

## **APPEAL COMMENTS OF THE CHIGWELL PARISH COUNCIL PLANNING COMMITTEE - King William IV Public House High Road Chigwell IG7 6PJ**

Chigwell Parish Council respectfully objects to this appeal and invites the Inspector to dismiss it and to uphold the decision of Epping Forest District Council.

The Parish Council did not object to the original planning application. That earlier stance reflected the limited remit and expertise of the Parish as a local representative body rather than any positive endorsement of the works that have been carried out. The Parish Council is not a professional planning authority and does not employ its own planning or heritage officers. It properly relies on the specialist assessment and advice of the District Councils professional officers when considering complex matters of design townscape and impact on the historic environment. Having now reviewed the detailed officer report the formal reasons for refusal and the appellant's statement the Parish Council fully supports the decision to refuse planning permission and objects to the appeal proposals.

The site occupies a sensitive position between the modern King William IV Public House and the Grade II listed former King William IV building. The space between these buildings together with the open and green character of the frontage makes an important contribution to the character and appearance of this part of High Road and to the setting of the listed building. Policy DM9 of the Epping Forest District Local Plan requires development to be design led of high quality and to relate positively to its locality in terms of scale form massing and materials. Policy DM7 requires the conservation and wherever possible the enhancement of the significance and setting of heritage assets. The National Planning Policy Framework also gives great weight to the conservation of heritage assets and to the achievement of high quality design.

The retrospective timber structure and associated works fail to satisfy those requirements. The large shallow pitched roof the extent of hard surfacing and the additional fixtures and fittings have created an overly dominant and sprawling area of built form in the gap between the two buildings. Rather than read as a modest and clearly subservient garden structure the pergola now competes visually with both the modern public house and the listed building. It disrupts the simple hierarchy and spacing of buildings along this stretch of High Road and erodes the visual primacy of the listed former inn. The Parish Council therefore agrees with the officers professional opinion that the development represents an incongruous addition that harms both the character and appearance of the area and the setting of the designated heritage asset.

The choice of materials adds to that harm. The extensive use of light weight modern polycarbonate for the roof appears poor in quality and out of keeping with the traditional materials of the surrounding buildings. The appellant suggests that this could be addressed by way of a planning condition that requires alternative materials. The Parish Council agrees with the officers that the concern is not limited to the finish of the roof. The fundamental issue is the size span and shallow profile of the structure which is at odds with the established building forms in this location. These are matters of principle and cannot be remedied simply by changing materials after the event.

The Parish Council also supports the officers' concerns regarding the treatment of the site frontage and boundary. The existing open and landscaped character at the front of the site makes a positive contribution to the street scene and helps to frame views of the listed building. The introduction of more formal fencing and additional hard landscape features would further enclose and urbanise this space and would add to the impression of over development within the plot to the detriment of local character.

The Parish Council notes that the District Council also refused the application because of a lack of information on certain technical matters including the detailed design of the proposed estate

fencing and the specification and acoustic performance of the air source heat pump. Given the proximity of neighbouring homes and the sensitivity of the heritage context it is essential that such impacts are properly understood before permission is granted. The material provided with the appeal does not overcome these shortcomings and it would not be appropriate or consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework to grant permission where the effects of the development cannot be fully assessed.

The Parish Council has considered the appellant's references to pergola structures at other public houses and does not find these persuasive. Each application must be determined on its own facts and in its own setting. The presence of other structures elsewhere does not alter the particular sensitivity of this site or reduce the need to adhere to Policies DM7 and DM9 in this location.

The Parish Council recognises the value of a successful public house to the local community and the local economy. However the commercial aims of the operator do not justify harmful development. The claimed public benefits are general in nature and are not supported by specific viability evidence or a clear explanation of why a structure of this scale and form is necessary. Any such benefits attract limited weight and do not outweigh the heritage harm and design harm identified by the professional officers. Even if the harm is considered to be less than substantial in National Planning Policy Framework terms it still carries great weight and is not outweighed by the limited and largely private benefits put forward.

In conclusion Chigwell Parish Council fully supports the professional judgement of Epping Forest District Council officers and the formal reasons for refusal. The appeal scheme conflicts with Policies DM7 and DM9 of the adopted Local Plan and with the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework concerning good design and the conservation of the historic environment. The Parish Council therefore respectfully requests that the Inspector dismisses the appeal and upholds the refusal of planning permission for the works at the King William IV Public House.