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Clayton Architecture Limited

648 Liverpool Road,

Southport,

PR8 3LT

01/08/2024

Vacant Building Justification for Planning Submission

Site Address: Bridge Hotel, 4 Bridge Road, Sutton Bridge, PE12 9UA

Proposal: Change of use from hotel Class C1 to residential Class C3 including the creating of 15 residential units

Introduction

This justification is provided in support of a planning application for the conversion of a vacant and derelict bed and breakfast (B&B) located at Bridge Hotel, 4 Bridge road Sutton Bridge, PE12 9UA into 15 residential units. This justification addresses the requirements set out by the planning officer and seeks to demonstrate that the proposed development qualifies for Vacant Building Credit (VBC) in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG).

Background and Last Use

The building in question was last used as a bed and breakfast, offering temporary accommodation for visitors. The bed and breakfast operation ceased on 2007 / 2008. Since then, the property has remained vacant and has not been in use for any other purpose. Since the building was vacated there have been various fires at the property which has resulted in a fully derelict structure.

Reason for Vacancy

The bed and breakfast ceased operations

Ownership and Timeline

- a. **Previous Ownership:** The last owner that ran the property as a business was in 2007 / 2008 and the details of this owner are not known as the property has changed hands a number of times since. The more recent owners did intend to develop the site but did not proceed with the works as the cost of development did not project a large enough profit margin.
- b. **Change in Ownership:** The current owner, API armchair property Investments LTD, acquired the property on 23/04/24 with the intention of redeveloping the site for residential use due to the unsustainable nature of continuing the B&B business. The premise of this was established by the previously Approved Planning Applications.

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- c. **Vacancy Period:** Since the cessation of the B&B operations in 2008, the building has been unoccupied. This period of vacancy is evidenced by photos of the property being boarded up on google street view as well as multiple news articles relating to the property and the fires that have impacted the site.

Application of Vacant Building Credit

According to Paragraph 65 of the NPPF and the associated guidance in the NPPG, VBC applies where buildings are vacant and are being reused or redeveloped. The guidance specifies that:

- a. **The building must be vacant at the time of the application:** As evidenced by the details above, the building has been vacant since pub and function rooms in 2004 and more recently a bed and breakfast 2007/2008. Overall the property has been vacant for 16 years.
- b. **The building must not have been abandoned:** The property has not been abandoned but has been actively managed and maintained by the owner during the vacancy period to prevent further deterioration. This is evident by the hoardings which have been replaced on various occasions evidenced by Google Street View and also the various Planning Applications that have taken place over the past 16 years.

Conclusion

Based on the information provided, the following points are submitted for consideration:

- The building was last used as a bed and breakfast and has been vacant since 2004 pub stopped trading and was then used as B&B style accommodation until 2007/2008.
- The property has changed ownership, with the new owner acquiring it on 23.04.24 with plans to redevelop it for residential use.
- The vacancy is documented and verifiable through records such as utility bills and council tax records held by the Local Planning Authority. Non of the items are accessible by the Applicant.
- The building has not been abandoned but maintained to a basic standard to prevent further disrepair.

Given these factors, we request that the Local Planning Authority (LPA) acknowledges the eligibility of the proposed development for Vacant Building Credit, thereby allowing a reduction in the affordable housing contributions required for this redevelopment project.

We trust that this justification meets the requirements outlined by the planning officer and provides sufficient evidence to support the application of VBC for this development.

Should you require any further information or clarification, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Kind Regards,

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