

APPENDIX B – MARKETING APPENDIX

(Chronology of Enquiries, Viewings, Feedback and Why These Do Not Demonstrate a Reasonable Prospect of Retention)

Purpose and Status of the Record

This appendix provides a chronological record of marketing enquiries and viewings to demonstrate the extent of market testing and to evidence the absence of a viable purchaser/operator. It is provided to support compliance with Policy 43 and the pre-application request for further market evidence.

Agent and Marketing History

Marketing was undertaken through GPS agents (Eastbourne) and later Batchelor Monkhouse. The purpose of using commercial agents was to ensure the property reached the correct market audience, including hospitality operators, wedding/event venue operators, and purchasers seeking going-concern opportunities.

Marketing was paused during the Covid period due to national restrictions and market disruption. Marketing resumed thereafter and continued, reflecting an ongoing attempt to secure a purchaser.

Chronology of Enquiries and Outcomes

2020 – First enquiry

An operator contacted the agent seeking to acquire a wedding/events venue on a lease-to-purchase model. The proposal was structured around a premium deposit over the first 12 months and an intention to purchase within five years with the premium offset against the purchase price. The enquiry also sought arrangements outside statutory tenancy protections and included TUPE transfer of staff and business goodwill.



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In policy terms, this enquiry is relevant because it demonstrates that the interest was not for a straightforward purchase and continued hotel operation. It was contingent on a complex and speculative arrangement which did not progress to a credible purchase or operation. It therefore cannot be relied upon as evidence of a reasonable prospect of retaining the use through normal market mechanisms.

2020 – Second enquiry and viewing

A further party wished to view, being a charitable organisation seeking a venue to run more weddings, ideally capable of accommodating around 100 customers. The party viewed and provided positive feedback initially but subsequently confirmed that the property was too small for their plans and did not proceed.

In policy terms, this is significant because it highlights a recurring theme: the building was liked but did not meet the operational scale requirements of the prospective operator market for weddings/events, which is a principal commercial route by which rural venues remain viable.

Post-Covid period and re-marketing

The hotel was taken off the market after Covid hit and was later remarketed.

2023 – Customer booking / informal interest

A couple who attended as customers later indicated an interest but decided that the outside space was not right for their requirements. This feedback aligns with later comments by other interested parties and indicates that the site's external amenity provision is a limiting factor for event-led or lifestyle-led purchaser models.

2023 – Interested viewers with partial funds

A viewing in 2023 resulted in an initial indication of interest with a stated cash sum and additional funding dependent on asset sales. Whilst this reflects some interest, the presence of multiple contingencies and the absence of a progressed offer demonstrates the difficulty in converting interest into a deliverable transaction.

June 2023 – Meeting with prospective purchasers

A meeting with Michelle and colleagues was positive and parties also considered acquisition of a neighbouring B&B as a potential addition to the venture. However, no transaction followed.

June 2023 – Further clarification from an interested party

Ron clarified that the enquiry was not for instalment purchase but for acquisition of a 50% share. This again demonstrates that interest was oriented towards non-standard ownership structures rather than a conventional purchase capable of securing the ongoing use.

Early 2024 – Feedback following viewing

Parties confirmed the property was not right for them, with feedback reflecting their personal requirements rather than specific faults. While neutral in tone, it still evidences the failure to secure a purchaser and indicates the narrowness of the buyer pool.

April 2024 – Review of figures and decision not to proceed

Prospective parties reviewed the accounting information and then decided not to take matters further. Feedback indicated that the price was at the top end of their budget and that further investment would be required to adapt the venue, with the lack of gardens identified as a “showstopper”.

This is a particularly important data point because it demonstrates a direct relationship between the purchase price, required capital expenditure and site constraints, resulting in an unwillingness to proceed even after reviewing the financial information.

August 2024 – Request for accounts and loss of momentum

Further parties expressed interest, requested accounting information and maintained interest for a short period before becoming unresponsive. This again reflects the common pattern of initial interest failing to progress to a credible offer.

April 2025 onwards – Batchelor Monkhouse marketing

Since April 2025 the property has been marketed by Batchelor Monkhouse with no viewings. This is strong evidence that the market has been tested recently and that, even with professional marketing, the property is not attracting the level of interest required to secure continuation of the hotel use.

Interpretation Against Policy 43

Taken together, the chronology demonstrates that the property has been marketed and exposed to the market audience for hospitality and events uses, yet has not attracted a viable purchaser/operator. The consistent reasons for withdrawal or non-progression are structural rather than superficial and relate to the viability of delivering an event-led or hospitality model within the constraints of the site and the level of investment required. The record therefore supports the conclusion that continued use is no longer feasible and that loss of the hotel use is justified.

Interaction with Appendix C (Viability)

The marketing outcomes align with the accounts evidence in Appendix C, which demonstrates a sustained decline in profitability and increasing risk to business continuity. Where a business is declining and the market has been repeatedly tested without securing a viable operator, Policy 43 does not require indefinite marketing exercises that delay the identification and delivery of a viable alternative use, particularly where heritage considerations apply.

Conclusion

This marketing record provides clear evidence that the market has been tested over a prolonged period and that no viable purchaser/operator has been secured to retain the hotel use. The evidence therefore supports the policy conclusion that continued use is no longer feasible and that the proposed change of use to residential use is justified, deliverable and necessary to secure the long-term future of the Grade II listed building.