

COVERING LETTER.

From Applicant : A.Gooch MRICS.

PLANNING and VIABILITY STATEMENT.

**SECOND PLANNING APPLICATION: The Fishermans Cottage Public House,
Canal Way and Kennetside, Reading.**

A] Introduction and History.

This report has been prepared by the directors of Fishermans Cottage Limited or FCLtd, owners of the above Property, otherwise referred to below as the Pub, Public House, Premises or Fishermans.

This statement supports this second planning application on this site, have been submitted following the **Appeal A: APP/E0345/W/17/3177374** under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission, regards the first application **Ref 161742, dated 16 September 2016**, which was refused by notice dated 8 December 2016. The development proposed was the partial demolition of rear projection and erection of a new extension to form ancillary guest accommodation. **Appeal B: APP/E0345/Y/17/3177376** under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 against a refusal to grant listed building consent.

This Statement summarizes previously raised viability issues, the relevant planning history and describes this new revised Planning Application. This new proposed development is assessed against the Appeal Inspector's report and relevant planning policies to demonstrate how they have been addressed. The Council are accordingly invited to grant planning permission for the revised development proposal

This report should be read in conjunction with the Annexes and Planning Application.

A2] History of First Application.

In December 2016 Refusal of Our Application Nos: 161742 and 161743 Listed Building Consent; “1. The proposed development, by reason of its height, bulk, appearance and siting, is considered to be overdevelopment of the site that would cause substantial harm to the Grade II Listed Fisherman’s Cottage Public House and its setting contrary to Policies CS7 (Design and the Public Realm) and CS33 (Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment) of the Reading Borough LDF Core Strategy 2008 (Altered 2015) and the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.”

PLEASE NOTE THAT ALL CONSULTATIONS except Conservation, were positive:

- a. Environment Agency – Officer note: Not required, LPA can rely on standing advice.
- b. Councils Conservation Consultant – Object recommend refusal.
- c. RBC Transport Strategy – No objection.
- d. RBC Environmental Protection – No objection subject to conditions to deal with construction phase.
- e. Consultant Ecologist – No objection subject to condition to require the eradication of Japanese Knotweed on the site.
- f. Natural Environment – Raises no objection subject to conditions.
- g. RBC Leisure – No comments received.

2. PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The applications were advertised in the local press as the proposal is an extension to a Listed Building. Two site notices were posted around the site and properties adjoining the site were consulted. As a result of the consultations: **7 letters in support were received highlighting the following:**

- The proposed letting rooms would support the pub business that third parties are seeking to be retained,
- The development site at present is overgrown so proposal is an improvement to the area,
- Guest rooms would improve security in the area.

B] Additional Supporting Documents to second Application.

This second application comprises the following documents:

1] Plans prepared by Flower Kittle Architects:

o 1969/LP Location Plan o 1969/BP Block Plan o 1969/EX-P01 Existing & Proposed Plans o 1969/EX-P02 Existing & Proposed Elevations & Sections.

The revised scheme incorporates the same number of bedrooms [6] and parking spaces [3] as previously but is significantly less high and “bulky” being built on 2 [not 3] levels.

2] Design and Access Statement prepared by Flower Kittle Architects;

The layout of this revised scheme on the lower ground floor is almost identical to the previous scheme, as are the parking and access provisions on the upper ground floor level. Two bedrooms are proposed on this upper level, whilst the design of the roof and facades have been modified.

3] Planning Statement prepared by Bell Cornwell;

Whilst dating from 2016 [written in support of the previous application], the vast majority of planning issues raised by Bell Cornwell in their report remain unchanged [regarding A4 use class, highways/traffic, flooding, listed building preservation & viability, planning policy, landscaping etc] and this report is thus highly pertinent.

4] Revised and updated Heritage Statement prepared by Forum Heritage Services;

5] Revised and updated Transport Technical Note prepared by RGP;

6] Revised and updated Green Link Appraisal and Landscape Proposals prepared by David Jarvis Associates;

7] Ecology Report prepared by EPR Ltd; the ecology on the development site, being redundant unused wasteland, has not changed since the previous application.

8] Flood Risk Assessment prepared by Simon Jones-Parry; the revised development is unchanged on the lower level to the original proposal.

.

C] Viability Issues of listed building Public House.

1] The public house business has been struggling for many years and was purchased by the current owners from Fullers. The current owners [REDACTED] have made significant investment in renovating the interior and exterior of the listed building, including the toilets, kitchens and resident managers living accommodation above. **These were all exciting and innovative changes benefitting the local community, the customers and the listed building itself.**

2] The Pub has been closed and re-opened 5 times by differing operators over the last 12 years, which demonstrates conclusively the unsustainable nature of this Public house, within the constraints of the current small premises. Sadly, earnings were neither sufficient to pay staff and remunerate a quality Publican, nor to pay to enhance the property, finance improvements, refurbishment or even undertake important repairs to the listed building's structure. Most recently the Pub was closed in 2014, June – December following failure of licensee [REDACTED]. Additionally, the Pub was closed between May – July 2016, when the owner operators [REDACTED] closed after Business Plan failure.

