

Application details

Ref: P/FUL/2022/06840	Applicant: Kingfisher Resorts Studland Ltd	Case Officer: Huw Williams
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Address: Knoll House Hotel Ferry Road Studland BH21 3AH
Description: Full application for the redevelopment of existing hotel to provide new tourist accommodation including 30 hotel bedroom apartment villa accommodation and associated leisure and dining facilities.
Case Officer comments to Consultee:
Consultee: Katherine Van Etten CMLI Senior Landscape Architect
Date: 30/3/23
Has a Pre-application discussion taken place with you? –Yes / No

Support	
Support subject to condition(s)	
Unable to support	x
No objection	
Request for further information	x
Other	

Summary

<p>1. The principle of appropriate redevelopment is supported in this site. However, I do not consider that the proposal demonstrates it would sensitively contribute to the protection and enhancement of the AONB respecting the special qualities for which it is so highly valued. The fundamental landscape concerns are the significant adverse landscape and visual effects brought about by the proposed scale and mass of the four storey and three storey development blocks.</p> <p>2. I consider there would be some very slight enhancement and local benefit to landscape character brought about by the change from existing white render and improved quality of built form particularly of the rear buildings as proposed within the LVIA. However, this is heavily outweighed by the significant adverse effects on the special landscape and visual qualities as a consequence of the inappropriate scale of development proposed.</p> <p>Further information is required –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Detailed Landscape planting plan, specification and management strategy is required for this Full application to ensure adequate and effective mitigation. • Updated Accurate Visual Representations to Landscape Institutes Type 4 standards from ViewPoint 5b and Veiwpoint 6. Baseline photographs outlining the site and its extent to LI Type 4 photography.

Site description/context/significance

3. The site is detached from Studland village and its CA and set within a scenic, undeveloped coastal landscape, highly valued for its beauty and landscape quality. The appreciation and experience of the natural heritage, distinctiveness and scenic qualities of the landscape are primary reasons for recreational activity within the area. The following relevant information/ designations apply to the site and demonstrate the exceptional value of the area:
 - UNESCO World Heritage Coastline- although not within this designation there are open views towards and from Old Harry's Rock from the site.
 - Entirely within the Purbeck Heritage Coast designated to conserve the best stretches of undeveloped coast in England.
 - Entirely within the Dorset AONB which is afforded significant protection through the CROW Act 2000 and the AONB Management Plan. Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, has a statutory duty of regard for the primary purpose of the AONB to conserve and enhance natural beauty.
 - Wildlife of national and international significance - NNR Studland and Godlingston Heath surround the area to the north and west of the site. SAC & SSSI adjacent to the site.
 - Open Access Land - Godlingston Heath and Studland Heath
 - SW Coast Path National Trails runs along Studland Bay beach. Closer to the site PROW's SE22//39 Bridleway runs along Ferry Road and PROW SE22/38 Bridleway to the south. Both afford open views of the existing development.

Context – Landscape Character & Views

- Landscape Character Type LCT Lowland Heathland
 - Landscape Character Area LCA South Purbeck Heaths. The Dorset AONB Landscape Character Assessment judges the overall landscape to have a moderate character and overall landscape condition to be moderate and improving. Key characteristics of this LCA include - *Wide open views of colourful and textured heathlands, with tranquil and remote character derived through perceived naturalness and an absence of development.*
4. Approaching on Ferry road the topography rises upwards from Knoll beach to the site at approx. 24m AOD. The landscape context is scenic and undeveloped with a large scale character and strong sense of place. The open panoramic views and undeveloped qualities of the AONB make this landscape highly sensitive to change.



Looking North from Ballard Down, Purbeck Ridgeway

5. Separated from Studland Village and the Conservation Area the existing hotel is isolated from surrounding development. The two-storey building, distinctive in its early C20th character, spreads broadly yet despite its elevated position over Studland Bay, is

visually settled into the landscape. The restricted existing building height and screening effect of the surrounding woodland and the iconic mature pine trees, assimilate the development into the setting. As a result, open views of the hotel are currently limited from the distant perspective.

