

Statement from Joanna Clay, resident

For the Public Inquiry for The Queens, High Street, Selborne GU34 3JJ

I, Joanna Clay, object to this Appeal. I have read the Statement of Common Ground and the parties' Statements of Case.

I have lived in Selborne for about 28 years. I served as a member of Selborne Parish Council from 2010 until May 2023. I am currently secretary of Selborne Stores Ltd, a registered not-for-profit company aiming to set up a Community Shop which would trade solely for the benefit of the village.

I would like to focus upon the works that have taken place at The Queens since the developer bought the site.

You will hear from others that the developer bought the pub in 2015 as a going concern with busy pub and letting rooms. In 2016 he closed it and gutted it before putting in an application to convert it into 6 residential flats and a house.

In 2019 the appellant sold the field to the rear of The Queens and some of the pub car parking area to the residents of Honeysuckle Cottage. This field had been used for many years for occasional events and extra parking.

In 2017 planning permission was refused for SDNP/17/04753/FUL Demolition of the contemporary single storey extensions. The application included demolition of the toilet and kitchen blocks. Although permission was refused, the developer has since demolished these parts of the building regardless.

The internal and external alterations that have taken place render the "existing site plan" P-15-025 02-91-002 obsolete. The plan shows the bars, bathrooms, the external toilet block and the large kitchen block, all of which have been removed.

The large brick kitchen block was demolished in January 2024, shortly before the High Court Decision was announced. There was a well-equipped commercial kitchen, capable of providing an extensive menu to the restaurant, two bars and pub garden. Now only a small section of one wall remains standing. Although partly hidden behind a high fence, it detracts from views within the Conservation Area. The works have resulted in extensive damage to the walls and roof of the function room which adjoined the kitchen, and which has been left to further deteriorate. In the Decision of SDNP/17/04753/FUL the function room was deemed "to make a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area". Yet, this part of the building is in serious decline, with roof tiles broken, slipped or missing, peeling paint and rotting woodwork. In April 2024 a letter to The Times stated that the Gilbert White Museum was "facing financial difficulties" and under threat of closure and a funding appeal was launched by

Alan Titchmarsh. It is not clear how the Museum would finance the now extensive repairs or to expand, when its own future is uncertain.

A section of mature hedge has been removed without permission, at the access point to Huckers Lane. The widening of this access opens the site and gives a more urban appearance.

As well as being an important wildlife habitat, the belt of mature trees and hedge to the rear of the pub garden provided screening. Out of the 9 mature trees only 3 remain. Some trees were removed under permission in 2022. In addition, the developer has removed a large evergreen hedge to the northwest corner, plus hedging along the rear. Whilst a few new trees and hedging have been planted, they will take decades to mature and will not screen the proposed large area of built and hard landscaping.

The boundary of Local Green Space 8 includes the trees and hedge line, the driveway, part of the pub garden and the fields to the rear. The South Downs National Park Authority awarded this important designation stating that "The site is demonstrably special for its natural beauty and tranquillity and for recreation".

The large timber field shelter by the drive is within LGS8 and under the applicant's control. It has been there for a few years now and has the appearance of a permanent structure. It blocks views and is prominent in the site.

There is a large mobile home in the side car park. Works on The Queens ceased after the apartments were completed in 2022. It has no planning permission yet has not been removed.

High close boarding has been erected in front of the barn. Although set back from the road, it is prominent and has a detrimental effect on the Conservation Area.

There is no planning permission for the two roof lights and the double glazing to the new rear doors and second floor windows installed in 2022. The two roof lights are not to be found anywhere on the proposed plans before you. Selborne Village Design Statement advises that roof lights are not generally appropriate. This guidance would also apply to the many roof lights proposed for the barn house.

Turning now to the interior of the building.

The existing ground floor plan before you is obsolete because of the alterations that have taken place.

There was a ground floor plan produced for the Tap Room Licensing application in 2022, number 2202-WD-01A, a copy of which I have given you

On your site visit you will see that alterations have taken place to roughly equate with this, but not with the proposals before you.

A small Tap Room was opened in early 2023. It is across the front of the building only, not as in the proposals. Owing to changes made to the layout of the front car park, there are now only 3 car parking spaces, not 6 as proposed. The public bar has been divided into two to form a kitchen and a small room to the rear, currently used for storage. The back room is also the fire exit from the kitchen. It is too small to be a viable village shop or to have any other community use. The area to the rear marked WC's /kitchen on the proposals has now been incorporated into the access for the flats above. The toilets for the Tap Room are now only in the centre of the building.

