

Address: Whicham House Whitley Road Dewsbury WF12 0LY

About the application

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| Application number: 2022/93731 | |
| What is the application for?: | Partial demolition and alterations to convert public house to 5 residential unit |
| Address of the site or building: | Woolpack Inn, Whitley Road, Whitley, Dewsbury, WF12 0LZ |
| Postcode: | WF12 0LZ |

User comments

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| Type of comment: An objection | |
| Do you wish your comments to be published on the website anonymously? | No |
| <p>I believe that the Woolpack Inn is an essential amenity for the village. It has long been an integral part of village life as well as being a destination or resting point for walkers/hikers/ramblers etc. In this way it has been essential in maintaining Whitley as a village and not just some houses on a road. I believe the Woolpack to be a community asset which is recognised now more than ever as being an important thing for a village to have. I understand that the Woolpack has been a pub since records began and, as such, it would not be returning to being accommodation but rather changing its use. I also understood that there was a covenant preventing the building being used for residential purposes and that this was confirmed by Greene King before they sold the property and the reason why they themselves did not try to get planning permission to turn it into residential units.</p> <p>Changing the building into residential units would put strain on Scopsley Lane which is already often difficult to navigate due to its narrowness and the number of houses on it. Parking is particularly difficult. The very limited number of parking spaces available with the suggested dwellings would, I am sure, exacerbate this considerably. The small lane below the pub which leads to the present accommodation and Croft House is blocked reasonably frequently with the very limited number of vehicles which use it to access the back of the pub. Most overnight visitors seem to use the main car park at the other side of Whitley Road instead of the small amount of parking that is just outside the rooms. The conversion would mean that there would be several families using this very small lane to access the proposed parking spaces and I believe that this could lead to severe congestion on Whitley Road which is used as a 'rat run' from Dewsbury to Kirkheaton, Huddersfield and the motorway. Whitley Road is not large and is twisting and therefore visibility is poor which would make this even more of a problem, particularly as cars from the potential dwellings in the pub would have to park on Whitley Road due to the lack of parking in the development. This would have a significant impact on the traffic in the village and would also increase the likelihood of a serious accident occurring.</p> <p>I agree with the applicant that under the ownership of Greene King the Woolpack was leased to many people with varying degrees of success. I was told by several of these people that the level of rent asked for after the initial settling in period was prohibitive</p> | |

people that the level of rent asked for after the initial settling in period was prohibitive which led to the high turnover of tenants. The pub being taken over by experienced publicans was therefore seen as a very positive step. The initial refurbishment was also very encouraging but, as can be seen on the photos attached to the planning application, this was not continued for long. As can be seen, the pub looks shabby, uncared for and unwelcoming. This is in stark contrast the owners' other pub in Kirkheaton. The food has also been very variable and not always available during the mealtimes advertised and the welcome extended to patrons has also been very variable. Again this is in complete contrast to the Blacksmith's Arms. The pub has been also not always opened when it is advertised as being open leading to clients having to find somewhere else to go. I believe that these points were very significant in the decline of trade post Covid restrictions and that if they were addressed the Woolpack could again become a very successful independent pub as it was in the 1990s. The number of very successful pubs in the area which also have to be driven to support this view. If the owners are unable to run the business, it would surely be fairer to the community to sell it rather than convert it but this they have not tried to do. The boarding up of the property in an area which has some properties which have been empty for decades without suffering vandalism increases my concern that they are more concerned with getting planning permission than trying to find a way out of an successful business.