1.0 Introduction

1.1 This supporting statement has been produced for consideration in connection with a Full Planning Application for the change of use of The Pheasant Pluckers Inn Burdrop OX15 5RQ from a Public House to a dwelling.

1.2 The Pheasant Pluckers Inn is a country village public house which has been under the ownership of the same family, the Noquets, for almost 12 years. Mr and Mrs Noquet have between them over 50 years’ experience in the licensed trade.

1.3 They are seeking a change of use to convert the public house to a dwelling. Having marketed it for sale as a Public House for some time now, with no success, we see it is the only viable option. Mrs Noquet is employed outside the business to support the running costs.

1.5 There is another Public House in the village; in the form of the Wykham Arms it provides an adequate local service due to the general decline in the rural pub trade over the years. A village of this size can no longer support two public houses.

2.0 The Site

2.1 The Pheasant Pluckers Inn is in Burdrop with Sibford Gower which is a village and civil parish in Oxfordshire, about 7 miles (6.4 km) west of Banbury and is situated on the north side of the Sib valley opposite Sibford Ferris.

2.2 Sibford Gower parish includes the village of [Burdrop](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burdrop" \o "Burdrop). The [2011 Census](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Kingdom_Census_2011) recorded the parish's population as 508. They share a parish council and along with the larger settlement of Sibford Ferris (5mins walk to the south) have been combined for planning purposes to form a single Category A Village.

2.3 Other facilities within the settlement include a church, two schools, a well-appointed and recently refurbished village hall, a doctors surgery, a village shop with post office and another public house.

2.4 A bus stop can be found 100 meters to the north. The recently downgraded bus service runs 4 times a day between Stratford upon Avon and Banbury.

2.5 The property lies on an unclassified road 1.2 miles from the B4035 and approx. 9 miles from Junction 9 of the M40.

2.6 There are 28 other pubs within a 5 mile radius.

2.7 The property offers accommodation by way of a self-contained one bedroom cottage positioned to the front of the property. For the past year, 98% of the Pheasant Pluckers revenue has been achieved from this facility. Since July a Shepherds Hut has also been available. Both are available to book via booking.com and Airbnb and they both have social media presence for added exposure.

2.8 The trading space of the Pheasant Pluckers Inn extends to some 380 sq ft, and this does not lend its self to separate drinking and dining areas. Planning permission was granted for an extension but was subject to a condition relating to extra car parking spaces which we were unable to construct.

2.9 The business does not employ any staff and is operated solely by family members, no wages are taken.

3.0 Development Proposal

3.1 This Planning Application seeks support for the change of use of the Pheasant Pluckers Inn from a Public House into a three bedroom family dwelling.

3.2 It is proposed that the areas of the Pheasant Pluckers Inn that are currently part of the public house be incorporated into the existing living accommodation, currently occupied by the Noquets, to create a three bedroom family home.

3.3 The proposed change of use will provide The Village with an additional three bedroom family dwelling whilst the village will still benefit from the service of a local Public House in the form of the Wykham Arms.

4.0 Planning Context

4.1 NPPF: At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

4.2 We believe that the proposed application is in broad adherence with advice set out in the NPPF.

4.3 Section 8; Promoting healthy communities states that; planning policies and decisions should guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community’s ability to meet its day to day needs.

4.4 Although it is acknowledged that Public Houses are important and valued local facilities there are currently two in The Sibfords. It is clear from the attached justification documentation that there is no longer the demand for two Public houses in the village. The Wykham Arms is a more attractive building, has a courtyard seating area and an extensive carpark. The Wykham Arms has a very good food offering with excellent reviews and has an extensive range of Beers and Real Ales, they have a comprehensive wine list and also take away offerings of both food and drink. We do not see this change of use as an unnecessary loss, especially since it is not a well-supported service.

4.5 The recently refurbished village hall has superb facilities including a bar, a stage, 2 different sized halls, a full catering kitchen, off road car parking and a very large grassed area to the rear. The village hall is available to rent at very competitive rates with discounts for villagers wishing to host their own private celebrations.

