

Appellant

PUBLIC INQUIRY – THE QUEENS – 22-25 October 2024

STATEMENT of the COMMITTEE of the SELBORNE ASSOCIATION

My name is Lynne Ravenscroft. I have lived in Selborne since 1967 and as the chair of the Executive Committee of the Selborne Association I speak on its behalf. The Association was founded in 1974 ‘To cherish, promote and protect all things relating to the village and the surrounding area’. Its aims, therefore, are very much aligned with the purposes of the South Downs National Park, albeit on a smaller scale.

We have submitted representations in relation to this planning proposal which we hope will demonstrate to you that the proposed alternative community facilities are of a significantly *lesser* quality to those that we have lost as a direct result of the Appellant’s plans. *Aparthotel* apartments do not support the needs of our visitors and the development as a whole will cause harm to the character of the village and to the landscape around it.

The Appellant in his proof of evidence states that he has worked with the community for seven years to identify a viable beneficial use for The Queens. The only engagement with the community that we are aware of in relation to this appeal proposal was a ‘consultation postcard’ sent to some, but not all households in the village in June 2020, asking residents to visit a website to ‘register your support for the application’. This can hardly be considered community consultation as the wording on the postcard and on the website only catered for responses in *support* of the proposals. (A copy of this postcard can be seen on page 5 of the Appellant’s Planning Statement dated September 2020)

The postcard and the website stated that the offer of the *gift* of the ground floor of The Queens to the Gilbert White Museum was ‘subject to the plans for The Queens as a whole getting the support of the Selborne community, the parish and district council, and the planners’. However, despite the lack of community support, demonstrated by the overwhelming number of objections including from ourselves and from the Parish Council, and the refusal of planning permission by members of the SDNPA planning committee, the Appellant has continued with his proposal to this second appeal regardless.

The Appellant says that the proposals will deliver multiple benefits to the community and that the site will become a community hub. This of course is precisely what The Queens was within the village before the actions of the developer destroyed it as a pub and deprived us of its use, including its seven serviced letting rooms that were so crucial for our tourist visitors.

As a 24/7 pub and hotel, it was a valuable asset to the community. It gave a free-of-charge venue for any number of organisations and individuals to use. With 2 bars and an excellent restaurant, people could drop in at any time, have breakfast or a coffee, have lunch, in nice weather in the garden, or have dinner in the evening.

It was a genuine community hub and fulfilled a genuine community need. All this has been replaced by a small Tap Room providing drinks (but not food) for just 3½ hours and only on Thursdays Friday and Saturday evenings. An additional Field Studies Centre is proposed when the existing one, a sizeable converted 16th century barn ideally placed in the Museum grounds and specially rebuilt for the purpose of field studies, is big enough to cater for programme expansion and is already available as a rentable space to the community.

The Tap Room is no replacement for the facilities of The Queens as they were. There is no *need* for it, nor for the proposed additional Field Studies Centre to constitute a 'viable' use for The Queens because non-viability of The Queens operating as a pub with rooms has never been proved - as the first Appeal Inspector made clear in her Decision Letter. These facilities cannot be claimed to provide a 'sustainable' future for the site because that future is only now in question due to The Queens having been bought by a development company which has sought to prevent its sustainable future as a Freehouse pub.

We consider that to cherish, promote and protect Selborne, a large hospitality venue, offering round-the-clock food and drink service, including serviced rooms available on a nightly basis, is exactly what the village, its businesses, the Museum, shops and gallery need to ensure sustainability, especially through tourism. The Queens, sitting at the heart of Selborne, did, and still could, if restored to its original condition in 2015, provide these beneficial and accessible facilities for the community and for visitors to the village. Tourism is crucial to the economic life of the village and the SDNP. The closure of The Queens, a pub with seven serviced rooms and restaurant open all day is in no way mitigated by the much lesser and unnecessary facilities proposed in the application now at appeal.



(P. Lynne Ravenscroft, PhD., MSc.)

Planning Statement

The Former Queens, Selborne



4. Statement of Community involvement

- 4.1. In readiness for this planning submission the applicant has undertaken a robust and sustained public consultation exercise in order to fully gauge the opinion of the local community.
- 4.2. In June 2020 the applicant circulated a 'consultation postcard' to addresses in the village of Selborne. The postcard directed recipients to the consultation website (www.Queens2020.co.uk) via which the proposals for the site could be reviewed. The website was also advertised via posters around the village and via the Selborne Facebook Group.



Bear Selborne resident

Having listened carefully to the planning outcome of last year for this site, we have redesigned the scheme principally to find a complimentary use to the other businesses in the village. Please visit www.queens2020.co.uk to see the proposed plan and register your support for the application.

The application will be brought forward only with support from your local residents.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Figure 2: Consultation Postcard

DEREK WARWICK
DEVELOPMENTS

CONSULTATION END DATE Friday 7th August

With the assistance of the following:

Figure 3: Website Home Page

The Queens

SELBORNE



Dear Selborne resident

Having listened carefully to the planning outcome of last year for this site, we have redesigned the scheme principally to find a complimentary use to the other businesses in the village. Please visit www.queens2020.co.uk to see the proposed plans and register your support for the application.

The application will be brought forward only with support from you as local residents.

We look forward to hearing from you.

