

About the application

Application number: 2019/91239	
What is the application for?:	Demolition of existing public house and erection of four dwellings
Address of the site or building:	The Shears, 201, Halifax Road, Hightown, Liversedge, WF15 6NR
Postcode:	WF156NR

User comments

Type of comment: An objection
<p>I wish to object to this application on the grounds that the development would result in the loss of a community facility.</p> <p>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:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 and societies <p>As well as injecting an average of £80,000 into their local economy each year, pubs play a key role in raising money for local charities – it is estimated that the average pub raises around £3000 a year for charity.</p> <p>The Institute of Public Policy Research (IPPR) has used 'Social Return on Investment' methodology to quantify the wider social value which pubs generate for their communities, which cannot be captured in financial terms. These wider community benefits range from the amount of money the pub raises for charity to the reduced risk of social isolation through opportunities for pub-goers to make new friends and strengthen community ties. The Institute for Public Policy Research's research found that each pub generates between £20,000 and £120,000 of wider social value to their communities.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Many other objectors have alluded to the pub's 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 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. There</p>

also features a beer garden which leads into the river. There is a quiz night on Tuesdays which brings the community together, a Sunday music quiz and occasional open mic sessions. The popular taproom provides Sky Sports TV, pool and darts. The pub supports an active pool team. 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.

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.

An unincorporated community group has nominated The Shears as an Asset of Community Value, and their application to Kirklees Council has been successful (case reference 116060570). This nomination will be added to the Register for Assets of Community Value, and this should be taken into account when the planning application is being considered.

The application should therefore be refused on the grounds that it is contrary to national planning policy. 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.

How will the application will be determined? If it is to go before Committee, please notify me of the date well in advance and clarify whether objectors will have the opportunity to speak.