A new door for access to the flats has been created to the rear, without permission. It is not shown on the proposed plans before you.

The access to the proposed Field Studies Centre is now blocked by the new Tap Room. The appellant's Final Statement of Case states the FSC would be "targeted at older children" and the Proof of Evidence as "school age children". If these children enter via the main Tap Room door, the safety and security of the licensed premises as well as child safety would be at risk even when the Tap Room is not open for drinkers. The only other access to the function room is via the front of the site, but there is no footway from the front car park.

Owing to the recent alterations, the only toilets for the proposed FSC would be shared with the Tap Room, with obvious concerns for child safety. The application is silent on expected numbers of children that may use the FSC, but there are now 2 unisex toilets, which would be insufficient for groups. The appellant suggests that the community could use the room when not in use for the FSC. The same problems of access, risk and inadequate toilets apply.

I have not been upstairs since the works have taken place but have looked at the photographs and plans on the Airbnb website, where the flats are offered to rent, an example of which I have given you. There is no lift shown on those plans, and no space for one now owing to the alterations made. So, there can be no disabled access to the first floor flats, contrary to the appellant's Proof of Evidence.

The 3 self-catering flats have been converted and let out since their completion in 2022. As the pub is Sui Generis, a pub with letting rooms, these flats have no planning permission.

I do not know if there is any building regulation approval for the conversions or whether the flats conform to fire regulations. There is now only one staircase from the flats, there is a new commercial kitchen directly underneath, and kitchens in each flat.

Two flats are listed as available on Airbnb, but not the second floor flat. Historically the second floor had an apartment for the publican, plus two letting rooms as shown on the existing plans. It appears the second floor has been converted to form just one flat

which has been lived in permanently for many months. The Appellants Proof of Evidence states that there is “a managers apartment”. There are only 2 Airbnb flats and a small lawned garden, so it would seem extraordinary to require a resident manager, especially as the Airbnb host is the appellant’s wife, who does not live in Selborne. The part time Tap Room manager lives elsewhere in the village. My perception is that this flat is let out long term.

The developer applied for C1 use for apart-hotels. Airbnb states that The Meadow is available for more than 28 days with a minimum 4-night stay. This is not indicative of a holiday or hotel let. There is no link whatsoever between the Tap Room, which is let out to, and managed by, the Gilbert White Museum, and the flats which are managed directly by the developer. In the past, guests would enter the front door, be greeted by the publican and meals were served all day in the pub. They were letting rooms. There is now a separate entrance for the self-catering apartments with its own post box and self check-in. The community and the National Park have lost the 7 letting rooms which were so vital for short term or overnight visitors, particularly for singles or couples.

