



**Cambridge and District
Campaign for Real Ale**

South Cambridgeshire
Planning Services

04 DEC 2019

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3rd December 2019

Your Ref: S/1782/19/FL

Planning Application for the Tree Public House, 9 Bar Lane, Stapleford, Cambridgeshire. CB22 5BJ.

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing on behalf of the Cambridge & District branch of the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA). CAMRA has a total membership of 190,000, 5,000 of whom are members of our branch. The area covered by the Cambridge & District branch consists of most of South Cambridgeshire as well as all of the city of Cambridge and part of East Cambridgeshire.

I have looked at the proposed changes to the planning application. As far as I can see none of the changes affect our existing objections to this planning application as laid out in our letter of 27 June 2019. I repeat them here.

Paragraph 70 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) gives planning authorities a duty to "guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities" with public houses being one of the items listed as a community facility. The South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (2018) policy SC/3 gives protection to village services and facilities including pubs. The Tree in Stapleford appears on South Cambridgeshire's Asset of Community Value register having been nominated by Stapleford Parish Council. It first appeared on the register in December 2013 and its presence was renewed in December 2018.

The current owner of the Tree purchased it in 2013 as a going concern but promptly closed it and it has been left closed ever since. The obvious suggestion is that the owner purchased it at a price applicable to a pub with the sole intention of exploiting the site's economic potential as a plot for residential use. The owner has previously submitted a planning application, subsequently withdrawn, that, if granted, would have done that. Subsequent to that, in 2017, a further application was submitted that would have cleared and redeveloped the site including the provision a smaller new-build pub. This planning application was refused partly on the grounds of the loss of service and facilities.

Since the pub's closure in 2013 the local community has been campaigning to get the Tree reopened as a pub. They have developed a business plan that would allow them to buy the Tree and reopen it. The fact that the tenant prior to its closure in 2013 was looking to extend his stay supports the suggestion that, even as a Greene King tied house, the pub was a viable business. Free of tie, in its current format, the Tree could be even more profitable.



Currently the Tree has a substantial bar area and also a chilled store and kitchen on the ground floor. Upstairs there is living space for the licensee consisting of a landing, three rooms and a bathroom. There is also a separate accommodation block containing two B&B units. There is ample car parking and a paved area.

The new planning application, if granted, would see the B&B block demolished and a detached house built on the North third of the site. The current pub chilled store would be converted into one B&B unit. A section of the what is currently bar area would be lost but would only result in a new chilled area that would be substantially smaller than the current one (roughly 5.6m² of usable space compared to over 16m²). An additional B&B unit would be provided in what is currently the largest room in the living area for the licensee. This would significantly reduce the size and attractiveness of the licensee's living space restricting the number of people who might be interested in running it as a village pub and B&B business. Also, despite the amount of work planned for the site as a whole, no provision has been made for making the Tree more accessible to people of limited mobility. The proposals would also leave the Tree with little or no off-street parking which would impact on the local community when the pub licensee, B&B users or pub customers needed to park or when taxis or delivery lorries called at the pub.

The planning application if accepted would cramp the site, significantly reduce the chilled storage area, squeeze the B&B units in and make the licensee's accommodation less appealing thus making it a less attractive business proposition.

That the pub has been listed as an Asset of Community Value and that the community has sought to buy and reopen it shows that it is valued. CAMRA opposes the loss of valued, viable public houses. It is clear to us that the Tree in its current format is a viable pub and is valued by the local community. The plans proposed in the application would undermine the ability to run the business at a profit or attract someone to run it. We therefore believe that this application should be refused.

Yours faithfully.

