

25/05/22

Dear Inspector

Derek Warwick Developments – Response to Third Party Representations

I am delighted to be partnering with the Gilbert White museum to deliver this development for the village of Selborne. Albeit not listed as formal joint applicants the unique and urgent operational requirements of the Gilbert White Museum have been at the forefront of the Appeal Proposals. Subject to securing planning consent, it is proposed that the ground floor of the appeal premises be leased to the GWOC for use as a Field Study Centre and Tap Room on a 'peppercorn rent' for a period of 99 years. As detailed in the Appeal Statement, the addition of this space is imperative for the ongoing financial sustainability of the GWOC who have been present in Selborne village since 1955. In addition to the direct benefits to the Gilbert White Museum It is envisioned that the Queens will become a community hub, offering multiple benefits to a much wider demographic in the village and beyond. The range and flexibility of uses offered will far eclipse the previous use and can flex to meet demand.

The Appeal Scheme represents the culmination of 7 years concerted effort during which time we have worked with the community and local authority officers to identify a viable beneficial use for the premises and site. The Appeal Proposals come as a direct response to the comments of the SDNPA, the content of the Appeal Inspector's previous decision and the representations received in response to the public consultation exercise carried out in preparation for this submission. The Appeal scheme is an unrivalled opportunity to deliver a truly complementary facility to the existing businesses within the village and deliver a valuable resource for the local community.

Having reviewed the representations of the Interested Parties it is clear that there is a well-established cohort of local objectors. The half-truths, misrepresentations and wild speculation in the statements from these groups are an attempt to mire the Appeal and obscure the true benefits of the Appeal scheme. At odds to each of their statements, this planning application has been created to answer a genuine community need, provide long lasting support of the Gilbert White Museum whilst also answering the Appeal Inspector's key points from the last appeal on this site. The potential benefit of the development is greater for the wider community, the visitors to the village and to the local businesses in Selborne.

The application has had wide ranging input from the Chief Executive of the SDNP and has been carefully worked up with full co-operation of Graeme Felstead (Case Officer), who in turn has been supported by the Tim Slaney (Head of Planning). At every opportunity Graeme and I worked together to deliver the application before you. I genuinely feel sorry for the SDNPA planning department as they have input many hours and been helpful throughout the process and find themselves having to justify a non-sensical planning committee decision they clearly do not agree with.

Answering the SDNP appeal statement first refusal reason and objector comments.

The key complaint from the objectors is the lack of SD43 policy compliance, although they are fixated with a marketing requirement which has no bearing on this application. This was echoed when the planning committee decided against the officer's recommendation.

Before this application was submitted, a meeting was held to confirm the exact process of compliance with SD43. It was agreed that we would focus solely on compliance with part SD43.2.c This took considerable time with much consultation with the policy team at SDNP before moving to the process of forming an application. (Policy note in our attachments) To see this as the first reason for refusal is an outrageous waste of everyone's time let alone the financial costs.

Answering the SDNP appeal statement second refusal reason and objector comments.

The second reason for refusal was stated as overdevelopment with particular focus on the barn building adjacent to Huckers Lane. The objectors drove the scheme away from a two-storey new element to replace the old restaurant on the high street and the case officer himself suggested placing the additional accommodation proposed towards the rear of the site. Then, under the scrutiny of design, conservation, and landscaping consultees we were advised (as detailed in the meeting note before you) to move this building on to the edge of Huckers Lane and remove the hedge which we duly agreed to. Given the level of engagement and the receipt of no formal objection from any of these consultees it is immensely disappointing for the Council to have included this element of the scheme within its reason for refusal and by extension the Appeal SoC. The objectors have maintained that the Appeal Proposals comprise overdevelopment, however, we are simply proposing to demolish some elements of run down old buildings (approx. 100m²) and proposing some much higher quality buildings of not considerably more size to replace them (approx. 123m²). I fail to see the demonstrable harm in this?

At every point in this 7-year saga we have worked with the LPA by listening to the objections and amending the application to grow the benefit and suit the local community. I hope the attitudes of a minority don't subvert the wishes of the silent majority who wish to see something done with this building. Please allow the appeal without delay and allow peace to return to this village.

Yours Sincerely

Guy Macklin
Derek Warwick Developments (Appellant)