

Application Number

P/2012/0690

Site Address

Princess Gardens
Off Torbay Road
Torquay
Devon
TQ2 5EQ

Case Officer

Mrs Ruth Robinson

Ward

Tormohun

Description

Erection and operation of a 50M observation wheel with ticket office and supporting coffee and crepe unit on a temporary basis from 13/8/12 to 7/11/12

Executive Summary/Key Outcomes

This application is for temporary consent for the erection of a 50m observation wheel with ticket office and ancillary coffee and crepe unit from the 13th August 2012 until the 7th November 2012. It is to be sited adjacent to the Pavilion on the Princess Gardens.

A permanent permission would not be considered acceptable due to the impact on the Pavilion, which is a Grade II listed building, on its setting and on the character of the wider Princess Gardens which is a Grade II entry on the register of Historic Parks and Gardens. A short term occupation of the site is however welcomed as it will enhance the tourist attraction of the area and the impacts are short lived and reversible.

The main issue arising from temporary occupation relates to the ability of the site, which is reclaimed land, to bear the weight of this structure. It has been confirmed by structural engineers that this is satisfactory.

The landscaping of the site needs to be reinstated following expiry of the temporary consent.

Recommendation

Approval; subject to a temporary consent until 7th November 2012 and subsequent reinstatement of the affected part of the gardens.

Site Details

The observation wheel is proposed to be sited on the garden area immediately adjacent to the Pavilion. This is a sensitive location; it is prominent within the Torquay Harbour Conservation Area, is adjacent to a Grade II Listed building and

set within Princess Gardens which is a Grade II entry on the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens. The Fountain and War Memorial, which are located close by are also Grade II listed. The area is currently grassed with flower beds and small palm trees. The wheel is currently operating at the London Olympics.

Detailed Proposals

This application is for temporary consent for the erection of a 50m observation wheel with ticket office and ancillary coffee and crepe unit from the 13th August 2012 until the 7th November 2012

Summary Of Consultation Responses

English Heritage: Find the proposal acceptable if temporary in nature.

Environment Agency: Obs awaited.

Environmental Health: Have detailed requirements in relation to the operation of the coffee and crepe unit and these will be included in an Informative.

Summary Of Representations

None.

Relevant Planning History

None of relevance to this proposal.

Key Issues/Material Considerations

Due to the sensitive location of this proposal, the effect on the listed buildings, the Registered Gardens and the wider conservation area are the key issues.

A permanent occupation of the site by the wheel would be, in the long term, harmful to the architectural and historical character of the site.

A temporary occupation of the site by the wheel is however welcomed as it will enhance the attractiveness of the wider area for tourists and residents alike and the impacts on the heritage features of the site are short term and reversible.

It has been confirmed that the structure poses no threats to the structural integrity of the Pavilion or the Gardens, which comprise reclaimed land. This is due to the fact that the load of the structure is to be spread by increasing the size of the load bearing plates. This has all been agreed and verified by the Councils structural engineers. Matting, sleepers and boards will be used to minimise the impact of footfall on the ground around the wheel. The wheel will not operate in winds of over 40 mph.

It is important that the site is reinstated following occupation and this needs to be secured by condition.

Conclusions

Providing the permission is for a temporary period only and the site is properly reinstated following the expiry of the use, then it is considered that permission should be granted for the required period.

Condition(s)/Reason(s)

01. The permission, allowing occupation of the site by the observation wheel, shall be for a temporary period only, expiring on the 7th November 2012. Following removal of the observation wheel on or before this date, the gardens shall be reinstated in accordance with details that shall have previously been submitted to and agreed in writing with the LPA. The agreed scheme of reinstatement shall be implemented in the first planting season following the removal of the wheel.

Reason: The use of the site by the Wheel is only acceptable on a short term basis and more lengthy occupation would be harmful to the setting of the listed buildings, to the character of the Registered Gardens and the wider Torquay Harbour Conservation Area contrary to policies BE6, BE8 and BE5 of the saved Torbay Local Plan 1995-2011.

Relevant Policies

- BE5 Policy in conservation areas
- BE6 Development affecting listed buildings
- BE8 Historic parks and gardens