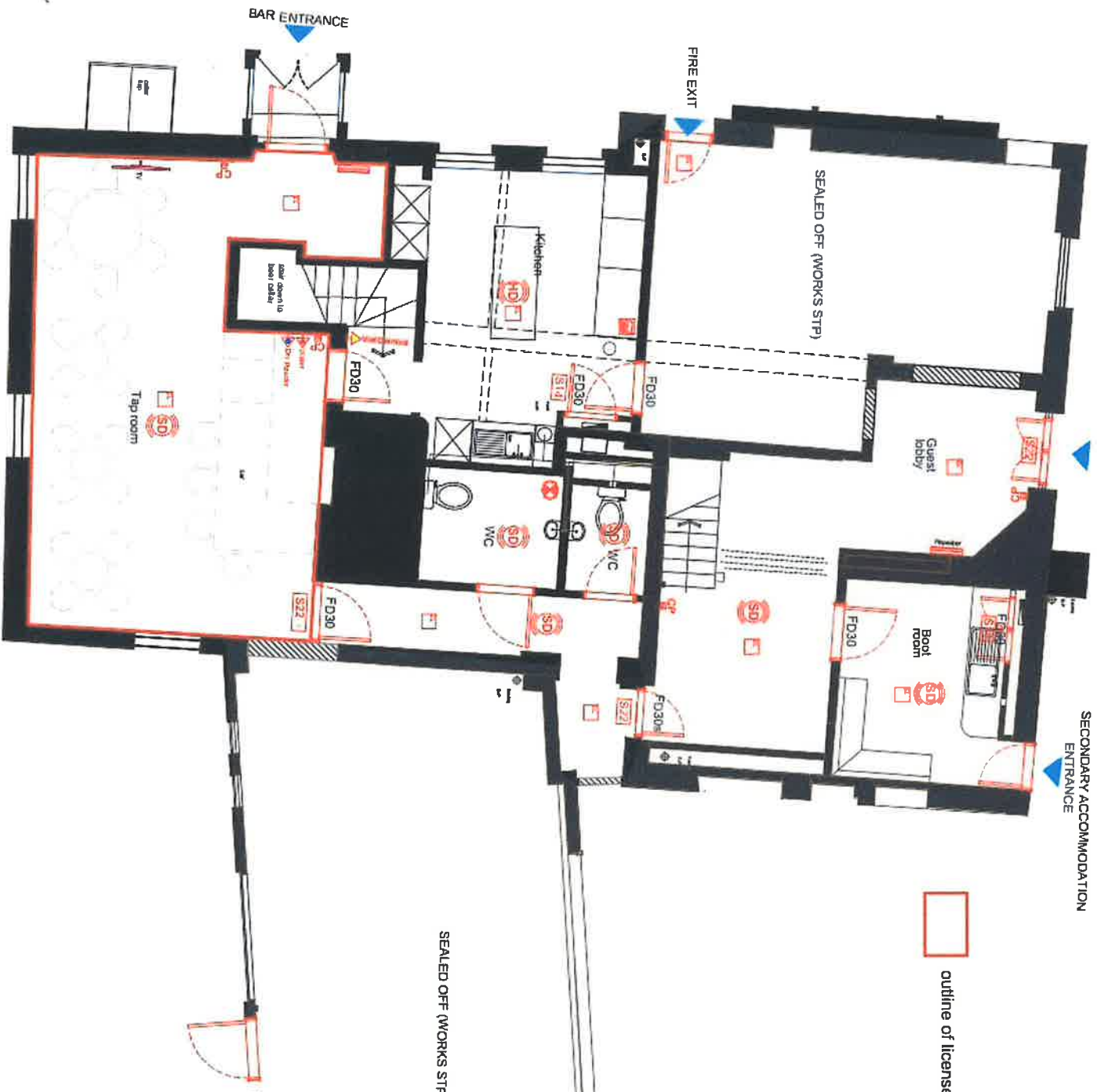
Now, community use has been reduced from a busy pub with two bars, restaurant, garden and parking to a small Tap Room with a car park at the front which shares tarmac space with bar tables and drinkers. It is open just 3 evenings a week - a shadow of its previous community use. That use has not increased since it opened in 2023 and does not conform to the hours in the proposals before you. Those documents also stated that there would be a food offering, but there is no food served at all. The Tap Room and car park is so small as to question its viability, especially as there is another pub serving a full menu nearby. The appellants Final Comments refer to a break clause in the lease to the Museum. If the break clause should be invoked, it would be difficult to envisage any commercial publican taking on a lease for such a small space with inadequate parking and direct competition so close by.

In summary, the appellant has made extensive changes to the site and to the building without regard to proper planning process or of the needs of the local community. The alterations render the existing plans obsolete. They also do not relate to the proposals before you. The current position of the Tap Room makes any Field Studies Centre or community use in the function room either unsafe or not possible. The room behind the new kitchen is too small for any community use. The alterations made by the developer make it very difficult indeed for me to see how meaningful community use could be achieved. The new flats are a loss of important visitor accommodation. There is lack of a landscape led approach and disregard of the Selborne Village Design Statement.

Sir, I urge you to dismiss the appeal.

MAIN ACCOMMODATION
ENTRANCE

SECONDARY ACCOMMODATION
ENTRANCE



 outline of license area

SEALED OFF (WORKS STP)

2202 - WD-01 A












1:50

01 Aug 2022

1/3P

Project: Queens tap room, Seabome
Client: ARKITECS
Drawing: Ground Floor Fire strategy Plan
Rev: TV and wet bar layout added

PRENTICE + BELL LTD
ARCHITECTS
100
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Drawn by: Matt Cole
COP: 02-28-2022

PB Fire list	
icon	description
	Emergency Light
	Fire alarm call point
	Fire alarm panel
	fire blanket
	fire extinguisher
	Fire sign S14 - FDLOCKED
	Fire sign S22 - FIRE EXIT + arrow
	Fire sign S22 - FIRE-EXIT
	heat detector + sounder
	smoke detector + sounder
	visible warning sounder



FIRST FLOOR



GROUND FLOOR

The Meadow

Two bedroom, first floor apartment with access to The Boot Room!