5.0 Design and Access Statement

5.1 USE: The change of use will provide Burdrop with Sibford Gower with a 3 bedroom detached dwelling, ideal for a family.

5.2 LAYOUT: It is not necessary to make any changes to the layout of the property. The main entrance remains in its existing location. The existing bar area will be converted into the main living room and dining room. The ladies Cloakroom would remain, the mens toilets could be converted to make a larger study area. The existing catering kitchen would become a Kitchen/utility room. At first floor the current living room would be converted into the third bedroom, whilst 2 bedrooms and bathrooms remain. There is no kitchen at first floor.

5.4 LANDSCAPING: The rear garden would remain, as would the currently gravelled car park area. The small lawn area to the front of the property would also remain along with the 2 car parking spaces, the overall appearance from the road would remain.

6.0 Justification

6.1 It is well publicised that the Pub trade has been in general decline, specifically rural village pubs, since 1980 when there were nearly 70,000 pubs in the UK. Currently there are now fewer than 50,000. This is due to a number of factors that include; Recession, Regulation, Increased taxation, Pub Cos, and a decrease in alcohol consumption. There are other factors that may have contributed such as the smoking ban and the impact of drink driving laws on pubs in rural locations especially.

6.2 For the above reasons it is just not viable for a village like Burdrop with Sibford Gower to support more than one Public House anymore and as stated previously the Wykham Arms is a site more suited to the modern requirements, including being all on one level without steps.

6.3 The Pheasant Pluckers Inn has been on the market since October 2015. A set of the Agent’s details and a summary of interest and viewings have been provided and it should be noted that the asking price is £200,000 less than the 2007 valuation.

6.4 The application is accompanied by The Pheasant Pluckers Inn income and expenses for the last year which further illustrate the lack of viability, it will be noted that most of the income is from the letting accommodation and food and drinks served to those guests. The outgoings far outweigh the incomings and it is for this reason that Mrs Noquet works outside the business to cover the running costs.

6.5 The application is also accompanied by further supporting information supplied by the applicants illustrating the Pheasant Pluckers Inn’s current situation and non-viability. (See separate viability study by Barry E J Voysey Bsc (Hons) DipArb MIRCS FCIArb). Also to be considered is the decision of the village not to progress a purchase in spite of a successful ACV nomination in January 2016. All of this helps to further illustrate the lack of viability of the current use and support the necessity for the proposed change of use to residential.

7.0 Other considerations

7.1 Since July 2016 the business has served 13 villagers with food and /or drinks

7.2 The opening hours versus takings equate to 0.06 pence per hour.

7.3 The village have chosen not to enter into negotiations for a purchase of the property or any discussion regarding other uses.

7.4 Why, would the village endure the financial pressure of an additional property to fund and maintain when they already have a very nice, fully equipped village hall which is much larger, has more car parking and a greater usable outside space. Furthermore it is all on one level and wheel chair friendly.

7.5 The Councils own finance department granted hardship allowance for business rates due in 2016. The business is now exempt from any liability. (since April 2017)

7.6 Many negative comments from Oswyn Murray – Chair of the Parish Council rather than encouragement to support the business. He recently misled members of the Parish and was forced to make a public apology to Mrs Noquet who is still unsure as to his motive.

7.7 The Bishop Blaize Support Group which is run by a Richard Butt and claims to have in excess of 540 members choose not to invest less than £800 each to purchase the business.

7.8 Diversification is not viable due to the amount of space.

7.9 The market for people looking to run a ‘lifestyle business’ has largely disappeared.

7.10 Directional and advertising boards have been removed by others.

7.11 Support for other village amenities by guests of the Holiday Cottage and Shepherds Hut.

8.0 Summary and Conclusions

In conclusion it is therefore considered that the proposed change of use is necessary and can be sympathetically and sensitively achieved.