

APP/C3105/W/23/3321715

Blaze-Inn Saddles

Street through Burdrop

Sibford Gower

OX15 5RQ

Revised Appeal Statement:

The Application is to Change the Buildings Current Use of Suis Generis (formerly A4) to that of C1.

No Structural Changes to the Building:

1.0 There is no intention to make any alterations or additions to the existing building, the only change will be that the Ground Floor Customer Area will no longer be Licenced.

1.1 The small bar servery will remain and therefore the building will be exactly the same as the existing layout. We have attached the Floor Plans as submitted to the LPA and it can be seen that there are no structural additions or alterations.

2.0 Proposed Holiday Letting Expansion:

The proposal is to increase our Holiday Letting facilities, this can be achieved by adding more Shepherds Huts/Gypsy Wagons to our present facilities and the construction of the previously allowed 3 new bedrooms. We intend to provide a variety of accommodation options with our existing self-contained Holly Cottage and Cherry Tree Shepherds Hut. We propose to site another 2 Shepherds Huts within our grounds, both will sleep 2 adults and 2 children. The increase to potential visitors will rise from our current capacity of 6 guests up to a possible 20 guests, 3.3 times our current capacity.

From a business standpoint our growth of sales revenue can only come from 2 sources those being increased Biker Trade or increased Holiday letting facilities. Our preferred option, taking into account the local opposition to our Biker Venue, is to expand our Holiday Stays Business.

2.1 Current Sales Breakdown:

We have operated a successful Holiday Letting Facility for the last 7 years, this diversification has enabled us to cover our running costs and has contributed approximately 70% of our income. Our Biker Café/Bar takings from food and soft drinks accounts for a further 25% of sales and just circa 5% is taken from alcohol sales. Therefore, we can no longer be accurately categorised as a Drinking Establishment or a traditional pub in the true definition and accepted use of that type of building.

3.2 Enforcement Compliance:

In 2019 to comply with the ongoing threats of Enforcement and Eviction Action from Cherwell Council we amended our business format to target and attract Motorcycling Enthusiasts (Bikers) which means that we open during the Biker Season on a week-end only basis. This change has proven to be quite successful however we have faced strong opposition from local residents who are concerned that our Biker Pub devalues their properties. Regardless of this, for obvious reasons the weather is a key factor in operating viably and that is proving to be problematic.

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4.0 Legal Definition of a Public House:

There is no Legal Definition of a Public House in regard to how many hours of the day or how many days of a year that a pub has to open so that it can be classed as a Public House. As long as we can prove that we have opened for at least 1 day in a year, then we are complying with any potential Planning Enforcement Legislation and are legally by definition, a pub. In addition, more and more pubs have found that it is very cost effective to reduce opening hours and many are closing for the winter. In particular Rural Pubs and Seasonal Tourist Destinations that rely on good weather are realising that they can earn more per hour by opening for fewer hours and many now only open at week-ends.

CAMRA has previously stated: 'that there is no accepted legal definition of a pub.'

Our supporting evidence proves that it is now common place for Pubs to close during the Winter and then only open for limited hours in the Spring and Summer. **EXIBITS 9.**

5. The Wykham Arms:

In every application that we have ever made the LPA have never acknowledged that there is another pub in Sibford Gower, that alone is inexcusable. Notwithstanding that, if they choose again to ignore the vulnerability of The Wykham Arms and do not consider the effect of 2 public houses fighting for survival in these harsh trading times, then that will be both unreasonable and irresponsible.

5.1 The Sibfords have better amenities than most villages of their size and population and are more than adequately served by The Wykham Arms and The Village Hall, they also benefit from a village shop/post office/off-licence. In addition, there are other pubs within 2miles from our location, The Stag and The Gate Hangs High.

5.2 In fact, we provide a healthy contribution to The Wykham's income and many of our holiday guests will eat and drink there frequently. They tell us that the pub's food and drink is really good but rather expensive and unfortunately the premises are rarely busy.

5.3 There is not enough village support for The Wykham Arms and our intention to increase our Holiday Letting Facilities will mean more of our visitors will undoubtedly become their customers and that will help significantly with its long-term viability and sustainability.

5.4 PINS Inspector David Murray: In his Decision David Murray stated that a critical event in his ruling was the fact that our pub had been designated as an Asset of Community Value (ACV) that no longer applies. **EXIBIT 6.**

6.0 Social Changes:

Hospitality Experts have expressed their concerns about the Changed Customer Habits since the Pandemic, a very recent Bruton Knowles study is in our supporting evidence. **EXIBIT 5.**

7.0 No Longer Viable as a Community Public House:

In the last 4 years we have taken just a few pounds from the local population and this clearly and overwhelmingly demonstrates that our Pub is no longer viable when relying on local custom. This fact also proves the pub is not a village hub, not important, not supported or vital to the Sibford Community and does not contribute to their social wellbeing.

8.0 Conclusions:

From what we now know from many villagers and their comments and actions, they do not want a Biker Pub in the Sibfords. Interestingly, most of the people that have constantly opposed our various planning proposals do not live anywhere near our pub and some are not even in the Sibfords.

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9.0 Planning Benefits of the Proposal:

There are clear benefits created by this new proposal, our increased visitor capacity will bring more potential customers to The Wykham Arms and they could serve up to 20 customers who are staying with us at any one time. That potential income boost to the Wykham is significant and will probably ensure their long-term viability. The Village Shop will increase their takings and we will obviously gain from the additional beds that will be available from this very sensible scheme. The closure of the Biker Pub Café will also placate many of the villagers that have complained about that part of our operation. In addition, the Wykham and ourselves will most certainly be required to employ more local staff to cope with the extra business created. More visitors to this location will bring a vibrance to the area that is much needed. Staycations are also being strongly promoted because of the reduction in air travel pollution.

9.1 Potential Harm

Blaze-Inn Saddles is no longer defined as an Asset of Community Value and we have proven that it is not supported by the local community and therefore it is not vital to their social welfare or wellbeing. In essence there is no demonstrable harm to the Sibfords and its community and they should support this proposal. The current Harm is the Mental Stress on our Family caused by the constant actions of Butt and the Enforcement Officers.

10. Final Conclusions:

The utilisation of a facility that is no longer used by the local community and turned into something positive that will bring more Tourism to the Sibfords has to be a good outcome. More trade for the Wykham Arms and the Village Shop and more employment generated by the Increase of visitors.

5 years ago, PINS Inspector David Murray had serious concerns that 2 pubs could trade viably together and he has been proven to be correct when he concluded:

"I have serious concerns about whether there is enough adult population in 'the Sibfords' to sustain another pub and also that a move towards a 'gastro-pub' may put the appeal site premises in direct competition with the Wykham Arms in Sibford Gower".

Many Villages have no Pubs at all, this proposal will ensure that The Wykham Arms has more potential customers generated by our scheme and it will significantly improve their chances of long-term viability and sustainability. The Application has weighted merit and fulfils the intentions and Policies of the Local Plan by the promotion of Tourism to rural areas and will support the retention of a village Public House (The Wykham Arms).

For all of the above reasons combined with our supporting evidence, we respectfully ask that our Appeal is Allowed.

Signed: Geoffrey Richard Noquet

Dated: 30th May 2023