6. The main building has been added to over the years forming an arrangement of low-quality buildings to the rear around a central space mainly used for parking. These outer buildings are subservient in their scale and mass to the original house.
7. The elevated view from the hotel grounds through mature pine trees across Studland Bay towards Old Harry's Rock, offers wider visual perspective and opportunity to enjoy the special view towards the UNESCO World Heritage Coastline. PROW SE22/38 to the south across open heath does afford open views of these rear buildings where there is little tree planting to filter these views.
8. The relationship between the gardens and building frontage plays a fundamental role in informing the character of the setting. Set back from the road within spacious landscape gardens surrounded by pine trees, the hotels early 20th residential character is enforced.
9. The Cultural and historical legacy of the Dorset AONB is recognised as one of its special qualities along with its exceptional undeveloped coast. The hotel is a distinctive and isolated landmark in the tranquil and highly valued landscape. The notable cultural history of the hotel and setting adds to the landscape value, natural beauty and local attachment placed on the site.
10. Originally the summer retreat of Bankes family of Kingston Lacy, the existing building has a deteriorated residential appearance when viewed from Ferry Road. Famously Enid Blyton became a regular visitor to the hotel through 1950's and 1960's and her stories were directly inspired by the local landscape including Studland Village. Vivien Leigh and Roald Dahl also stayed at the hotel and in 1944, Sir Winston Churchill, King George VI and General Dwight D. Eisenhower dined in the hotel after witnessing the D-Day rehearsals on Studland Beach. Dorset AONB Management Plan P87 states - *The planning system has a key role to play in delivering sensitive change in areas with strong cultural identities, by safeguarding assets and better revealing their significance.*

Main issues

Considerations:

- Would there be landscape and visual harm brought about by the proposal
- Would the application conserve and enhance the landscape and scenic beauty and comply with the AONB Management Plan.
- Does the application comply with National and Local Planning policy regarding landscape and design.

The proposal

11. The proposal, a luxury hotel, leisure and dining resort follows a previous submission in 2018 refused due to '*detrimental effect upon the environment and natural landscape*' and '*detrimental effect on protected heathland*' and inadequate mitigation measures.

Comments on proposal

12. I have reviewed the submitted LVIA against the Landscape Institutes' Technical Guidance Note 1/20 (10 Jan 2020) "Reviewing Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIAs) and Landscape and Visual Appraisals (LVAs). The assessment considers whether the special landscape and visual qualities of the area would be adversely affected by the proposal. In general, I do not dispute the methodology however I do share the concerns of the AONB officer comments regarding some contentious findings within the LVIA. I consider that there is a level of under reporting of the landscape and visual effects and their significance and outline the following as example of concern regarding the findings.
13. The sensitivity of visual receptors is recorded mainly as High in all viewpoints except motorist on Ferry Road VP1-which is scored as Low. Yet p22 of Appendix 6.2 LVIA Methodology states- *The users of local roads will have a Medium sensitivity*. In addition, Ferry Road is also a bridleway, P23 Appendix 6.2 states- *Those whose main preoccupation is the enjoyment of scenery (High sensitivity) Recreational walkers and equestrians (High sensitivity). Cyclists (High-Medium sensitivity)*. Given the use and value placed on this route for appreciation of the view, including views of the World Heritage Coast and using the applicants own methodology I consider the sensitivity to be at least high. I note the methodology does not explain what Very High sensitivity would be despite this being categorised within Table 6.2.9. A high receptor sensitivity with moderate magnitude of change would result in a Moderate or large significance of effect.
14. In other viewpoints the receptor sensitivity is rated high, the magnitude of change moderate which again using the applicant's methodology would consider the level of effect to be Moderate or Large. However, the LVIA assesses the proposal will provide post construction *short, medium, long term benefit to the landscape*. (8.13 Summary of effects). The assessment considers that the design and change from existing white render to natural materials will constitute an improvement in the baseline.
15. Photography submitted within the LVIA Appendix 6.4 does not appear to meet best practice standards and therefore I can not be confident regarding the accuracy of the image or representation of the visual effects. LVIA P8 f) refers to Landscape Institutes TGN 06/19 yet states that the images need to be enlarged for review. The images submitted are very unclear when enlarged. I recommend that Accurate Visual Representations are submitted, particularly VP5b and 6, to LI TGN 06/19 Type 4 standards which will provide a much more accurate and clear representation of the proposal. Photography within the LVIA should clearly identify the location and extent of the site and be resubmitted to the Landscape Institutes TGN 06/19 Type 4 standards.

