

Proposal: Full planning application and listed building consent for redevelopment of land to the rear of The Stilton Cheese Inn for ten 3-bedroom houses with associated parking, change of use of ancillary accommodation to the rear of The Stilton Cheese Inn to office/community use, reconfiguration of car parking serving the pub and office/community use, alteration of access from North Street, together with landscaping and associated works

Site Address: Public House The Stilton Cheese Inn 24 North Street

Reference: 21/02874/FUL

## **STILTON PARISH COUNCIL RECOMMENDS REFUSAL**

The Parish Council is pleased to see a development application at the rear of this vacant and neglected site. However, the Parish Council is disappointed to see no provision in the application to renovate/repair/bring back into use the Grade II Listed Stilton Cheese Public House. This application also removes part of the Public House car parking facilities to provide access from the housing development at the rear onto a busy road (North Street, Stilton).

### Proposed Houses

The Parish Council is pleased by the style, size and number of houses detailed within the application which accords with Huntingdonshire's Local Plan (LP) aim in LP1 to provide an increased supply of housing in the district and LP2's aim to concentrate development in locations which provide the most comprehensive range of services and facilities. The housing design is attractive and the nod to Stilton's Alms Houses, buff brick of The Stilton Cheese and current mixed housing found within the village, appealing and accords with the design context of LP11 in the Local Plan. Stilton is in need of this type of property, which enables younger people and families to stay in the village.

As detailed in LP12 of the Local Plan re design implementation (sustainable design and construction methods), the Parish Council are keen to encourage optimisation of energy consumption through incorporation of more suitable building materials and insulation to achieve elevated U-Values. Water saving features, renewable and sustainable materials and renewable boundary treatments, as suggested, are welcomed.

We would question if appropriate to access private residences through a pub car park though and wonder if an alternative would be possible, as despite the rumble strips used to designate each area, this may not be enough in practice. We also highlight the potential for pressure on limited car parking spaces and have concerns that parking for the public house might spill over onto residential allocation to cause issues. LP17 (5.54) details the need for adequate provision of space for parking so that overflow onto surrounding roads is countered ensuring flow of traffic and accessibility for service and emergency vehicles can be maintained.

### Office block

The Parish Council is very happy with the office/community use facility and welcomes its addition into the scheme alongside provision of the bicycle hoops to encourage/facilitate sustainable modes of transport. LP22 of the Local Plan advises support for an application where an existing facility provides for a new service for mixed use or holds multiple community functions. This aligns with the office facilities detailed in the application.

### Access/Egress

The addition of residential housing and offices while maintaining The Stilton Cheese as a public house concerns the Parish Council with regard to an elevated level of traffic potentially using North Street. This is a very busy road with parking issues (often on pavements) that could be problematic for users of footpaths and the highway alike regarding safety as illuminated in Parking Provision and Vehicle Movement, LP17 (a)(b)(c) – highway safety and access to and from the site; servicing requirements and the accessibility of the development to a wide range of services by public transport, cycling and walking.

As the Parish Council has found from their MVAS speed camera, incidences of speeds in excess of 30mph are often found on this stretch of road and could cause an issue for cyclists or motorists as they exit the site at an initially reduced speed.

The developers of this site could possibly liaise with the developers of the potential sites on either side to come up with a more positive solution?

### The Stilton Cheese as a Grade II listed building

Although the proposed application retains this existing historic building, the Parish Council is disappointed that no work to restore the property or amend it so that its commercial viability, is increased, is included. This is a missed opportunity which raises the question as to what will happen to the Inn should the building not be utilised as a regional hospitality asset. In the Local Plan, LP34 it details how proposals, 'within, affecting the setting of, or affecting views in or out of, a conservation area should preserve, and wherever possible enhance, features that contribute positively to the area's character, appearance and setting'. As The Stilton Cheese Inn is within the conservation area, this seems of primary importance yet has not been addressed in this application.

As the exterior appearance of The Stilton Cheese is tired and detracts from the pleasant street scene along North Street, the Parish Council would like to see a reversal to the compromised architectural significance the building has suffered in more modern times. As outlined in the NPPF (189) historical assets, 'are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations'. Simply leaving the building whilst developing the office space and housing, allows the building to potentially fall into a greater level of neglect, which could result in its architectural/historical significance being lost in the long-term. There is no positive strategy for the conservation of this building as such and the lack of these plans are not consistent with the NPPF, point 190, recommending this action.

The NPPF, point 206 encourages the enhancement of historic buildings so that their significance can be revealed and that applications that do this should be treated more favourably which also echoes the Local Plan (LP34), requiring demonstration that the heritage asset is protected, not detracted from, respected, the distinctiveness/character conserved and the long-term maintenance secured. These details are currently missing from the proposal as it is.

To conclude, the Parish Council is positive about the housing and office/community space proposals within this application but the access/egress to the site and lack of clarity over future plans for The Stilton Cheese Inn give rise to concerns. Therefore the Parish Council recommends refusal to this application.