

About the application

Application number: 2023/93657	
What is the application for?:	Erection of two detached dwellings with detached garages; alterations to public
Address of the site or building:	The Shears, 201, Halifax Road, Hightown, Liversedge, WF15 6NR
Postcode:	WF15 6PR

User comments

Type of comment: An objection	
Do you wish your comments to be published on the website anonymously?	Yes
I wish to object to this application on the grounds that the development would result in the loss of a community facility. In general terms, I share the deep national concern about the loss of public houses, with closures now taking place at the rate of around fourteen each week. Pubs are valuable community assets for many reasons, including:- • Providing somewhere for people to meet and socialise with others from different backgrounds to their own • Supporting the local economy through employment of staff and purchases from local businesses • Offering meeting places for clubs, societies and charities. The Shears is a community pub which boasts a large U-shaped lounge with stained glass windows. Rescued from pubco abandonment in 2010, this well-loved historic pub also features log fires. There is a popular beer garden which boasts fine views. The Shears also has a well-deserved reputation for the quality of its real ales and is a past winner of the CAMRA Pub of the Season award. The pub has significant historical connections. The Shears dates from 1773. The Luddites met here in 1812 to plan the attack on Rawfold's Mill and this is one of the few remaining links to the Luddites in the area. The Shears is listed as an Asset of Community Value, and is also a non-designated heritage asset. It is identified in the West Yorkshire Historic Environment record. These factors should be taken into account when the planning application is being considered. Section 92 of the NPPF requires local planning authorities to guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities where they would reduce the community's ability to meet its needs. I consider that the Shears Inn is a valued facility which does meet the needs of the local community. I believe that the application will also need to address the council's PLP48 policy and I trust that this will be taken into account. There was a previous application to demolish the pub and replace it with private housing. See planning reference 2010/01000. This application generated almost 150	

housing. See planning reference 2019/91239. This application prompted almost 450 objections from the local community and was refused by the Planning Sub-Committee. An extract from the council's decision letter reads as follows:-

In accordance with the plan(s) and applications submitted to the Council on 11-Apr-2019. The reasons for the Council's decision to refuse permission for the development are: 1. The Shears Inn dates from the late 18th century and makes an important contribution to the townscape of Hightown. The Inn has an important part in the history of the Luddite movement in Yorkshire. It is a non-designated heritage asset and identified in the West Yorkshire Historic Environment Record. The proposed development would result in the complete loss of the building and its replacement with a development that would not respect or enhance the local townscape and deliver a minimal additional public benefit. Consequently, the proposed development would be contrary to Policies LP24 and LP35 of the Kirklees Local Plan and paragraphs 192 and 197 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

This decision was not appealed by the applicant.

Most of the concerns raised in the report to the Sub-Committee from the Head of Planning and Development in connection with the previous application are also relevant to the latest one.

There is a perception that The Shears has recently suffered from lack of investment and has therefore not been achieving its potential. It has been a thriving establishment in the past and it is apparent that there are other, similar pubs in the area which are doing well. In the right hands, there is no reason why the Shears should not be commercially viable. If the applicant claims it is not viable, then those claims should be tested using CAMRA's Public House Viability Test which should be carried out by the planners themselves so that they have an objective assessment as to whether, if properly run, the pub could be a viable business.

As a minimum, the applicant should be required to submit trading accounts for the last three full years in which the pub was operating as a full-time business. Is there clear evidence that the pub has been marketed as a going concern at a reasonable price and for a significant length of time? The applicant should be asked for details of where the pub was offered for sale and by whom e.g. specialist licensed trade agents.

If there is insufficient evidence of a comprehensive marketing campaign, the application should be refused and not be reconsidered before such a campaign has taken place.

For all the reasons outlined above I believe that the application should be refused.