

Objection from the Torquay Neighbourhood Plan Forum (TNPF) on the redevelopment of Corbyn Head Hotel P/2018/1086

The TNPF are not against the redevelopment of the site 'in principle' but the design that nominally doubles the height of the existing hotel and increases its bulk and size dramatically is absolutely contrary to the policy in our Neighbourhood Plan that was drafted to make sure new development fits with the surrounding area. We recognise the need for regeneration of this poor quality site and would support a modest design from a range of potential development types.

Development Plans

The Torquay Neighbourhood Plan having passed referendum is now (with the Local Plan) a Development Plan for Torquay and must be used to decide planning applications in Torquay. Any potential conflict with another Development Plan uses the latest Plan; in this case the Neighbourhood Plan takes precedence.

Neighbourhood Plan Policies

The application is contrary to Neighbourhood Plan Policy TH8

Policy TH8 - Established architecture

Development must be of good quality design, respect the local character in terms of height, scale and bulk; and reflect the identity of its surroundings.

I quote from the draft officer report (April 2019) that described the built environment in the surrounding area and is a crucial description that provides the evidence for interpreting the policy in the Neighbourhood Plan in terms of building height, scale and bulk.

The existing building is a standalone structure, which is two to three storeys in height and is set within a curtilage area mostly comprised of a car park.

The locality is characterised by a range of building types including hotel buildings, apartment blocks, and houses. The neighbouring Corbyn Apartments is a four storey building with a mansard roof; to the west, and located on the hillside beyond the railway line, is the Cromartie Point Flats building, which is four storeys in height, and there are various other, similarly sized apartment buildings around the same location, off Livermead Hill. The three-storey Livermead Cliff Hotel is located on lower ground to the south-east.

It is clear from this acknowledgement that the prevailing height in the surrounding area is a maximum 4 stories and typically 3 stories in the immediate area.

The building would be up to 6 storeys tall at its highest point above ground level. The proposal would range from four storeys at its southern end, to six storeys in height at its northern end, above ground level, however, a sub-surface car park would also be provided at the building's southern end. The building would measure between approximately 15m (around 23m AOD) in height from the road level at the southern end of the building, and 21m (around 29m AOD) from road level at the northern end of the building. This compares to around 12m (around 20m AOD) in relation to the existing building. The proposed building would be tallest at its northern end and would step down towards its

southern end. The footprint of the building would measure approximately 104m in length, and would have an average depth of around 17m. The footprint of the building would measure 1657sqm, which compares to 1089sqm in relation to the existing building.

This clearly shows the size and bulk is a substantial increase on the modest hotel existing on the site.

Marine Management Planning

Policy TE7 - Marine Management Planning

Development proposals on land adjacent to the coastline will be supported where do not have an adverse effect on a marine policy or management plan.

We question whether the development should be assessed for compliance with the Marine Management Organisation policies as it discharges surface water to the marine environment.

Local Plan Parking Policies

The proposed development is contrary to policy DE4 in the Local Plan

Local Plan Policy DE4

The height of new buildings should be appropriate to the location, historic character and the setting of the development.

New development should be constructed to the prevailing height (the most commonly occurring height) within the character area in which it is located, unless there are sound urban design or socio economic benefits to justify the deviation from this approach.

The explanation in 6.4.2.27 goes on to limit tall buildings to 'town centres' and 'station character areas' and states that 'the remainder of the Bay outside these areas is unlikely to be acceptable for tall buildings in order to maintain existing low rise residential character, residential amenity, landscape character and green, uninterrupted hilltops.'

Although there are supported options these are not in compliance with the more recent Torquay Neighbourhood Plan that takes precedence under the law.