3] The company [REDACTED] has now been dissolved with debts [REDACTED] following the extensive renovations, and 18 months operating an unsustainable business model.

4] After closure in 2016 and extensive marketing, a tenant [REDACTED] agreed to sign a short-term license for 2 years and re-opens and is now Landlord number 5 since 2005. This new tenant took over the premises with the outgoing tenant's furnishings, fixtures and equipment for a zero-capital payment. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

The owners understand that the Pub in its current form cannot compete and survive profitably without growth and evolving with the times. The addition of 6 guest rooms is a necessary part of the business plan to secure the future of the public house as a business and a community facility as well as ensuring a positive long-term use for the listed building.

D] Revised Planning Application and the Appeal Decision, modified Scheme.

Unfortunately Planning Permission was refused to build the additional 6 guest bedrooms, on the basis of the harm to the Listed building, and the excessive bulk of the original scheme.

The Appeal Inspector's report highlighted the following points on the previous scheme, which we have corrected **and stipulated in bold type below**:

"Paragraph 8. I note that the height of the proposed building which has a very shallow hipped roof has been designed to be slightly lower than that of the top of the pub's roof. However, the roof of the pub is of a substantially different design, with hipped faces to all sides and only a small ridge line at the top. While I agree with the appellant that a key part of the buildings significance emanates from its attractive façade and historic riverside setting, the view of its roof scape and the chimneys of the property from the rear also contributes to its setting and therefore its significance." **The new scheme has modified the roof design to match the Pub, with hipped tiled roof faces visible to all sides. The revised scheme also has no upper floor, therefor lowering the ridge by an additional 1,1meters approximately, being subservient to the Listed building.**

"Paragraph 9. The roof of the proposal would present a very different design to that of the listed building. The very shallow hip would, judging from the submitted plans, almost appear as flat from many angles and consequently the building and its height would present a substantial mass and bulk to the street scene. In views from Canal Way in particular, this design would detract substantially from views of the rear elevation and roofscape of the Fisherman's Cottage...". **The new scheme is located further away from the Pub, exposing the visibility of the Pub. It has a roof design when viewed from Canal way, similar to the Pub, with sloping hipped tiled roof elevations to all sides. The revised design presents much less mass and bulk without the upper floor.**

"Paragraph 10. I am also not convinced by the detailed design of the building.... The design of the proposal particularly of the open car parking arches and the overall bulk and weight of the building would draw the eye away from the rear of the pub and cause harm to the setting I recognize and appreciate that the setting of the pub has already to a certain extent been degraded by other development adjacent and nearby". **The new Architects have developed a different design for their scheme, there are no open car parking arches to cause harm to the setting.**

"Paragraph 11. I have fewer concerns over the footprint of the building, which I consider to be reasonable, given the separation of the structure from the main building of the pub, and I therefore do not consider that in pure footprint terms solely the scheme would represent the overdevelopment of the site. A small garden area would be retained at the rear of the building and open space would be retained between the site and the conservatory to the side of the building, as well as in the form of the existing car park... I consider that the height, mass and design of the proposal would cause less than substantial harm." **The Inspector has approved the footprint design, which remains almost identical to the previous design, at 124m2 built area on the lower ground floor. The upper ground floor is a further 67m2 which is smaller than the previous design of 71m2 for the 2 rooms on the first floor. Additionally, the parking area is retained, extended and enhanced with green planting, as is the Pub garden with a covered roof smoking area.**

“Paragraph 12. ... the Framework states that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of a proposal, including securing the asset’s optimum use. Detailed evidence is submitted of issues concerning continuing viability issues of the pub, the fate of many pubs in the area in recent times and substantial new riverside competition closer to the town center. I can appreciate and fully accept therefore that the pub has on going viability issues and that the provision of guest rooms would provide a valuable additional income for the business, enabling the heritage asset to remain within its optimum use. I place material weight on such benefits.”

“Paragraph 13.while noting evidence that a 4 room scheme would not be viable, it seems to me that it would be entirely possible for a scheme to be brought forward that would secure similar benefits to the current proposal, without causing the same degree of harm. Consequently, while there are public benefits to the proposal I consider that these are insufficient to outweigh the less than substantial harm that the proposed development would cause to the setting and the significance of the Grade II listed building.

The Inspector accepts the viability issues for the current Pub operation and supports the construction of 6 bedrooms to provide additional income and preserve the Pub. This new revised application mitigates any harm to the listed building, maintains a viable 6-bedroom scheme and secures the same public benefits as the previous scheme.

For the above reasons FCLtd are hopeful of receiving positive feedback from the Reading Planning Department with regard to this preliminary application for the construction of these 6 guest bedrooms, and providing an additional 3 parking spaces which we believe should ensure the long term future of the Fishermans Cottage as a viable Public house.

If you require any further information regarding he scheme then please contact the client FCL, represented by Alex Gooch [REDACTED] directly. We would appreciate a meeting with the designated Planning Officer to discuss these proposals at your earliest convenience.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]