to be used.

*Highways:* Considers that there are existing opportunities for coaches to turn and that this represents more of a case of increasing car parking provision. Does not however object to the scheme providing that there is no net loss of public car parking and so would like to see 5-6 spaces reserved for public use.

### **Summary Of Representations**

There have been many representations. The majority of residents are opposed to the scheme for the following reasons:

- Adverse impact on landscape character/trees/loss of natural habitat.
- Such a proposal is unnecessary due to the availability of public car parking in close proximity to the Hotel.
- It would not solve the problem of coaches reversing down Daddyhole Road.
- Public land should not be used for private profit.
- It would lead to the loss of existing public car parking currently available on the public highway.
- The Hotel should use its own land to meet the needs of its customers.
- Increased traffic hazards would be caused to pedestrians using the SWCP.

In terms of support for the proposal, there is a minority view that it will bring to an end the ongoing problems of coaches reversing down Daddyhole Road as it will allow coaches and lorries the opportunity to turn providing that a condition is imposed requiring the forecourt of the Hotel to be kept clear of parked cars.

These representations are reproduced at Page T.200.

### **Relevant Planning History**

Permission has been granted in the past to allow more car parking on the site.

P/2006/0661: Construction of 17 space car park to forecourt of hotel: Approved February 2006.

This followed 2 earlier refusals of planning permission for a 19 space car parking area due to the impact on trees.

A large stone planter which formed the front boundary to the hotel was demolished several years ago without Conservation Area Consent. This area now forms an unauthorised addition to the existing car park.

### **Key Issues/Material Considerations**

The key issues are: 1) the impact on the natural landscape character of the area and on wildlife habitat and the degree to which this can be mitigated by the improvements to the design of the scheme and to the adjacent SWCP and associated landscape, 2) the need for additional spaces for the Hotel and the contribution that these would make to the long term viability of the hotel, 3) whether the loss of public car parking can be mitigated, 4) whether existing public car parking facilities could be used to resolve the needs of the Hotel, 5) whether it is justified to use public land to provide private car parking, 6) whether the proposal would detract from or enhance the experience of SWCP users and 7) whether the scheme is likely to resolve the long standing problem of coaches reversing along Daddyhole Road. Each will be addressed in turn.

### **Would the proposal adversely impact on the Natural Landscape Character of the Area?**

The site is prominently located within the Lincombes Conservation Area and the Daddyhole Plain Urban Landscape Protection Area; it is within an Area of Great Landscape Value, within a Coastal Preservation Area and it is in the Daddyhole Plain County Wildlife Site. It is also within the Coastal Protection Zone. It abuts a SSSI. This policy protection reflects the importance of its natural landscape and ecological character and the contribution it makes to the quality of the coastal area. It has an undeniably attractive character which is much appreciated by locals and walkers alike.

However it is a strip of roadside land and does not enjoy the same 'value' in terms of visual quality as areas more central to Daddyhole Plain. This suggests that this scheme could be acceptable if the benefits to the wider and 'higher value' protected landscape on the adjacent headland are of a sufficient scale and quality to mitigate the impact of the introduction of the car parking bay.

An acceptable scheme would also be required to be very sympathetically designed itself in order to ensure integration with the character of the wider landscape. The SWCP team and TCCT have been engaged in discussions with the applicant about a package of improvements to the SWCP footpaths and to manage and improve the quality of the headland landscape. These two organisations consider that there is a package which would offer adequate compensation for the impact on the scheme. Unfortunately this package was not fully worked up and included in the application.

In terms of the design of the existing proposal, it is not well detailed, it needs some 'strategic' landscaping and the arrangement of spaces would be better if drawn back from the SWCP and proximity to the SSSI. As it stands, the scheme could be improved and the package of benefits needs to be agreed and included in a S106 agreement.

In terms of ecology, the impact of the development is capable of being mitigated by a 5 year management plan in relation to adjacent land.

**Is the need for additional car parking spaces justified?**

Planning permission has been granted in the past for additional spaces within the grounds of the hotel and these have largely been implemented. The applicant contends that he needs more spaces and is losing custom due to the lack of spaces. He currently has around 20 spaces on site, there is freely available public car parking along Daddyhole Road and there are two public car parks, one on Daddyhole Plain and one on the Meadfoot Beach end of Daddyhole Road which are generally underused and both within easy walking distance.