In any case the development does not increased the vitality of the area as apart from this one site the area is not run down; it might be argued that it contributes to the regeneration of Torbay but the redevelopment of the site is not in question so a more suitable and complaint development would be supported; it will not strengthen the character of the area, rather detracting from the modest 3/4 storey prevailing development; it will have a hugely negative visual impact both in the immediate area and from vistas further away; it will have little urban design benefit as designed, in fact it will be negative and any socio economic benefit is less than significant in the context of a replacement business of the same type; it will be a negative addition to the landscape overpowering the backdrop of modest residential developments, it will also block local and long distance views and key vistas because of its height particularly from the seafront and on Livermead hill behind.

Local Plan Policy TA3

The Council will require appropriate provision of car, commercial vehicle and cycle parking spaces in all new development. The loss of on-street or public parking provision will be a material consideration in planning applications...Development proposals will be expected to meet the guideline requirements as set out in appendix F

Appendix F Hotels and holiday developments

1 space per bedroom, plus appropriate provision for coaches. Provision for setting down and picking up guests by car or coach should also be provided.

In instances where the location of the hotel and its setting may limit the parking available, the availability of public spaces will be taken in to account.

The designed parking provision is contrary to Policy TA3 in the Local Plan that requires 151 parking spaces (1 per room) and appropriate parking for coaches plus drop off/pickup by car and coach. Cycle space should be 1 per 2 employees which equates to approx. 50 spaces that should be covered and secure and integral to the development. The proposal is for 101 car parking spaces in total, equating to 2 spaces per 3 guestrooms, along with a temporary coach drop-off area capable of accommodating two coaches.

The exception is not appropriate as there are no public car parks within reasonable distance and any use of public highway parking will lead to antisocial parking in adjacent streets that will impact on the key designated diversion route for seafront road closures (via Wheatridge Lane/Underhill Road).

It is of note that the Police have objected to the inadequate parking provision.

Highways

The proposal is for a substantial increase in vehicle usage from the almost 4 times increase in bedrooms (39 to 151) and the expectation of high occupancy (against a run down low occupancy hotel). Without a right turn refuge lane to service the development then significant additional congestion is highly likely during a significant part of the day and in particular during busy periods that will cause major issues for vehicular movements between Torquay and Paignton. Another development on the close by site at Hollicombe was mandated to provide a right turn refuge and the adjacent right turn to Cockington also has a refuge. The transport assessment does not provide evidence that entering or leaving the site will not cause disruption during the main summer season (it uses low season winter figures for traffic flows) or at peak times when vehicles are turning right and blocking the traffic from Torquay or vehicles are turning right towards Paignton. It is well known that the congestion is heavy during the very periods that hotel use is at a maximum.

The transport assessment does not consider the implications of the loading bay on the safety of traffic and pedestrians using Livermead Hill which is narrow and without pavements for pedestrians nor does it consider compensatory measures.

The transport assessment does not consider the impact of additional on road parking arising from the restricted onsite hotel parking on the main and critical diversion route along Wheatridge Lane/Underhill Road for traffic when the Torbay Road is closed due to flooding or accidents. It is of note that the Police have objected to the inadequate parking provision.

Local Plan Development Amenity Policy

Local Plan Policy DE3 Development Amenity

All development should be designed.....not unduly impact upon the amenity of neighbouring and surrounding uses....

- 1. The impact of noise, nuisance, visual intrusion, overlooking and privacy, light and air pollution.*
- 2. Satisfactory provision for off-road motor vehicle parking..*

The development is contrary to this policy. It is just 30m from the nearest neighbour – Cromatie Point - and the height and scale will mean the rear facing bedrooms will directly look in to the 16 apartments in the block causing a significant loss of privacy and substantial overlooking; it will also be visually obtrusive being double in height to the existing.

The Torbay Design Review Panel

We strongly criticise the Torbay Design Review Panel for not undertaking a professional assessment of the proposal under the publicly available terms of reference. They failed to consider the overall design in relation to its impact on the local area and its compliance with the Local and Neighbourhood Plan policies. We also criticise the makeup of this Panel as not representing a truly independent panel of appropriately qualified professionals capable of assessing major developments of this sort.

Leon Butler

Chair Torquay Neighbourhood Plan Forum