

MAIN CASE

Reference No: 17/01738/FUL

Proposal: Extensions, loft conversion and alterations plus change of use from public house to hotel

Site Address: The Three Pickerels 19 Bridge Road Mepal Ely
Cambridgeshire CB6 2AR

Applicant: Mr Paul Kenyon

Case Officer: Oli Haydon, Planning Officer

Parish: Mepal

Ward: Downham Villages
Ward Councillor/s: Councillor Anna Bailey
Councillor Mike Bradley

Date Received: 26 September 2017 **Expiry Date:** 11th December 2017

[S190]

1.0 RECOMMENDATION

1.1 Members are recommended to REFUSE this application for the following reason:

1. The proposed development would not respect the character and appearance of the existing public house and would appear inharmonious by virtue of its massing, bulk and height, contrary to Policy ENV1 and Policy ENV2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 and LP22 and LP28 of the Proposed Submission Local Plan 2017. The extensions to the business are neither sympathetic nor subservient to the public house and its unique riverside setting, contrary to Local Plan Policy EMP2 and LP8 of the Proposed Submission Local Plan 2017. Furthermore, the proposed extensions not only dwarf the existing building beyond recognition but also offer no cohesion with its traditional architectural style. The proposed extensions have paid no regard for the character or appearance of either the existing building or its setting within the landscape. As such the proposal is contrary to Policy ENV1, ENV2 and EMP2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015, Policies LP22, LP28 and LP8 of the Proposed Submission Local Plan and the SPD Design Guide and NPPF Part 7.

2.0 SUMMARY OF APPLICATION

- 2.1 The application seeks consent for the construction of several large extensions to the existing public house. The proposal will convert the loft space of the building to create a third floor space for additional accommodation. The application seeks consent to change the use of the building from public house to hotel.

- 2.2 A similar application was previously refused on the site (July 2017) and amendments were sought between the previous scheme and the proposal currently being considered.
- 2.3 The full planning application, plans and documents submitted by the Applicant can be viewed online via East Cambridgeshire District Council's Public Access online service, via the following link <http://pa.eastcambs.gov.uk/online-applications/>. **Alternatively a paper copy is available to view at the East Cambridgeshire District Council offices, in the application file.**
- 2.4 The application was called-in to Planning Committee by Cllr Mike Bradley as the "Three Pickerels Pub is seen as vital to the community and in principle the applications are supported by the local community, Mepal PC and other Councillors."

3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

3.1

17/00623/FUL	Proposed extensions, loft conversions & alterations plus change of use from public house to hotel	Refused	11.07.2017
08/00329/FUL	Proposed external dining deck, fire escape staircase, internal alterations to form bed and breakfast accommodation and change existing window to rear entrance door, and redesign of approved conservatory	Approved	20.05.2008

4.0 THE SITE AND ITS ENVIRONMENT

- 4.1 The Three Pickerels is a large public house with permission to operate a bed and breakfast. The building is located along the riverside at the end of Bridge Road in Mepal. The site is located outside the development envelope and is in close proximity to a Grade-II listed building at Number 16 Bridge Road. The public house is of a traditional architectural style with a number of traditional elements. A public right of way runs along the southern side of the site.

5.0 RESPONSES FROM CONSULTEES

- 5.1 Responses were received from the following consultees and these are summarised below. The full responses are available on the Council's web site.

Asset Information Definitive Map Team - No Comments Received

Conservation Officer - Nothing further to add from comments on previous proposal for the site.

Conservation Officer's comments on 17/00623/FUL:

"This application affects a property located within proximity to a grade II listed building (No.15) and therefore any development should take care to preserve or enhance the wider setting of the listed building.

The proposal seeks consent for a change of use from a pub to a hotel as well as a number of alterations and extensions to facilitate this change of use. The application site occupies a large plot, adjacent to the river in what would be considered to be a desirable location within the District.

The existing building appears on the 1880s OS map of the area and is of a traditional architectural style with a number of surviving architectural details. It is one of the more formal buildings within the immediate area and would be considered to be a positive contribution to the character of the area. The building is also highly visible from the street.

The immediate surroundings are characterised by high quality traditional farm style buildings - namely No. 15 and No.17 Bridge Road and over the bridge to the edge of the settlement. Collectively there is a distinctive built form and character to the area around the river and the Bridge which needs to be considered when looking at the proposal.

