

18/04678/FUL

I wish to strongly object to this application for change of use.

The premise has been a public house for over 130 years and has a quintessentially English rural setting opposite the village green. Despite an ongoing lack of investment in basic facilities, such as the toilets which were more appropriate to the 60's than expectations of the 21st century, the previous landlord was able to run a busy and successful business at the heart of the village community until his wife fell seriously ill.

This took the necessary drive and energy out of the business and lead ultimately to the landlords retirement and the arrival of new tenants. There was a great deal of anticipation and goodwill at this time, but it quickly became clear they are no experience of running a pub and also had personal issues which affected their ability to operate the business successfully.

In this context, the arguments of the independent report are weak and contain a number of factual errors.

- The pub has had only two landlords in the past 20 or so years;
- The remaining pub in the village does not do food and does not open at lunchtimes (which were a popular social occasion in the Horseshoes for some of the more elderly members of the community). As a free house, it has demonstrated the ability to maintain a pub business within the village, but is now also up for sale with an uncertain future;
- The report contends that Burbage has no village centre, but local people readily identify the village green, where the Horsehoes is located, and the church as key locations.
- Given the understandable lack of rural public transport, the reports contention that pubs in Marlborough and Pewsey are a viable alternative is laughable and also do not take into account the differing nature of rural and town pubs. One suspects the author may have spent more time with google maps than on local reconnaissance!
- The pub received regular passing trade from the canal, cyclists and people making their way to the south and south west coastal holiday resorts

Critically, the argument regarding reduced barrelage does not take into account the situation and abilities of the former landlords. It is obvious to say that, for the personal reasons noted above, the business will have declined during this time. It is equally obvious to say that, given the location and appearance of the pub and with suitable investment and

	<p>modernisation of facilities, an enterprising landlord could create a profitable business.</p> <p>Wadworths themselves recognised this as part of the submitted planning application to extend the dining area of the premises. Their business strategy is now to focus on busier, town centre locations, and hence there has been no investment in the property for many years. That is their decision, but does not imply the pub must be closed – merely that it needs a new owner.</p> <p>It should be noted that Wadworth’s behaviour in this has been nothing if not disingenuous. Having publically claimed in the press that the pub was being sold as a going concern, it was not openly marketed but sold to a development company who have previously undertaken change of use to other Wadworth’s public houses. This is no doubt financially beneficial to Wadworths but contributes to the further hollowing out of village facilities and rural life.</p> <p>I submit that the consultants report is poorly founded and, by ignoring the history and potential of the pub business, puts profit ahead of the needs of the village and surrounding area. Therefore this proposal should be rejected.</p>
	Dr. Paul Stow
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Date:	27.06.2018
Case Officer:	Jonathan James