Existing built form lowers towards the northern boundary



Existing Site

Proposed three storey with four storey roofline behind



Proposed site section AA

Proposed site

16. On review of the special landscape qualities and information submitted, I consider that the proposal is incongruent with the local area. Furthermore, the increase in the scale and mass of the existing built form, as seen above in section AA within the DAS, would have a negatively adverse landscape effect. The increased height and intensity of development particularly the northern 3 and 4 storey blocks would negatively impact on the landscape qualities such as tranquillity and undeveloped character, perceived naturalness, and dark night skies. National Design Guide Context C1, I1, B1.
17. Furthermore, I do not consider that the cultural historical associations have been sufficiently considered or respected within the architectural form. The proposed development detracts from the original purpose of the main building as a summer house as taller 3-4 storey elements dominate the form. National Design Guide C2
18. The retention of the pine trees, existing development line and front lawn along the eastern boundary are fundamental to the development setting and have been retained within the proposal. The pine trees lining Ferry Road are distinctive long established features with particularly characteristic of the setting.
19. Landscape mitigation should be provided within the site and yet due to the extent of development proposed this is limited particularly to the South and West. The existing woodland planting is heavily relied upon as mitigation within the scheme yet Appendix 6.4 VP2a p5 states *The off-site trees, not owned by the hotel, cannot be relied upon to screen and filter views for the design life of the project.* In addition, the Woodland Management Plan outlines major works to remove/replace significant quantity of existing planting.
20. The Woodland Management Plan is an ecological improvement plan and does not consider the function that the surrounding woodland provides in screening the hotel.

Table 6 notes the Scots Pine is the principal component of the woodland directly surrounding the hotel, seen from VP 5B screening the rear of the hotel. However, it also states that particular concern regarding plant health in Purbeck area is needle blight. The plan proposes the removal of non-natives- to *clear and fell 95% sweet chestnut, 95% holm oak and 50% Scots pine over 5 years*. This is likely to result in further exposure of the site particularly from the South and West in winter over the short-medium term, due to the loss of established evergreens and replacement with broad leaved species.

21. The LVIA states that *mitigation of advance planting is important factor in design to reduce impact of car park on edge of site*. A single line of advance planted 4-5m conifers is proposed along the southern boundary yet will be some years before they begin to provide meaningful mitigation to the scale of development proposed.
22. The proposed removal of 29 trees within the site is very concerning. This includes 19 large trees which are predominately mature Scots pine in addition to Sweet chestnut, English Oak, and Holme Oak. I recommend consultation with the Arboricultural officer regarding this. In addition to the loss of character, the tree removal would visually open up the site, particularly in views from the S/W.
23. The Planting Strategy is focused on the site alone and does not incorporate the surrounding woodland on which the scheme heavily relies upon for mitigation. As above the Woodland management plans ecological focus is likely to reduce the effectiveness of this screening and I suggest that the overall Woodland and Landscape strategy are reconsidered to address this conflict.
24. In addition, full planting plans including plant details, specification and maintenance and management are required for approval. Planting details of semi mature large trees will need particular care given the extreme climate in this location. The green roofs (not specified in a planting list) should incorporate appropriate native heathland planting species. Sorbus aria tree is not typical species of the area.
25. Water management should be integrated within the development as far as possible. Information regarding the integration of well-designed multifunctional and integrated SUDS should be submitted.
26. The proposed naturalistic palate of materials reflects a sensitivity to the location. However, I do have concern on the reflectivity particularly of the zinc roofs.
27. The extent of glazing is mainly a concern regarding an increase in light at night impacting on the Dark night skies found in the AONB. The building position facing east and the window detailing should address reflection in the daytime. Particularly windows on higher levels of the site which may be seen from greater distance.
28. In summary, I consider that there would be significant adverse landscape and visual harm brought about by the scale and mass of the proposal. As such, the application fails to conserve and enhance the landscape and scenic beauty and comply with the AONB Management Plan. This is contrary to the spatial objectives of the Purbeck Local Plan and particularly policy D, CO, TA, LHH. In addition, the application conflicts with National Planning policy especially 174, 176, 177 and 178.

Policy consideration

NPPF 2021

Purbeck Local Plan Adopted 2012

National Design Guide 2021

Dorset AONB Management plan