OFFICER REPORT

Case No: 25/00079/LBC Listed Building Consent

Proposal: Internal works to Public House (Sui-Generis)

Location: Crown And Cushion West Street Great Gransden

Applicant: Ms Louisa Reeve

Grid Ref: 526837 255798

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

The application site relates to the Crown and Cushion Public House, West Street, Great Gransden, SG19 3AT. The property sits upon a key junction in the village and the wider area is mainly residential in nature, with many of the dwellings in the immediate vicinity different ages, design, siting and materials. To the rear and side is a large garden area with access from the side of the property.

The site is located within the Great Gransden Conservation Area and is a Grade II Listed Building. To the South and South East there are numerous Listed Buildings in this area.

The property is comprised of a two storey pitched-roof building. The principal east-west range is timber framed and dates to the 17th Century. It is built on a typical three-bay plan with the main entrance located opposite the chimneystack. Originally single storey in height, it has an inserted floor to create attic rooms. The construction of a two-storey brick extension to the south of the main range led to further alterations. The southern side of the timber frame was built up to allow first floor access to the extension and to create of an internal corridor. Consequently, the roof is asymmetrical with a shallower pitch to the southern roof slope than that to the north. It appears that the cellar and eastern bay of the original building were built or rebuilt in brick in the 19th Century although there may still be residual timber framing hidden behind modern fabric.

At ground floor level the framing has been removed to allow access into the brick extension. The timbers appear to have been re-used to create an internal room that incorporates a small extension on the north elevation. This created a small discrete room with access to the street frontage. It is likely that activity within this room required security as the entrance framing retains hasps for a draw bar. It may have been used for storing and selling beer or other goods, discrete from the function of the rest of the building.

There are relatively few 20th Century alterations. The bar and fittings are modern, covering up an assumed inglenook fireplace and there is a small single storey modern extension on the southern elevation housing the toilets.

The building is painted white with timber detailing on the elevations with flat-roofed single storey projections to the rear. The building immediately fronts the pavement with an open parking area to the northern side and a garden area to the rear. A low timber fence separates the building from the carpark, which is hardstanding and open on its front elevation. The submitted plans show the existing layout of the building to comprise of a public house on the ground floor with accommodation to the first floor.

This application seeked permission for the change of use and conversion of the existing public house (use class: Sui Generis) to a residential dwelling (C3). However, as this is a Listed Building consent, the change of use is a planning matter and so has been removed from the description. Therefore the permission is just for the internal works (Internal works to Public House (Sui-Generis)).

The proposed internal alterations to the listed building are:
a. removal of the bar, commercial kitchen, boiler and toilets.
b. reinstatement of the assumed fireplace in the west side of the main stack.
c. changing the east wall of the toilet extension and the re-arrangement of the internal space to create a utility room.
d. creation of a master bathroom in Bedroom 2 and removal of adjacent toilet.

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

The National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) (NPPF 2024) sets out the three objectives - economic, social and environmental - of the planning system to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF 2024 at paragraph 10 provides as follows: 'So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11).'

The NPPF 2024 sets out the Government's planning policies for (amongst other things):
* delivering a sufficient supply of homes;
* building a strong, competitive economy;
* achieving well-designed, beautiful and safe places;
* conserving and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment.

The National Planning Policy Framework (2024) states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (Para 212) and that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting) should require clear and convincing justification (Para 213). The NPPF 2024 states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal (Para 214).

Planning Practice Guidance and the National Design Guide 2021 are also relevant and material considerations.
For full details visit the government website: https://www.gov.uk

Section 72 of the Planning (LBCA) Act 1990 states that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area.

Section 66 of the Planning (LBCA) Act 1990 states that in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

PLANNING POLICIES

Great Gransden Neighbourhood Plan 2023
G5 Conserving and enhancing Great Gransden's Conservation Area

Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036:

LP34: Heritage Assets and their Settings

Local policies are viewable at https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk

PLANNING HISTORY

74/00141/FUL for ALTERATIONS & EXTENSIONS,
GRANTED dated 15.07.1974

85/00396/FUL for CHIMNEY STACK
CROWN & CUSHION P H GREAT GRANSDEN,
GRANTED dated 10.06.1985

85/00398/LBC for ERECTION OF CHIMNEY STACK
CROWN & CUSHION P H GREAT GRANSDEN,
CONSENT dated 10.06.1985

19/01893/FUL for Proposed annexe/ancillary accommodation,
GRANTED dated 20.01.2020

20/80197/COND for Conditional information for 19/01893/FUL: C3 (materials), C5 (ramp construction), C6 (landscaping),,
DISCHARGED dated 15.01.2021

25/00078/FUL for Change of Use, including internal works, from Public House (Sui-Generis) to Dwelling (Class C3),
PENDING

There is a pending enforcement case for the 'Change of use from Pub to dwelling without consent'.