The proposed extensions have paid absolutely no regard for the character or appearance of either the existing building nor its setting within the landscape. The introduction of a three storey rear element that sits above the existing ridge heights is wholly inappropriate, as is the poorly detailed mix of traditional and contemporary design proposal.

The western elevation of the building will be visible from the river which is navigable and the oversized dormer style additions at the existing roof level do little to enhance the overall design. I am struggling to see how the design solution has taken any account of the existing style or scale of the host building or the context of the site.

There are currently clear views towards the site from the road, within which No.15 and No.17 are also visible. The three storey rear element will be clearly visible between and above the existing ridge line and between the two gables thus detracting from an currently high quality building and group setting.

The cumulative impact of the scheme on the scale proposed combined with a design that completely disregards the host property, competing both visually and in terms of scale would be considered to be wholly inappropriate. There is no disputing that a change of use combined with an appropriately and sensitively designed extension could be achieved here and would have the potential to create a truly unique and high quality venue, however the proposal as submitted would result in irreversible harm being caused to the existing high quality building.

Consent should not be granted from a conservation viewpoint.”

Environmental Health - The layout, design and construction must comply with relevant food and health and safety legislative requirements.

Open Spaces Society - No Comments Received

Cambridge Ramblers Association - No Comments Received

Mepal Parish Council – “The Parish Council strongly support the application”

Ward Councillors – “I support the principle of these applications and we need to support our local businesses. So I am calling in these two linked applications because the Three Pickerel Pub is seen as vital to the community and in principle the applications are supported by the local community, Mepal PC and other councillors. This application should enhance the area so it's vital that it's done correctly so has a good look and feel that the community can be proud of.”

Senior Trees Officer – “I have no concerns regarding this application as I consider there to be a very low probability of impact upon the trees at the site. If the application is to be approved, I recommend an informative advising the applicant to refer to BS 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations for information upon affective site management practices to ensure trees are not damaged during the construction process”.

Technical Officer Access – “Principal entrance should be step free as should all public areas of the hotel. The reception is some distance from the principal entrance via a torturous route; therefore good signage will be required. Reception desks/bays should be at two heights. The accessible WC should be laid out to BS 8300 2009. If an accessible bedroom is provided above ground level, a lift will be required. The accessible room should comply with BS 8300 2009. Handrails should be provided on both sides of the stairs. Audible and visual fire alarms will be required. “

5.2 **Neighbours** – Five neighbouring properties were notified, a site notice was posted and an advert was placed in the Cambridge Evening News and two responses were received and are summarised below. A full copy of the responses are available on the Council's website.

- The expansion of the pub will benefit the area
- Would lead to an increase in revenue for the shop, village and local area
- Provide employment opportunities
- Sympathetic proposals and vision
- Mepal needs a good pub with rooms for travellers
- Dozen spaces for cars to park for guests which will still leave room for local residents to park

6.0 **THE PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT**

6.1 East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015

ENV 2	Design
ENV 12	Listed Buildings
ENV 1	Landscape and settlement character
ENV 9	Pollution
EMP 2	Extensions to existing businesses in the countryside
ENV 9	Pollution
COM 7	Transport impact
COM 8	Parking provision
GROWTH 2	Locational strategy
GROWTH 1	Levels of housing, employment and retail growth
GROWTH 3	Infrastructure requirements
GROWTH 4	Delivery of growth
ENV 8	Flood risk
ENV 7	Biodiversity and geology
COM 1	Location of retail and town centre uses
EMP 7	Tourist facilities and visitor attractions
EMP 8	Tourist accommodation

6.2 Supplementary Planning Documents

Design Guide
Developer Contributions and Planning Obligations
Flood and Water

6.3 National Planning Policy Framework 2012

7 Requiring good design
12 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

6.4 Proposed Submission Local Plan 2017

LP22	Achieving Design Excellence
LP27	Conserving and Enhancing Heritage Assets
LP17	Creating a Sustainable, Efficient and Resilient Transport Network
LP26	Pollution and Land Contamination
LP28	Landscape, Treescape and Built Environment Character, including Cathedral Views
LP8	Delivering prosperity and Jobs
LP1A	presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
LP2	Level and Distribution of Growth
LP3	The Settlement Hierarchy and the Countryside
LP14	Retail and Other Main Town Centre Uses
LP11	Tourist Facilities and Visitor Attractions
LP12	Tourist Accommodation (excluding holiday cottages)

7.0 **PLANNING COMMENTS**

7.0.1 The main issues to consider in the determination of this application are the principle of the use of the premises as a hotel, whether the proposals will have a significantly

detrimental effect on the residential amenity of nearby occupiers and on the visual amenity and character of the area and the nearby listed building.

