

Comments summary

Dear Sir/Madam,

Planning Application comments have been made. A summary of the comments is provided below.

Comments were submitted at 29/04/2026 4:41 PM from Mr Geoff Fisher.

Application Summary

Address:	Gardeners Arms West Street Sompting West Sussex BN15 0AR
Proposal:	Change of use from Public House with flat over to residential dwelling including relevant internal and external changes, parking and landscaping
Case Officer:	Peter Barnett

[Click for further information](#)

Customer Details

Name:	Mr Geoff Fisher
Email:	
Address:	1 Kelso Close Sompting West Sussex

Comments Details

Commenter Type:	Member of the Public
Stance:	Customer objects to the Planning Application
Reasons for comment:	- Loss of General Amenity
Comments:	In addition to the already well-documented statements made by other objectors regarding the conflict with various planning regulations, rules and guidance notes, plus the removal of a long-established pavement and consequent inconvenience and danger to pedestrians and mobility scooters, I, as a regular former customer of this pub, wish to make the following comments: The Gardeners Arms was the last remaining pub in Sompting, providing a vital role as the only place where friends, neighbours and anyone within the local community could meet, socialise and enjoy themselves. As a frequent user, I can confirm that it had a friendly and cosy atmosphere and hosted various team games such as cribbage and darts, held raffles and quizzes, and every few weeks, had a musician, singer or band playing. It was a viable and thriving business, and only closed because the last pub landlord was told to leave (at very short notice) by the new owner. The hundreds of new houses presently being built at nearby Malthouse Meadows (with no additional amenities) are likely to create more customers and an even greater need to retain a local pub.

If this change of use request is granted, Sompting will have lost its last pub, following the earlier loss of the Ball Tree, The Joyful Whippet and, most recently, the nearby Marquis of Granby, now rebuilt as residential accommodation (most flats still unoccupied). The length of time that the Gardeners Arms has been closed has already seriously damaged the social cohesion and wellbeing of Sompting residents. This makes the Parish Council's strapline that vaunts: "Making Sompting a better place to Live, Work and Play" sound somewhat hollow. The nearest remaining pubs would then be The Crabtree, Lancing, 1.9 km to the east and Ye Olde House at Home, Broadwater about 1.7 km to the west, involving a section of walk along a footpath (very muddy in winter months) or along a road with no pavement. These are walking distances; not the "as the crow flies" distances stated in the submitted application, since most pubgoers don't drink and fly. It should be noted that bus services along West Street are sparse at best, and non-existent in the evenings.

The Teague Viability Statement provided with the resubmission in no way proves that the pub was financially unviable as a business. It is necessarily based on supposition, the author having no knowledge of how the pub was previously run or how busy it was. The circa £200,000 total sum the report asserts will be necessary to resurrect the premises as a pub includes £16,650 for new kitchen equipment: Re point 28.3: The kitchen was fully fitted and working when the last landlord Nick was ordered to leave. If the new owner's been so presumptuous as to remove it prior to receiving planning permission, surely the planning authority should insist that the new owner reinstates it at their own expense? One also wonders where all the bar furniture and fixtures, fittings and decorative items went; a further £18,550 is allocated to replacing these. The example given in the report assumes that a new landlord would need to borrow £200,000 at 8% interest over 15 years, thus also detracting from the FMOP. This may or may not be true, and is yet another assumption. There are other dubious assertions made in the report, and the statement (ref. 28.4) that alternative facilities are available in Brighton, Worthing and Littlehampton is irrelevant to the need for a local pub. The implied threat that the Council is short of its 5% quota for new housing should not be taken seriously in regard to this application: The pub already provided 3-bedroom accommodation (for the landlord). The proposed conversion to a 4-bedroom house simply provides one more bedroom, not even one single new house, to add to the tally of hundreds presently being built nearby.

Lastly, I would respectfully like to quote Hilaire Belloc's (1870 - 1953) famous and, in this case, very apt words:

"From the towns all inns have been driven: From the villages most Change your hearts or you will lose your inns and you will deserve to have lost them. But when you have lost your inns drown your empty selves, for you will have lost the last of England".

Yours faithfully,

Geoff Fisher