In comparison to many hotels in the Bay, this is well served by car parking. There is little justification included within the application relating to the need for car parking.

**Should the scheme include mitigation for loss of public car parking?**

Highways have commented that they expect the loss of public car parking, which currently occurs on the public highway to be mitigated by the inclusion of an equivalent number of spaces within this scheme. This would be equivalent to around 5-6 spaces leaving the balance as private spaces for the hotel. It is unknown at the moment how this would be managed and whether the number of spaces remaining for the hotel would render the scheme viable.

**Is it justified to use public land to provide private car parking?**

The land in question is owned by the Council and is currently public open space. There is a concern that a public asset should not be used to benefit a single business, however, highways have asked that public spaces be accommodated within this scheme so that there is no net loss of public car parking. As previously explained, this scheme is only likely to be acceptable if the 'public benefit' i.e. the wider mitigation, is sufficient to outweigh the impacts that arise on the local environment. This has yet to be demonstrated.

**Could Existing Car Parks be used to provide improved car parking opportunities for the Hotel?**

There are two public car parks that are not well used in close proximity to the hotel. Use of CCTV and other management improvements would allow these to be used more effectively to serve local hotels. This needs to be explored as part of the justification and consideration of an alternative scheme.

**Would the Scheme enhance or detract from the public enjoyment of this well used pedestrian route?**

Although the SWCP's defined route borders the seaward side of the application site, this is elevated, in a poor state of repair and not ideal for those with limited mobility. As a consequence many walkers use Daddyhole Road as part of the SWCP as it provides a level access along the route. Again, the acceptability of this depends on how attractive the defined route can be made. It also depends on the quality of the scheme and the

degree to which its visual intrusion can be mitigated. As a minimum, the spaces that are shown immediately abutting the SWCP need to be deleted and appropriate landscaping introduced.

**Is this likely to resolve the long standing problem of coaches reversing along Daddyhole Road?**

There has been a long standing problem of coaches reversing down Daddyhole Plain. This action is contrary to the Highway Act and the drivers are liable to prosecution. It is a cul-de-sac and residents have for some time pushed for a turning circle to be provided to discourage drivers from carrying out this illegal action. The applicant recently demolished a large stone planter that formed a front boundary to the hotel and if the space freed up had been reserved as a turning circle it would have been sufficient to resolve the problem. Whilst the plans show the coaches turning using an existing access to the side of the hotel, this manoeuvre is possible now and has not brought about an end to the practice. For this reason, and to enable a greater degree of certainty about the likelihood of coaches turning it is suggested that this space should be clearly marked as a turning circle and cars denied the opportunity to park. It would mean the loss of 4 existing spaces. This arrangement would also be better aesthetically and for pedestrians as it would obviate the need to demolish the stone boundary wall and to remove part of the footpath.

**S106/CIL -**

A S106 agreement would be required to secure the appropriate mitigation in the event that an acceptable scheme is forthcoming. This would need to mitigate for the landscape impact and the loss of on street parking spaces.

**Conclusions**

The scheme as it stands will primarily achieve more private car parking to serve the hotel. There is widespread concern that the proposal would be damaging to the character and appearance of Daddyhole Plain. There is some limited support from residents of Daddyhole Road if it secures an end to the illegal manoeuvre of coaches reversing down Daddyhole Road. The site is heavily constrained by policies designed to protect the landscape, visual and ecological character of the site. On that basis, the scheme is only likely to be acceptable if:

1. The need for the additional spaces is justified and the contribution of nearby public car parks to satisfying the need for additional spaces addressed.
2. The loss of public car parking spaces is mitigated through inclusion of an equivalent number of spaces to be available for public use and a Management Plan is in place to secure proper use of the facility.
3. The scheme is properly detailed and the spaces adjacent to the SWCP are deleted or relocated and the land remaining properly landscaped.
4. Of prime importance, that a package of works to mitigate for the impact on landscape character/ecology and to enhance the SWCP is secured through a S106 agreement.
5. The car parking spaces on the forecourt of the hotel in the position of the demolished stone planter are removed and the space clearly marked as being

available for coach turning only.

As the current proposal does not achieve these objectives, it is recommended that planning permission be refused but Members are asked to offer a steer as to their views on a revised application that achieves items 1-5 above. This would enable the applicant to have some understanding about the residual viability of the scheme and a degree of 'comfort' about the outcome prior to investing resources in assembling an appropriate package of improvements.

**Relevant Policies**

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