- 7.0.2 A similar proposal was refused in July 2017 for multiple extensions; amendments were sought between applications to reduce the visual harm caused by the proposed alterations.

7.1 Principle of the Change of Use to Hotel

- 7.1.1 The Three Pickerels currently offers four bed and breakfast units on the first floor, with the ground floor containing the restaurant, bar and conservatory. The applicant has stated that the premises cannot meet the demand in the area for overnight accommodation and is looking to expand to provide further bedrooms. The applicant has sought a change of use from pub/B&B to a hotel as the overnight accommodation is likely to be the main feature of the premises, with the restaurant and bar ancillary to this provision. Policies EMP8 and LP12 allow for expansion of existing hotels whilst COM1 and LP14 allow for new town centre uses outside of Ely, Littleport or Soham where:

- The sequential approach has been followed and there are no suitable sequentially preferable sites available;
- The site is suitable for the proposed use and the building form and design is appropriate in the local context;
- The scale and type of development is directly related to the role and function of the centre or its locality, in accordance with the hierarchy in Policy LP3;
- The development would be accessible by a choice of means of transport (including public transport).

Furthermore, LP12 allows for the expansion of existing service providers where additional space is required so long as the proposals are appropriate in scale and nature and would not harm the visual character and appearance of the area. It's considered that it would not be justified to request an existing and viable B&B to sequentially identify other sites for potential expansion to hotel status in Mepal. The building form and design currently provides accommodation with on-site services such as food and drink and the site is considered to be suitable for expansion. The principle of the change of use is therefore considered acceptable.

7.2 Visual Amenity

- 7.2.1 The proposal is made up of several key elements to accompany the change of use application; the internal works include the creation of additional accommodation and reconfiguration of the kitchen and bar areas. The scheme seeks to convert the loft space to create additional four letting rooms whilst adding a structure above the existing eaves. An extension is proposed at the rear of the site which will contain the main staircase and which will match the current ridge height; a further extension will be created at the rear of the building which will be 0.3m below the existing ridge height. The application also wishes to amend the conservatory element previously granted approved in 2008 (08/00329/FUL).

- 7.2.2 The principle of the extension of this business may be acceptable as the Local Plan encourages the growth and diversification of existing businesses. Local Plan Policy

EMP2 (Extensions to existing businesses in the countryside) states proposals to expand existing businesses in the countryside will be permitted where:

- The proposal does not harm the character and appearance of any existing buildings or the locality.
- The proposal is in scale with the location, and would not (by itself or cumulatively) have a significant adverse impact in terms of the amount or nature of traffic generated.
- The extension is for the purpose of the existing business; and
- Any intensification of use will not detract from residential amenity.

Proposed Submission Local Plan 2017 Policy LP8 states that “any extensions to an existing business in the countryside will be considered on their merits, taking account of matters such as location and accessibility to communities, overall scale (especially in relation to the footprint of the existing business), landscape impacts, highway safety and flood risk. The extension must be to support an existing business, not the creation of a wholly separate business”. The SPD Design Guide and Local Plan Policy ENV2 (Design) and LP22 of the Proposed Submission Local Plan promotes the use of sympathetic scales, forms, massing and layouts and promotes subservience.

