

Comments for Planning Application AWDM/0423/26

Reps and Consults



planning@adur-worth 11:17 (29 minutes ago)
to me

Comments summary

Dear Sir/Madam,

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

Comments were submitted at 22/04/2026 11:17 AM from Mr Tom Sadler.

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 Tom Sadler
Email:	
Address:	2 Latimer Cottages West Street Sompting West Sussex

Comments Details

Commenter Type:	Neighbour
Stance:	Customer objects to the Planning Application
Reasons for comment:	- Highway Access and Parking - Loss of General Amenity
Comments:	I am writing to object to the revised application for the change of use of The Gardeners Arms, West Street, Sompting, to a residential dwelling.

Having reviewed the applicant's updated submission, including the Planning, Design & Access Statement (April 2026) and the Viability Assessment (March 2026), I do not consider that the proposal overcomes the Council's previous reason for refusal. The application remains contrary to Policy 33 of the Adur Local Plan, Paragraph 98 of the NPPF, and the principles of emerging Policy HC6.

A fundamental issue remains the total loss of the last remaining public house in

the village. The applicant's own statement confirms that "The Gardners Arms was the last pub in the village prior to its closure". This is not disputed. There is no alternative provision within Sompting itself, and the Viability Assessment acknowledges that the nearest pubs are outside what would reasonably be considered easy walking distance for most residents. In these circumstances, national policy is clear that decision-makers must guard against the unnecessary loss of valued community facilities, particularly where this would reduce a community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs. The loss here would be absolute, with no replacement and no equivalent within the village.

The applicant's viability case is also unreliable. The Viability Assessment explicitly states that "there are no historic trading accounts or other trading information available". This means that no evidence has been provided in relation to turnover, profitability, staffing, or actual operating costs. Without this fundamental data, any conclusions about viability are speculative. Policy 33 requires clear and demonstrable, site-specific evidence, not assumptions or retrospective interpretation. Similarly, Paragraph 98 of the NPPF requires robust local evidence to justify the loss of a community facility; this cannot be satisfied by reliance on broad national generalisations such as those presented in the Teague report.

Furthermore, the operational history set out by the applicant contradicts the claim that there is no demand. The pub continued to operate between 2022 and 2025, with three separate tenants running the business during that period. A premises with no demand does not attract multiple operators over a sustained period. The continued reopening of the pub is a clear indication of ongoing community use and commercial interest.

It is also important to recognise the nature of those tenancies. Where premises are operated under a Tenancy at Will (TAW), tenants have no security and therefore no realistic ability or incentive to invest in repairs or improvements to the property. This undermines the reliability of any argument that poor condition or performance reflects inherent lack of viability. In this case, the landlord, Wellington Pub Company, is known for under-investment in its estate. Any deterioration in the condition or performance of the pub must therefore be viewed in that context, rather than as evidence that the use itself is no longer viable.

The marketing evidence also undermines the applicant's position. Once the freehold was placed on the market in June 2024, interest was generated, including multiple parties and offers. This demonstrates that the premises was marketable as a public house. The fact that the property ultimately sold following interest from purchasers willing to acquire it confirms that there was demand for the pub. The loss of the pub is therefore not due to lack of demand, but simply due to the choice of sale outcome.

If another of the offers was accepted, it would still be open as a pub today.

I am also concerned by the proposal to enclose the front of the site with a wall. The applicant asserts that "there has never been a public pavement in front of the pub". This does not reflect the long-established reality of how the frontage has been used. The area has functioned as a continuous pedestrian route along West Street for many decades. The absence of a formal pavement does not negate long-standing public use. The proposed wall would remove this informal but established route, forcing pedestrians into the carriageway on a narrow section of road, thereby worsening highway safety. This impact has not been meaningfully assessed.

While the revised scheme removes the previously proposed dormer and therefore

addresses the second reason for refusal, the primary reason remains unresolved. The applicant has not demonstrated that the pub is unviable, that there is no demand, that marketing has been properly conducted, or that alternative provision exists.

For these reasons, the proposal remains contrary to Policy 33 of the Adur Local Plan, Policies 15 and 17, Paragraph 98 of the NPPF, and emerging Policy HC6.

The Gardeners Arms is the last pub in Sompting, and its loss would result in significant and irreversible harm to the village's social infrastructure, character, and community cohesion.

I therefore respectfully request that the Council refuse this application once again.
