

	<p>Online Comments</p>
<p>Application No</p>	<p>18/04678/ful</p>
<p>Comments</p>	<p>BJECTION TO PLANNING APPLICATION FOR CHANGE OF USE OF THE THREE HORSESHOES INN TO A SINGLE RESIDENTIAL DWELLING (Ref:18/04676/FUL)</p> <p>The applicant appears to be utilising a well-used template where only the names, dates and locations have changed. However, in doing so, the applicant includes several factual errors and makes speculative assumptions. The application recognises that “both national and local planning policy seek to retain public houses as community assets” but, nonetheless, seeks planning permission for change of use claiming the pub is no longer a financially viable prospect.</p> <p>It is claimed the landlord ceased trading in September 2017 and the building has been vacant since then. It is possible that the applicant is confusing the given closure date with when surveyors and valuers visited the pub, presumably to start the sale process. In reality, the pub did not close until late January 2018 and it was then sold in a record six weeks to the applicant. Furthermore, the tenant had entered a new three-year tenancy agreement in June 2017.</p> <p>The viability of the pub is supported by a letter from Chris Welham, CEO of Wadworth, dated 13 February 2018 which states “We are selling the property as a pub and we have an interested party as such to purchase it as a pub. I am truly sorry that the pub has closed in the interim period. This was never our intention as we fully hoped that it could have continued to trade up and until the point when the sale completes. We are trying to appoint a temporary operator ... but it is proving difficult ...”</p> <p>“I am also very hopeful that you will be able to continue to enjoy Wadwoth beer once the sale has gone through ...”</p> <p>That many people in Burbage wanted to see the pub re-open and that there would be stiff opposition to any other outcome was conveyed to the CEO of Wadworth, who undertook to ensure this would happen in a letter dated 27 February 2018. Clearly, Wadworth thought the pub could be viable. Wadworth sold the business because it did not see it as fitting its business strategy, which is to focus on larger managed pubs and to divest smaller tenanted pubs (letter from CEO and Annual Report 2017). It did not sell it because it was unviable.</p> <p>The application states “In recent years there have been several managers, with each one seeking to invigorate custom”. If this had been checked, it would have been evident that this is certainly not the case. The previous tenant but 1 ran the pub successfully for around 25 years, until his wife’s ill health precipitated retirement in June 2015. It was then taken over by new a tenant who left in late January 2018 to move to another Wadworth pub. The new tenant tried a few events in the first year of their tenancy but found it difficult to engage with customers and these became much less frequent thereafter and much less well supported.</p> <p>It is true that trade at the pub has declined in recent years, but the applicant surprisingly ignores the underlying reasons. The decline from 2013 coincided with new ownership of the other pub in the village, a free house, named The White Hart. A significant number of the customers took all or part of their custom to the other pub because of a large price differential that prevailed from June to around November 2014 (60p per pint rather than the previous 20p). The decline also coincided with the tenant’s wife being seriously ill, which reduced her ability to help with running the pub (she ran the food side). It was not helped by many customers and potential customers being put off by the behaviour and demeanour of the new tenants.</p> <p>It should be noted that The White Hart does not open lunchtimes and does not sell food. In a village the size of Burbage, these present substantial opportunities to the Three Horseshoes if</p>

	<p>properly run by the right people. The Three Horseshoes has potential for becoming a “destination” pub for food and for attracting back locals and passing trade coming off a major holiday/trunk route.</p> <p>Despite the application claiming that change of use is the only option, there are a number of possibilities that, with the right landlords, could change its fortunes, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · investing in the pub – the CEO of Wadworth acknowledged in his letter of 13 February 2018 that “we have not historically invested in the pub for many years”. · developing the food business. This would be attractive to residents of the village, people from the surrounding area and passers-by. · developing a lunchtime trade centred on making the pub attractive to older residents of the village. <p>IN CONCLUSION, THE PLANNING APPLICATION HAS NO MERIT AND SHOULD BE REJECTED.</p>
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