AWDM /1327/21 – Applicant's Further Statement 1st December 2021 .

Alternative Local provisions

As concluded from our *Report to demonstrate alternative provision available locally*, there are five alternative public houses within less than 1 mile walk of the Schooner, all of which are open 7 days a week. In terms of quality all five public houses match or exceed the Adur Council hygiene rating of the Schooner, and four of the five match or exceed the independent ratings of reviews on three independent review sites (google, Facebook and TripAdvisor). In addition, all five public houses received very positive reviews by CAMRA on the WhatPub website.

We note that no specific distance has been referenced in policy 33 to define "local." It should be noted that there are a further 9 public houses within 1.5 miles of the Schooner, of which 4 feature in the CAMRA 2022 Good Beer Guide & one was "Brighton & South Downs CAMRA Pub of the Year Runner-up 2020" (The Foghorn). There a further 12 public houses within a 2mile radius in which 2 are included in the CAMRA Good Beer Guide, totalling 24 public houses within 2mile radius of the Schooner Inn. It is also noteworthy that the Schooner has never been in the CAMRA Good Beer Guide.

Further to recent representations, we wish to further highlight the similarities between the Schooner and the New Port Arms. The New Port Arms describes itself as a unique pub, restaurant and function venue featuring a fantastic harbour-side terrace overlooking Shoreham Harbour at Southwick. Please see the below images of their harbour views and large terrace and balcony, one of which shows just how close the Schooner is in the background, less than 120 meters.









Photos of the food and weekly pub quiz night at the New Port Arms:





We wish to respond to the council's comment on page 23 of the Agenda Report Pack stating that "*Using the New Port Arms as an example of nearby alternative provision does lessen the applicant's argument that the location of the premises prevents the potential successful operation of a public house in this location."* We wish to address this as we strongly believe it is a combination of the location of the Schooner pub, limited parking and a lack of outside space all together that has led to the pub not being a viable business; not just singularly the location as the Agenda Report pack infers. The lack of outside space has always been a problem at The Schooner and nobody can deny that post COVID there has certainly been a huge increase in the use of outside space by hospitality customers all across the country.

Whilst the New Port Arms is also south of the A259 it does have a large waterfront outside terrace and ample parking, both factors which the Schooner does not possess.

In summary the same harbour views from the Schooner are also offered by the New Port Arms, with the added bonus of customers being able to sit outside and soak up the atmosphere of the harbour. It should be noted that there are also other nearby venues that can be classed as "Marine Taverns" such as the Bridge Inn, Crown and Anchor and The Waterside Inn all in Shoreham, and also the Gather Inn at the East of the Shoreham Port basin, all of which have plenty of outside seating.

Secondly, we wish to take this opportunity to compare the historic and old charm of the Schooner Inn with the Ship Inn 0.2 miles away. CAMRA recognise this pub as "A historic pub interior of regional importance offering." The Ship Inn is a large corner plot Victorian pub well positioned in the hub of the community with plenty of footfall and a car park converted to a beer garden (as shown in the below image) post-COVID which The Schooner cannot do.



It should be noted that the Ship Inn does have twin bars whereas the Schooner Inn only has one bar on the main level.

Lastly, The Cricketers is a prominent building at the end of the busy Southwick square high street benefiting from passing trade, footfall and also nestled in amongst the community. The Cricketers offers a huge car park, plenty of outdoor space for diners and drinkers to avail of post-COVID which is a growing trend even in winter. It also benefits from excellent views across Southwick green, the cricket pitch and the park as shown by the below images:





We wish to expand on Policy 33: Planning for Sustainable Communities of the Adur Local Plan 2017 which states that "*Development which would result in the loss of existing social or community facilities will only be permitted where:*

- *It can be demonstrated there is no demand for the facility within the area and the premises have been marketed for a reasonable period of time; or*
- *There is alternative provision available locally that is accessible, and at least equivalent in terms of quality; or*
- *The proposed development would provide an alternative social and community facility.* "

Whilst the planning team have already agreed that the second point of policy 33 has satisfactorily been met and only one of the criteria need to be met, we wish to highlight that we also feel that aspects of the first point of policy 33 have also been justified through the following points:

- We have provided historic data from the previous owners on the number of landlords at the site - 7 Landlords between 2002 and 2013 averaging 1.5 years per landlord. This provides evidence that it is not just us as the landlords that struggled to make this a successful business and supports that the site itself has challenges.
- We have provided financial records outlining that the growth of the business was always limited and our investments never paid off and in fact required more investment each year.
- In the 8 years of us running the pub we have had net losses. In the interest of transparency, we have invested a total of £167,000 ourselves into the business.
- With regards to demand for the facility, in 2018 we invested heavily (approximately £25,000) to relaunch the business. We enlisted a specialist pub and marketing consultancy firm for 18months to provide expert support to build the business. They provided ongoing expert support with reputational development, creation of a new website, and managed google ads and analytics driven activities, weekly email campaigns, tailored social media content, a loyalty scheme, events, special theme nights and promotions.

- In addition to the specialist venue marketers, we also regularly advertised in local publications, delivered leaflets to 2,500 homes in the Southwick vicinity, as well as radio adverts and advertised on multiple large AO posters outside the pub with daily promotions. We also enlisted local specialist company "Restaurants Brighton" to promote our venue across Sussex since 2015.
- The above expert marketing campaigns together with the ongoing daily food promotions we offered and good customer feedback we received demonstrate that there is insufficient demand for the venue. We were not an anomaly, but an ongoing pattern at this venue.

Preservation of the Building

As per the Agenda report outlines no external alterations are proposed. We wish to highlight that the reference to installing balconies etc were suggestions in response to the council's initial concerns about suitability for residential due to lack of outside space. In our second supporting statement we outline that "In response to possible concerns over the suitability of the site for residential use due to lack of outside space, we are very open to working with the planning team to create additional outside space." We thereafter list possible ideas and also outline if it is not possible to create outside space that "the rear of the property literally opens up onto a walking trail and large green field within a few meters to the East of the property. Notably Southwick beach is also within a few minutes' walk."

In the event that we did later wish to alter the exterior of the building we of course fully understand that planning permission would need to be sought. If permission was granted, we understand that a high standard of design and materials would be required to respect, preserve and enhance the character of the building

We wish to extend our family home and it is our intention to preserve the building. For all intents and purposes the building will look exactly the same and is not going to disappear. We have no plans to modify the existing exterior of the building so the character will remain.

We would like to highlight that by approving the change of use to residential it will ultimately help to preserve and restore the building façade which we love and fully appreciate and maintain it as the attractive landmark building on the edge of the conservation area. As an unviable business, the building could easily fall into dilapidation, be subject to vandalism (some of which has already been encountered) and become an eyesore on the Southwick coastline.

Site Limitations

As Peter Barnett mentioned The Schooner used to be in the major shopping corridor until the town centre was moved to Southwick Square which was previously farming land. The main road has also changed from the waterside to north of the Schooner and whilst the building was adapted to move the entrance from basement waterside level to the ground floor of the A259 it still has not attracted the footfall that is experienced at Southwick Square.

Pub drinking culture has significantly changed over the last few decades, prompted by a multitude of factors such as the Smoking ban, changing health attitude and COVID now too which shall be around for many, many years has created a huge desire for customers frequenting hospitality businesses to sit outside to minimise risk of catching COVID. The site of the Schooner Inn offers very limited outside space and this should be considered in the ongoing viability of the site.