- 7.2.3 The proposed rear extensions, incorporating accommodation, a ground floor garden bar and the staircase were previously higher than the existing ridge height and dominant in their appearance. This proposal has been amended to be set down from the ridge and reduced in scale and bulk, maintaining an element of subservience to the existing public house. The rear extension would be visible from the footpath which runs along the eastern boundary of the site and partially visible from the front elevation. However, it's considered that these rear extensions are respectful of the scale of the Three Pickerels and would not harm the character or appearance of the existing building.
- 7.2.4 The proposed roof extension would seek to add an additional floor through a conversion of the loft-space and creation of a new roof element. The extension would create 90sqm of new floorspace and allow for the creation of four bedrooms and storage space. The extension required to facilitate this floorspace creation would involve a distinct change in the front and side elevation of the premises. The extension would occupy the void between the unique double gabled front elevation and dominate the overall appearance of the public house. The proposed roof extension and cumulative effects of this element and the side and rear extensions would not only dwarf the existing building beyond recognition but also offer no cohesion with its traditional style. The proposed extensions offer a mix of traditional and contemporary designs that harm the overall character of the Three Pickerels and its unique riverside setting.
- 7.2.5 The conservatory element may be considered acceptable as it was previously approved in 2008 with a similar design. However, the view from the river and beyond would be significantly harmed upon by the loft conversion and the new openings proposed, along with the large rear extension.

7.3 Residential Amenity

- 7.3.1 The proposed extensions will create additional accommodation to accompany the existing Bed and Breakfast provision on the site. There will be a total of ten bedrooms on site, with additional accommodation for the manager. There are two residential properties in close proximity to the site, 15 and 17 Bridge Road. It's considered that the proposed changes to the public house and any increase in trade as a result of the public house's expansion is not likely to be significant enough to be deemed as a harmful impact on resident's amenity.
- 7.3.2 It is concluded that the proposal will not create significantly detrimental effects on the residential amenity of nearby occupiers and complies with Policy ENV2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 and LP22 of the Proposed Submission Local Plan 2017 in this regard.

7.4 Historic Environment

- 7.4.1 The site is located within proximity to a Grade-II listed building (15 Bridge Road) and therefore the any development should take care to preserve or enhance the wider setting of the listed building. The Conservation Officer objected to the original scheme on the basis of the cumulative impact of the scale proposed combined with a design that completely disregards the host property, competing both visually and in terms of scale would be considered to be wholly inappropriate. The Conservation Officer reiterated these comments with this proposal.
- 7.4.2 It is considered that the amendments to the rear extension help soften the overall impact on the listed building, which is located 40m from the front elevation of the public house. The application is recommended for refusal on the grounds of visual harm caused to The Three Pickerels and it is not considered that this significant and demonstrable harm extends to the listed building and its curtilage. The Conservation Officer agrees that a "change of use combined with an appropriately and sensitively designed extension could be achieved here and would have the potential to create a truly unique and high quality venue however the proposal as submitted would result in irreversible harm being caused to the existing high quality building".

7.5 Highways

- 7.5.1 The proposed extensions are unlikely to have any wider impact on the highways network and the parking provision on the site is capable of accommodating four additional bedrooms and the vehicles associated with this.

7.6 Other Material Matters

- 7.6.1 An amendment was accepted to ensure the render of the rear extension is cream coloured, to match the existing building. All other materials are considered acceptable but could be conditioned to ensure samples are submitted.
- 7.6.2 Environmental Health Commercial Team have raised no concerns regarding the proposal assuming all necessary food and safety standards are complied with.

7.7 Planning Balance

- 7.7.1 The cumulative impact of the various large and bulky elements along with the architectural style used results in a proposal that is contrary to all the relevant local and national policies referred to previously. The principle of the change of use is considered acceptable as there is an existing bed and breakfast use on the site, with sufficient parking and space within the curtilage to support an expansion.
- 7.7.2 The roof extension element would significantly detract from the unique facade of The Three Pickerels and not act cohesively with the traditional riverside pub vernacular. On balance, although the rear extensions may appear subservient and be acceptable in terms of their impact on the visual character of the public house, the cumulative effects of the roof extension and the aforementioned rear elements would be significantly and demonstrably harmful to visual appearance of the Three Pickerels. The scheme is considered contrary to Policy ENV1, ENV2 and EMP2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015, Policies LP22, LP28 and LP8 of the Proposed Submission Local Plan and the SPD Design Guide and NPPF Part 7

<u>Background Documents</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Contact Officer(s)</u>
17/01738/FUL	Oli Haydon Room No. 011 The Grange	Oli Haydon Planning Officer 01353 665555
17/00623/FUL 08/00329/FUL	Ely	oli.haydon@eastcambs.gov.uk

National Planning Policy Framework -

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf

East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 -

<http://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Local%20Plan%20April%202015%20-%20front%20cover%20and%20inside%20front%20cover.pdf>