

GLOUCESTER CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE : **PLANNING**

DATE : **7TH JULY 2009**

ADDRESS/LOCATION : **OLIVER CROMWELL PADDLE WHEELER,
ALEXANDRA QUAY, THE DOCKS**

APPLICATION NO. & WARD : **09/00492/COU
WESTGATE**

EXPIRY DATE : **19TH JUNE 2009**

APPLICANT : **RICHARD CLEMENTS**

PROPOSAL : **CHANGE OF USE OF PADDLE WHEELER
TO STATIC HOTEL, RESTAURANT AND
CABARET VENUE (TEMPORARY
PERMISSION)**

REPORT BY : **LOUISE FOLLETT**

**NO. OF APPENDICES/
OBJECTIONS** : **SITE LOCATION PLAN
9 LETTERS OF OBJECTION
6 LETTERS OF SUPPORT**

1.0 SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL

- 1.1 The application site comprises the Oliver Cromwell paddle wheeler which is currently moored at Alexandra Quay at the Docks and an area of external and internal storage currently rented by the applicant from British Waterways at buildings adjacent to Alexandra Quay.
- 1.2 The site lies within the Docks Conservation Area and within the Central Area of the City.
- 1.3 The Oliver Cromwell paddle wheeler is a converted Dutch barge which previously provided cruising holidays on the River Severn and Gloucester to Sharpness Canal operating out of Gloucester Docks. It is no longer possible for the applicant to provide such holidays owing, in part, to the silting up of parts of the River Severn. Additional evidence has also been submitted as to why the vessel is no longer able to offer cruising holidays.
- 1.4 The applicant is therefore now seeking a temporary permission for a change of use of the vessel to a static hotel, restaurant and cabaret venue sited at Alexandra Quay. It is intended that once relevant utilities and services have

been provided that the vessel will be able to relocate south of Llanthony Bridge.

- 1.5 The proposal is for a hotel providing 15 no. en-suite guest rooms which will require internal alterations to the existing cabins to provide an enhanced accommodation offer plus use of the existing salon as a restaurant with a maximum cover of 120 people with the occasional use of the restaurant for a cabaret venue.
- 1.6 No specific parking is identified within the application site however the applicant has submitted that secure parking for overnight visitors and visitors to the restaurant can be provided at the Quays which has a 24 hour secure car park.
- 1.7 It is also submitted that some restaurant customers will be pre-booked coach parties who will be dropped off in Llanthony Road with coaches parking at designated coach parks elsewhere in the City.

2.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 2.1 09/00292/PREAPP Proposed use of the Oliver Cromwell paddle wheeler as a static hotel and restaurant at Alexandra Quay. 09.03.09
Applicant invited to submit a planning application.
- 2.2 98/00120/FUL Residential Boat Mooring. Granted Permission 29.07.1998.

3.0 PLANNING POLICIES

Relevant policies from the City of Gloucester Second Deposit Local Plan (2002) are:

- 3.1 BE.1 Scale, massing and height
BE.2 Views and Skyline
BE.21 Safeguarding of Amenity
BE.29 Development within Conservation Areas
TR.9 Parking Standards
TR.12 Cycle parking standards
TR.31 Highway Safety
T.1 Visitor Attractions in the Central Area
T.3 New Hotel Development in the Central Area
- 3.2 All policies can be viewed at the relevant website address- Gloucester Local Plan policies – www.gloucester.gov.uk/planning; Gloucestershire Structure Plan policies – www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=2112 and Department of Community and Local Government planning policies - www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planning/.

4.0 CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1 **Highway Authority** – No objection subject to conditions.

- 4.2 **Conservation Officer** – has no objections to proposed change of use, however careful consideration will be required with regard to further advertising within the Docks.
- 4.3 **Local Plans** – no objection.
- 4.4 **Environmental Health Officer** – no objection subject to conditions.
- 4.5 **Civic Trust** - Permission should only be granted for one year while efforts are made to secure a permanent mooring at Llanthony Quay. The vessel is not historic and its size is incongruous with the historic dock of national and international importance.
- 4.6 **City Centre Community Partnership** – do not object to proposed change of use however raise the following points;
- Proposed location of vessel dominates Alexandra Quay and blights views from Llanthony Bridge, National Waterways Museum & Alexandra Quay
 - The vessel is out of context with the historic buildings and dry docks surrounding it
 - Noise emanating from the vessel could impact on residential amenity of converted warehouses
 - Vessel should be moored south of Llanthony Bridge in order to address points raised above
 - Vessel should be relocated closer to Llanthony Bridge and permission should only be granted for 12 months while efforts are made to provide relevant services at Llanthony Quay
 - Concerns raised over additional signage and car parking
- 4.7 **British Waterways** – Supports the dynamic use of the waterway by commercially and professionally run businesses. Are in discussions with the applicant to find a longer term mooring as West Quay will be developed in the future.

