

**Addendum to Parish Council minutes of meeting held 17<sup>th</sup> August 2015.**

**Applications 2423/15 and 2424/15, The Angel Inn, 5 High Street, Debenham**

**C/o: Planning Officer, Miss Lisa Evans, Mid Suffolk District Council Planning.**

**Debenham Parish Council Comments:**

The Parish Council would like to strongly recommend the refusal of the above planning applications. This decision has taken into account the following policies:

**2424/15:** hb8, hb9, gp1, cor4-cs4, hb1, cor 5, hb4, h18, sb2, t9, cor 1, csfr-fc1, and csfr-fc1.1.,

**2423/15:** gp1, cor5, hb9, hb8, hb1, hb4, cor1, csfr1-fc1, csfr1.1, and sb2.

Detailed comments are as follows:

1. There are no material differences between these plans and the plans previously submitted and considered, which were strongly recommended for refusal by the Parish Council previously;
2. The Parish Council believes that the wording used in the application is misleading and does not reflect accurate facts;
3. The unit referred to as a former dwelling should actually make reference to it being a former single storey cart shed;
4. The provision of the proposed six car parking spaces would be inappropriate for the site;
5. The applications are clearly against Mid Suffolk District Councils' Tourist Policy, particularly when considering the following elements:
  - It does not encourage the retention of local services
  - It does not encourage the retention of an existing facility
  - It does not resist alterations to existing businesses
  - It most probably will result in the loss of local employment potential
  - The creation of a temporary partition wall meant that the gallery is no longer accessible to the public, who have a right to request to view it.
6. With regards to the temporary wall, the area currently blocked off from the public is rapidly deteriorating and is filled with waste materials/excess furniture and other types of unused items, which in itself is a fire and vermin risk. As guardians of the premises, the current owners have a duty of care to maintain the building and this is not being observed in the areas not being used. This is a listed building in the heart of a conservation area and must be protected as a main facility in this Key Service Centre that is Debenham.
7. Due to the erection of the temporary wall, the entrance point to the public house is now a very narrow door, which is also a possible health and safety hazard. It is very congested at busy times and encourages patrons to either overspill to the eating area or simply to the pavement, which is certainly not ideal and can cause other problems.

8. The Angel was used by families, young people, local residents, residents of nearby villages and tourists. The public house was accessible for People with Disabilities and for families with young children in pushchairs. Having such a local, centralised amenity for all ages ensured that not only were the social/community aspects addressed, but also encouraged patrons to either walk or cycle to the venue, which make parking on the High Street much easier and reduced the carbon footprint of those now having to driving outside of the village, as well as add to further congestion of access routes.
9. The current owners are also responsible for the loss of the only “purposely built” Bed and Breakfast facility in the village, which was used by many tourists and visiting relatives. This automatically resulted in loss of employment and loss of amenity, thus reducing the village’s tourism industry intake.

Furthermore, the Parish Council would like to refer to the following points, some also for your consideration when considering the application please.

### **Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)**

In order for the planning guidance to work effectively it must state its objectives clearly, present robust information and monitor the effects of its policy implementation. This **SPG** has three objectives;

- To encourage the retention of rural services.
- To ensure that proposals for changes of use are properly justified
- To enable the reopening of a service or facility at a future stage by resisting specific building alterations that would prevent reopening.

The Planning system has policies and stated guidance that can and should play an important role in facilitating social interaction and help to sustain inclusive communities by ensuring the provision and integration of community facilities such as pubs to enhance the sustainability of communities.

The **NPPF** states: "The Governments objective is to create strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by creating a good quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect community needs" ..... "Planning policies and decisions should safeguard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services".

Planning for people-a social role, planning for prosperity and an economic role.

The **CSFR** comments about: *“enabling communities to be balanced, inclusive and prosperous” and “Achieving a stable economy for a sustainable community”*.

The Mid Suffolk Core Strategy (CS) identifies Debenham as a Key Service Centre within its settlement hierarchy and a main focus for development. **CS policy CS5** requires all development to maintain and enhance the environment and retain the local distinctiveness of the area

"NPPF regarding Listed buildings in Conservation areas" ***Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets***

***are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional."***

As stated in the **SPG** -we would also like to ask if as part of the process the following evidence has been supplied by the applicants?

• **Evidence on the viability of the facility:**

All of the following points need to be addressed by the applicant:

- *The property is required to have been advertised for sale for a minimum of 12 months. Information should include selling agent's literature, valuations and offers that have been received on the property.*
- *Information on the annual accounts/turnover of the premises for the most recent trading year should be submitted to the Local Planning Authority. These should take the form as if submitted to HM Inland Revenue and not just a single line 'the losses were...£\*\*\*'*
- *Evidence needs to be submitted on the opening hours of the premises, and attempts at diversification to sell/provide a wider product range/let rooms.*
- *Whether an application for financial assistance by an application to the Local Authority for rate relief has been made.*
- *Whether an application to the Local Authority to accommodate multiple use of the premises has been made.*

We believe The Angel Public House to be essential to the vitality and sustainability of this growing Key Service centre and policy and guidance appear to support this.

**Policy FC1** states that the planning authority takes into account any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in NPPF

**Policy SC5**

"maintain and enhance"

Grade II - buildings that are part of the local heritage and warrant every effort being made to preserve them.

**POLICY HB3** *Proposals for the conversion of, or alteration to Listed buildings or other buildings of architectural or historic interest will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances.*

**POLICY HB1**

*The District Planning Authority places a HIGH PRIORITY on protecting the character and appearance of all buildings of architectural or historic interest. Particular attention will be given to protecting the settings of Listed Buildings.*

**5.4 Policy statement for village pubs**

*The Change of use of a village Public House to an alternative use will not be permitted **UNLESS:***

- *At least one other public house exists within the settlement boundary or within easy walking distance to it;*

**AND**

- *It can be demonstrated by the applicant that ALL reasonable efforts have been made to sell or let (without restrictive covenant) the property as a Public House AND that it is not economically viable;*

**AND**

- *There is no evidence of significant support from the community for the retention of the Public House.*

The Debenham Parish Council would like to further recommend that the temporary wall is removed (there does not appear to be a deadline for this to take place by in previous planning permissions) and the public house is returned to its original (full) size. This proposal also carries the weight of significant community support, who have also registered this site as an Asset Of Community Value.

The Parish Council would also like to re-iterate all the concerns raised previously and would like to ask the Planning Officer to go through those in detail so that they are fully aware of the background of planning applications for this site and the general community consensus, which has been in line with the Parish Council comments.

Dina Bedwell

Clerk to the Council