CONSULTATIONS

The below responses are summaries of the full consultation response. To view all full consultee responses, please visit the councils website.

Historic England: No comments, defer to the conservation officer.

Conservation: No objection

Parish Council (PC): The Parish council's objection refers to the change of use and how the change of use will harm the Listed Building. They also feel the consent lacks details on the internal changes.

REPRESENTATIONS

A total of 104 submissions were received during the public notification period some are from the same address. 1 of these were in support of the application and 103 were in objection:

- 15 responses were from outside of Great Gransden.
- 89 responses were from residents of Great Gransden

There was also an extensive representation made by the Great Gransden Community Benefit Society Ltd (GGCBS).

The concerns raised within the submissions have been summarised below and the full responses can be viewed on the council website. These include matters that do not relate to the internal works but to the wider change of use matter. But for completeness these are all included below.

Support
- Feel that the pub is not viable or profitable
- Desire to have a pub is not matched by the use of the pub
- Too small for food, cannot survive on drinks sales alone
- Community cannot find the money
- Condition deteriorating and so will bring back to residential use
- It's a family home and they have a right to it
- Cambourne can only sustain one pub and is much larger

Objection
- Substantial harm felt to be created to the Listed Building from the change of use contrary to LP34 as it will remove the integrity of the building. The Listed building is deteriorating with the current owners.
- Feel there is demand for a pub from within Great Gransden and neighbouring villages
- On sustainable routes for walking and cycling
- Pub has not considered diversifying, such as B&B. Or specialise in a food or local brews, as other local pubs have done.
- Loss of the last pub in the village
- Loss of a Asset of Community Value (ACV). Made on the 9th October 2014. The listing was renewed July 2023 and runs to July 2028.
- Did not try to re-open after COVID
- The Reading Rooms (community space) has a pop up pub showing demand for this facility in the village.
- Not letting the community give it a go
- It was awarded Huntingdonshire CAMRA "Most Improved Rural Pub 2013"
- People have mentioned they are happy to pay a membership to keep the pub going.
- Part of the garden not in the listing and so reducing potential interest in the enterprise
- In the Neighbourhood Plan and should be protected
- There is a village campaign to get it re-open showing support for the pub
- Community (Great Gransden Community Benefit Society GGCBS) offer refused twice, under offer and then on offer but refused as no cash.
- All viewings have been refused even from potential buyers who have written in to say they couldn't view, couldn't get more details and offers not acceptable as not cash.
- Concerns the listing was mainly with residential sales agents and not marketed correctly.
- Growing village and more residents need community facilities.
- Contrary to LP22 as there is community support and not effectively marketed.
- Used to run as a profitable business with food and events, so can again.
- Potential buyers not allowed in for surveys including the community group
- Community group undertaken a RICS red book valuation and the market value is felt to be inflated due to hope value for a residential dwelling. No evidence or explanation of the value.
- Charging VAT which acts against a sale
- State of the property reduces the chance of a sale
- No change in marketing to try and attract more buyers
- Lack of financial transparency in the application
- Marketing report does not mention the other viewings requested by potential buyers that were refused and noted in their representations.
- It is also highly irregular to suggest that an offer for the asking price, subject to survey, from a registered community body that is subject to regulation by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), with legal and financial duties for its registered officers, and abiding by the Plunkett Foundation Model Rules for Community Ownership, might be "vexatious" and thus should be dismissed if "not credible". As noted, the stated purpose of GGCBS in its FCA registration is to purchase the pub and to run it as a community business.
- Treated bids differently
- Non negotiable price
- Similar public house
- Conservation area is being harmed by the building falling into disrepair

- Owners not willing to engage with the community.
- Contrary to the NPPF para 202, the Crown & Cushion should be conserved as a pub; para 212, great weight should be given to conserving the pub; para 213, there is no clear or convincing justification for a change of use; para 214, the application will not result in any public benefit, harm will be substantial and the application fails tests a to d. Retaining the pub meets requirements in para 96 a and 98 a.
- People feel the owner has tried to run it down to ensure it is not viable and should be turned into residential.
- Similar to the Dragoon, Brampton that was refused and dismissed at appeal
- Loss of Centre for social contact, foster a sense of community, negative impact on social cohesion, interests, trust, sense of belonging and heart of social life for the villagers. Poorer socially for not having a pub and adding to social isolation with a growing wider demographic.
- The social contact that pub could bring and has previously brought includes:

* Live music
* Community meetings
* Sports events meeting afterwards
* Meeting after church services
* Pub garden for children
* Films in the pub or garden
* Amateur dramatic group
* Tennis groups
* Badminton groups
* Golf groups
* Walking club
* Cycling club
* Car entuastists
* Musicians
* Darts group
* Artists

The Great Gransden Community Benefit Society Ltd (GGCBS) response is summarised below due to the level of detail:

- A key part of the submission is a RICS red book Valuation of the Pub to prove that the "non negotiable" "Asking Price" is double the "Market Value". £215,000 market value from the RICS assessment. The red book is evidence of unreasonable asking price
- They have made attempts over 16 months to meaningful engage in the sales process.
- Community owned businesses have a 94% success rate.
- 93.6% support in recent survey for retention of the Public House
- This is a Limited company formed to engage with the freeholder to purchase the C&C (Crown and Cushion)
- Formal invitation to apply for community ownership funding dismissed by applicant.
- Refused access by the applicants
- Cost of rewiring etc not taken into account and no access for next level survey to allow for funding process
- They do not feel that reasonable steps to market the property effectively
- This is a Grade II listed building and in the conservation area . It is deteriorating, destroying heritage setting of the area and key junction. They feel converting it to a residential dwelling would lose its heritage interest.
- They feel the applicant cannot argue that it won't be financially viable in the future and provide evidence of this legal argument. Not confuse commercial viability with what altruism and community effort can achieve.
- Price had hope value of possible residential use, not just public house
- No professional Valuation
- Land reduced in size to make less attractive
- Price and sales details produced by applicant alone

- If the pub was open and in a good condition and run by reasonably efficient operator and achieving a fair and operating profit then it would be worth £295,000
- Trying to engage from July 2023 to 5th Dec 2024
- Refused access, and asking for seeing funds in place first is unreasonable.
- the community group have provided a timeline of communication and offers

ASSESSMENT

Policy LP34 of the Local Plan to 2036 outlines that "Great weight and importance is given to the conservation of heritage assets and their settings. The statutory presumption of the avoidance of harm can only be outweighed if there are public benefits that are powerful enough to do so.

The National Planning Policy Framework (2024) states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (Para 212) and that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting) should require clear and convincing justification (Para 213). The NPPF 2024 states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal (Para 214).

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The proposal is for a conversion of an existing public house into 1 dwelling with no external alterations. Consequently, it is not anticipated that the proposed changes would cause significant visual harm to the exterior of the property itself or the wider conservation area.

The proposed alterations and change of use are unlikely to harm the architectural significance of the listed building. There would be some loss of historic significance through the removal of the bar and change of use to residential, however, interpretation of the listed building is not solely reliant on its continued commercial use. If the negative aspects of the proposals are considered there would be less than substantial harm to the significance of the heritage asset. Under NPPF Paragraph 215 this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use. A commercial use may be viable where there is no pressure to make significant internal alterations or to extend the building. A residential use is likely to be accommodated within the existing capacity of the building. It is felt that the internal works do not significantly harm the Listed Building and the benefits to the standard of living of making the changes weigh significantly in support of the benefit of the application thus would be recommended for approval subject to more details being supplied by condition in regard to the new fabric, chimney and fireplace.

The conservation officer acknowledges this stating 'the proposed alterations would impact modern fabric with no special architectural or historic interest. The historic evolution of the building would be retained. There would be slight loss of significance through moving the modern extension wall to change the historic entrance to the building. There would be slight enhancement to the significance of the building by opening up the assumed fireplace in the main stack. No alterations to the exterior of the building are proposed and therefore there would be no impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area under these applications.'

The proposal on balance would not give rise to any significant harmful impact on the identified heritage asset with less than substantial harm to the Listed Building and is compliant with the provisions of the Planning (LBCA) Act 1990, the NPPF and Local Plan policy LP34Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036.

CONCLUSION

The proposed development for internal works to the Listed Building is considered to accord with the relevant national and local policy as it is felt that the alterations do not cause significant harm to the Listed Building and offer benefit to the users of the property thus is compliant with the provisions of the Planning (LBCA) Act 1990, the NPPF and Local Plan policy LP34Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036, subject to conditions.

Taking national and local planning policies into account, and having regard for all relevant material considerations, it is recommended that planning permission be GRANTED for the above reason.

It is noted that this does not approve a change of use as this is subject to planning permission.

CONTACT OFFICER:
Enquiries about this report to **Hannah Hodges**