5.0 PUBLICITY AND REPRESENTATIONS

- 5.1 Both commercial and residential neighbours were notified of the application.
- 5.2 7 letters of objection have been received which raise the following additional points:-
- Proposal would bring noise and late night revellers to the mainly residential area of the Docks.
 - The design of the vessel is alien to the canal system and the Docks and is not representative of the typical ships and boats that historically have used the system.
 - The numbers of vehicles using Alexandra Quay will substantially increase as a result of the use with associated increase in noise.

- Conflict between pedestrians and vehicles on Alexandra Quay now that students from Gloucestershire College use the Quay as a link through to the City Centre.
- There is no need for a new hotel as there is one within the Quays complex.
- The Quay should be used for mooring boats not for a static hotel.
- Concern raised over parking on the Quayside.
- The vessel obscures visibility of West Quay for the Docks security team.
- Concern over safety with regard to the proposed use and the proximity of the dry docks

5.3 4 letters of support have been received which raise the following points:-

- Proposal will add vibrancy to the Docks and to the City as a whole.
- The Docks desperately needs an additional venue for food, entertainment and business meetings.
- The proposal will provide a venue for tourists, day visitors and business clients alike.
- The upper deck of the vessel provides outstanding and unique viewing opportunities of the City Centre, the Docks and the Cathedral.

5.4 The full content of all correspondence on this application can be inspected at the 4th floor reception, Herbert Warehouse, The Docks, Gloucester, prior to the Committee meeting.

6.0 OFFICER OPINION

6.1 It is considered that the main planning issues with regard to this application are:-

- Principle of Development
- Siting in the Conservation Area
- Potential impact on residential amenity
- Contribution to regeneration of Docks and tourism within the City

Principle of Development

6.2 The principle of an additional restaurant facility and hotel within the Docks regeneration area is considered to be acceptable and complies with both Policy T.1 which seeks to grant planning permission for new visitor attractions in the Central Area and Policy T.3 new hotel development in the Central Area.

6.3 The Oliver Cromwell has long been a feature of the Docks area, albeit formally located on the southern side of Llanthony Bridge where it was moored in association with its use as a cruising vessel. The mooring of a vessel in association with its main use for travelling along waterways does not require planning permission however the permanent siting of a vessel for

other non-travelling uses at a quay or landing stage does require planning permission.

- 6.4 The principle of a temporary permission for the siting of the vessel on Alexandra Quay is considered to be acceptable given that the vessel will provide additional hotel accommodation in the Central Area and additional restaurant offer in a regeneration area.
- 6.5 It is noted that recently the vessel played an integral part in the successful Tall Ships Festival providing lunches and refreshments to visitors to the event.

Siting in the Conservation Area

- 6.6 Many of the objections raised to the proposal by community and interest groups relate to the fact that the vessel is a relatively modern themed cruising vessel, it is not a historic vessel that would traditionally have been a feature of either the Gloucester to Sharpness Canal or the River Severn and therefore is considered to be an alien feature in the Conservation Area.
- 6.7 The Docks Conservation Area and adjacent regeneration area, Gloucester Quays are one of the priority regeneration areas within the City for the City Council.
- 6.8 Although there are some misgivings about the modified appearance of the barge the temporary siting of this vessel at Alexandra Quay would contribute to the regeneration and tourist offer within the area.
- 6.9 It is understood that the applicant is pursuing an alternative mooring for the vessel south of Llanthony Bridge at Llanthony Quay, however the site does not currently benefit from the provision of utilities and services. A three year temporary permission in the Docks should allow sufficient time for British Waterways and the applicant to provide an alternative mooring.
- 6.10 Therefore, on balance, it is considered that a three year temporary permission will not permanently or drastically harm the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 6.11 The paddle wheeler is moored to the front of Alexandra Warehouse adjacent to which are located a mix of brick warehouse structures. British Waterways have indicated in their representation that this area will be redeveloped in the future. The applicant has also indicated that additional on shore storage areas are rented on the Quay for ancillary storage and recycling purposes. Covered and secure storage for staff bicycles can be provided in the storage area.
- 6.12 The paddle wheeler currently receives deliveries and disposes of waste via lorries coming onto the Quayside from Llanthony Road. Given the commercial nature of other activities currently taking place on this Quayside such vehicular movements are considered appropriate. It is considered that these vehicular movements do not detract from the Conservation Area but reinforce

its identity as a vibrant regeneration area which supports commercial activity as well as tourism.

