

I Guy Masson have prepared this statement for the planning inquiry into the appeal against the refusal of planning permission SDNP/20/04118/FUL. In preparing this statement, I have read the SoCG and the parties' Statements of Case.'

I live in Huckers Lane near to but not in view of the property known as the Queens and not a direct neighbouring property. I have lived in Selborne for 12 years.

I have seen a considerable change to the landscaping at the rear of the Queens. When I moved to Selborne, the garden of the Queens was fully enclosed and only very small glimpses could be eyed. There was a gap in the hedge by the corner of Huckers Lane and the driveway to Plum Tree House and some local people including myself used this gap to gain access to the garden and the bar/restaurant in the summer months. The garden was essentially fully enclosed or wrapped around by foliage and quite a peaceful haven from the noise of the High Street. To the north of the garden beyond a hedge was the car parking for the Queens that was open to the Plum Tree house drive allowing customers to access the overflow parking that ran along the edge of the field. More often and not, this additional parking was not needed and the transition from the curtilage of the Queens to the countryside was quite clear and pronounced.

Following the refusal for permission of the planning application, that was decided in October 2021, the Developer (DWD) felled trees to the rear of the Queen's Garden in May 2022 and this exposed the rear of the Queens to the local green space beyond and altered the setting. A large amount of hedging was removed including a significant screen to Plum Tree house and this has since been landscaped with machinery and hardcore, leaving a very urban feel. During 2022, work started on the interior of the Queens. The workers lived in two caravans on site. The garden was used for various fires to burn debris from the interior of the Queens. Pre 2022, the toilet block was removed from the NE elevation and in early 2024, the buildings attached to the buttery on the S elevation have been removed. This includes the kitchen block. Currently the rear of the buttery is exposed with sheeting to protect it.

The changes when viewed from Huckers Lane have been significant. The Queens can now be seen from various aspects of Church meadow whereas in 2015, it could not be seen at all.

With specific reference to the aparthotel suites, it is difficult to argue a financial reason for altering the interior of the Queens. From seven good quality letting rooms to three aparthotel suites, the net result will be a smaller customer base and that is assuming that one of the suites is not housing the manager. Yes, the capacity can be increased by adding an additional building parallel to Huckers Lane but that would incur even more expense. But the revenue generated is very unlikely to justify the cost. This has led to the conclusion amongst many villagers that the developer and owner of the Queens can only financially benefit by selling those apartments suites as apartments and that was the intention from the outset. This would result in no visitor accommodation at all. Yet, that concept was clearly rejected by the previous planning application.

Since the apartment suites have been completed, I can confirm that I have met several people who have lived in the flats. This included a lady who had a small dog who lived there for three months whilst work was done to her house. An Italian lady with a Hungarian vizsla lived there for perhaps two months and I understand another tenant has been there over one year. I only meet those with dogs as I am a dog walker myself so cannot comment further. For most of the last 15 months this situation has not offered much needed access to overnight tourist accommodation in the village. I would stress that the Gilbert White Museum raises revenue from wedding events and there is a need for accommodation during these events. In the last two months, it appears that the visitor accommodation may be more accessible, but it does

raise questions as to how this can be monitored given the previous year history of longer term lets at the Queens.

The Jubilee bar is well received by some in the village. I have been there a few times, and it is a pleasant cosy winter bar inhabited by some Selborne residents. However, it cannot be compared to the two bars, restaurant and rear garden that the Queens should be. The current offering clearly has merit, but it needs to be on the same scale as before the purchase of the Queens by the developer. It is not offering access to the wider public, with the emphasis being on the word wider, as there is no room for tourists, limited opening hours and a very limited food offering. One of the statutory purposes of the national park is 'To promote opportunities for the public understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of their areas'. Given its limited size, opening times and offerings, it is fair to ask whether the current offering achieves this.

My concern is the direction of the future of the village. If the development is allowed to proceed, there is an obvious risk that those suites will be sold as apartments. Those apartments will not contribute to the village either economically or aesthetically nor will this development be fulfilling the mandate of the SDNP. Thank you.

The Queens Garden

2012