

Rampton Parish Council

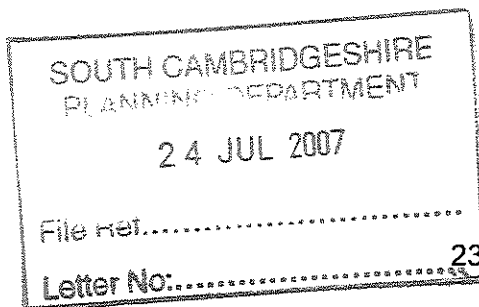
Clerk to the Council:

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Emma Millband
Planning Department
South Cambs District Council
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Dear Emma,

Re: S/0213/07/F – Public House Feasibility Study, land adjacent The Black Horse Public House

The Public House Viability Test submitted in support for the application for a dwelling to be built adjacent to the Black Horse Public House was considered by Rampton Parish Council (RPC) at an extra-ordinary meeting on Monday last. The Council agreed that a letter of representation relating to the above planning application be submitted. Below is the representation from Rampton:

Introduction

As you will be aware there has been a great deal of concern expressed by the villagers of Rampton about this planning application.

Para 1.1 - it is noted that the Viability Test has been completed by the owner of the Black Horse Public House, who is likely to have a vested interest in presenting information in support of the application. RPC would be interested to know if an independent Test has been completed?

Population Density

Para 2.3 – we believe the 10 mile radius population is nearer to 200,000 not 80,0000.

Para 2.4 – in addition to our comments above the new development of Northstowe will comprise 10,000 houses with a population of 25,000 plus.

Visitor Potential

Para 3.2 – we dispute the comment that Rampton does not have any long distance footpaths or cycle routes. With the development of Northstowe, money has already been spent on by-ways, which connect Histon, Oakington, Cottenham and Rampton. Future works will link Rampton to Willingham and Northstowe. This will create a link from Cambridge through Rampton to Northstowe of footpaths, bridle way and by-ways. The link could provide an opportunity to increase trade to the pub.

Para 3.5 – the pub hosts events such as darts and petang matches involving visiting teams from elsewhere in the county. It also hosts local and community events, such as St George's Day celebrations and weddings/anniversary parties.

Para 3.6 – this is a subjective statement and RPC is led to understand that since the pub was sold by Green King and tenants put in to manage the pub, it has been a struggle for the tenants to meet the rent demand despite their efforts. See also Para 10.4 comment.

Competition

Para 4.2 – RPC would say that the different group catered for is Rampton village specifically, especially the children who would lose the play area/garden should the new build go ahead.

Flexibility

Para 5.2 – the site is large enough to allow expansion at the moment, but will not be able to if the planning application is successful.

Para 5.3 – we would question the statement that the pub has been reasonably well maintained. See Para 10.4. Further, despite CAMRA 1996 comment the pub is still here and very much wanted by the village.

Parking

Para 6.1 – we reiterate our previous comment in letter dated 14 June 2007, the parking provision may be adequate but is not when the pub is busy or would it be if trade increased. Village events such as St George's Day celebrations need all of the parking space.

Multiple Use

Para 8.1 – in a village survey carried out on 7th July 2007, 73% of respondents wanted additional facilities. The statement that it is not feasible for the pub to provide additional facilities such as a shop or post office is a matter of opinion and has not been tested.

The Business at Present

Para 10.2 – see para 3.6 comment.

Para 10.4 – RPC would question this statement. There has been no repairs done by current free holder, and previous tenants have not been able to afford to carry out the repairs themselves. RPC believes the repair policy has undermined the viability of the pub.

The Sale

Para 11.1 – RPC is puzzled by this statement as it is understood that the freehold is for sale. Indeed we are led to believe that a Rampton resident is interested in buying the free hold of the pub so long as the planning application is not granted as it is considered that this would affect the future viability of the pub. As far as we know the potential buyer has not been informed that the pub is no longer for sale.

Conclusion

Para 12.1 – RPC would agree that the application would meet current planning policy if this was an infill between 2 residences, but this is not the case. The car park land has not been previously developed and therefore this is not an infill proposal.

Para 12.3 – we find the second sentence contradictory. If the pub becomes more viable then it will need more parking spaces not less, and the reduction of the pub's curtilage would prevent it from expanding to meet increase demand. Additionally, there is no guarantee that the generated capital will be utilised for the pub. Without investment the fortunes of the pub could decline leading to closure.

Para 12.4 – few pubs are a 'roaring success' yet they manage to continue. The Black Horse is a village pub

that has served Rampton well in the past and will, hopefully, continue to be an integral part of the village. Further, although it is stated that there is no proposal to close or convert the pub at present we believe that the future viability of the pub is in jeopardy should the application be accepted.

Rampton Parish Council believes the viability test has not addressed the issues and concerns of Rampton residents. The test statement contains some inaccuracies, as well as questionable and subjective comments. RPC strongly opposes the application. As previously requested the RPC Chairperson would appreciate the opportunity to attend the relevant meeting when South Cambs District Council discusses the above application. I would be obliged if you could forward me details when they are known (by email would be preferable and quicker), so that I can inform the chairperson and enable her attendance.

Yours sincerely



Chris Dickinson
Clerk to Rampton Parish Council