Residential Amenity

- 6.13 Concern over the impact of the proposed use on neighbouring residential flats has been raised during consultation.
- 6.14 The closest flats to the moored vessel are in Biddles and Shipton converted warehouse some 34 metres across the Dock at its closest point to the moored vessel.
- 6.15 The Environmental Health Officer has confirmed that there have been no complaints with regard to the existing use of the vessel, which has included 3 nights over night accommodation per week at the Docks in association with the inland cruising use as well as occasional showboat evenings.
- 6.16 The applicant has submitted further information to satisfy the Environmental Health Officer with regard to the management and running of cabaret evenings, the timings of recorded and live music and the arrival and dispersal of guests. Such information also relates to the use of the open upper deck during such events.
- 6.17 It is considered that there is a need to control the use of the upper deck in the interests of residential amenity and this matter can be addressed by condition and will reflect the terms of a revised licence currently being pursued by the applicant. It is considered that there should be no impact on the residential amenity of flat dwellers in the Docks as long as the use is operated within the conditions of any permission and licence.

Regeneration of the Docks and tourism within the City

- 6.18 A good range of facilities in the Docks and Quays area for visitors and tourists alike is essential for the area to thrive and reach its potential as a prime tourist attraction both within the County and nationally.
- 6.19 The proposal seeks to provide overnight accommodation, a new restaurant at the Docks and a cabaret venue for occasional events. It is anticipated that the cabaret venue will provide events accessible by ticket as well as being used for booked private functions.
- 6.20 A new Travel Lodge at the Quays offers additional budget accommodation in the City, however the paddle wheeler would provide a more unique hotel offer within the City with outstanding views of the locality including the historic docks and the City and Cathedral beyond.
- 6.21 The site lies within the Central Area and therefore is accessible by a range of modes of transport. Covered and secure 24 hour parking is available at The Quays car park.

7.0 CONCLUSION/REASON FOR APPROVAL

- 7.1 Given the points made above it is considered reasonable that the application be recommended for approval for a temporary period of three years.

Reason for Approval

The proposal would provide additional visitor accommodation and tourist facilities within the Central Area of the City as well as an additional evening venue which would contribute towards the regeneration of the Docks area and the evening economy of the City. The temporary siting of the vessel would not detract from the character or appearance of The Docks Conservation Area. It is considered that subject to compliance with the conditions of this permission this use of the mooring would not have an adverse impact on the residential amenity of surrounding residents. Accordingly the proposal is considered to comply with Policies BE21, BE.29, TR.9, TR.31, T.1 and T.3 of the Second Deposit Gloucester City Local Plan (2002).

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE DEVELOPMENT CONTROL MANAGER

- 8.1 That committee grant temporary planning permission subject to the following conditions and reasons:-

Condition 1

The use of this mooring hereby permitted shall cease on the 31st December 2012 unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason

In order to safeguard the character or appearance of The Docks Conservation Area in accordance with Policy BE.29 of the Second Deposit Gloucester Local Plan (2002).

Condition 2

The cabaret use hereby permitted shall be operated at all times in accordance with the noise abatement plan stated in the applicants letter of 19th June 2009 unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason

In order to safeguard the residential amenity of neighbouring residents in accordance with Policy BE.21 of the Second Deposit Gloucester Local Plan (2002).

Condition 3

The upper deck of the vessel shall not be used for live music or dancing after 18.00hrs or for any other reasons by guests after 23.00hrs.

Reason

In order to safeguard the residential amenity of neighbouring residents in accordance with Policy BE.21 of the Second Deposit Gloucester Local Plan (2002).

Condition 4

The external storage of goods or waste associated with the vessel shall not take place on the adjacent quayside and all existing storage arrangements for waste and recycling shall be maintained for the life of this planning permission.

Reason

In the interests of the visual amenity of the Conservation Area in accordance with Policies BE.4 and BE.29 of the Second Deposit Gloucester Local Plan (2002).

Condition 5

Before the use hereby permitted commences secure cycle parking shall be provided for a minimum of 4 bicycles to be parked in the covered storage area identified on the amended site plan received on 10th June 2009.

Reason

In the interests of highway safety in accordance with Policy TR.31 of the Second Deposit Gloucester Local Plan (2002).

Decision:

Notes:

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Person to contact: Louise Follett
(Tel: 396733)