

Comments for Planning Application 20/03090/OUT

Application Summary

Application Number: 20/03090/OUT

Address: Car Park East Of Blue Bell Mount Pleasant West Mickley Northumberland

Proposal: Outline application for construction of 3no. detached 4 bedroomed dwellings and re-configuring of existing carpark

Case Officer: Mr Callum Harvey

Customer Details

Name: Ms Margaret Burt

Address: Bat Cottage, Mount Pleasant, West Mickley Stocksfield, Northumberland NE43 7LP

Comment Details

Commenter Type: Neighbour

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: The rapidly changing Covid situation means that flexible outside space is more valuable than ever to a pub. The Feathers Inn nearby turned its car park into a pallet beer garden last summer. The current tenant is imaginative and innovative and makes good use of the car park. Street food events are becoming increasingly popular and the Blue Bell uses the car park to host them.

The car park was often full on a Sunday, pre Covid, when the pub served lunches inside. The pub organises big events - christening and wedding celebration meals, funeral teas, New Year's day parties, Burns nights, Halloween nights and many music events. These big events are crucial to the income of the tenant and the suggested tiny car park would have a very real adverse effect on them.

Regular customers drive to the Blue Bell from Prudhoe, Stocksfield, Mickley Square, High Mickley, Hedley and beyond, all using the car park. The village alone cannot sustain the pub and many drivers are unhappy parking in the road.

With successive tenants' permission, the pub acts as a village visitors' car park and provides car parking for residents, in a village where few houses have a garage or parking bay. Many villagers have two cars and parking is already congested in Mount Pleasant.

It is stated that there is parking on the road in front of the pub - there are literally two or three spaces directly outside. Many of the pub's customers are elderly. They would be less likely to visit the pub if they had to park 100 metres up the hill on a busy Sunday lunchtime, particularly if the road (there is no path south of the village by the pub) were icy or slippery. Nobody wants to get

dressed up for a night out and then have to yomp down the hill in the rain to get to the pub. Custom would be affected.

There is a covenant on the land, stating that it should be used as a car park only. This represents a clear intention to keep the pub and its valuable amenities intact.

Professing that building three houses on the pub car park would benefit the pub is clearly disingenuous. It is like suggesting that converting the toilet block into an apartment would bring money to the pub via one or two extra customers. What kind of a gastro pub needs toilets - or a decent car park? All 50 spaces are needed.

Mount Pleasant is a small, rural hamlet, and the Blue Bell is its sole amenity. The pub is a community pub, with a book swap shelf and quiz nights. It is a valuable place to meet socially and more formally to discuss community issues. This development would threaten its existence.

I endorse my neighbours' detailed and cogent objections, including the fact that the car park is built on contaminated land, over a culvert, and is not suitable for development, and that congestion ensuing the development would make it difficult for farm traffic and larger vehicles to travel through Mount Pleasant. There is insufficient space for three houses with gardens, garages and the space needed to turn cars. There is no disabled access to the, stepped, rear of the pub. Also, I agree that emergency vehicles would be unable to turn in the suggested smaller car park.

Village pubs were vulnerable economically before Covid - critical now. Losing most of the car park to development could mean losing the pub altogether. If the development were a benefit to the pub, as suggested, then why is the current tenant objecting to it?

The Blue Bell is 200 years old in 2023. Let's not carve it up and destroy it now.