

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	242954
Site Address:	The Horns Inn, Crazies Hill, Wargrave, RG10 8LY
Expiry Date:	15 April 2025
Advert Publication Date:	29 November 2024
Site Notice Date:	3 December 2024
Site Visit Date:	4 June 2024 & 20 February 2025
Proposal: Application for Listed Building consent for the external alterations to the building including changes to fenestration and erection of a single storey canopy roof to the side; internal refurbishment of the bar area; removal of 3 no. chimney breasts at ground floor and associated structural works; structural works to the existing ground floor timber frame and 1 no. ground floor chimney, toilets and first floor rooms; new signage to the main elevation and a replacement roadside post sign.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

- Grade II Listed building

PLANNING POLICY

National Policy	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	TB24 – Designated Heritage Assets

PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
242953	Full application for the proposed change of use of part of the upper floor to guest accommodation (Use Class C1) and part to a dual flexible use of Class C1 (guest accommodation) and Sui Generis use (Public House); erection of a replacement gazebo with PV panels, removal of decking and 2 no. existing sheds and erection of 1 no. shed, plus landscaping and external alterations to the building including changes to fenestration and erection of a single storey canopy roof to the side.	<i>Pending Decision</i>
171384 (not implemented)	Full planning application for the proposed erection of a single storey rear extension to the	C/A – 03/07/2017

	existing building.	
LB/2010/0687	Listed Building application for the proposed addition of new flue to serve log burning stove.	C/A 01/06/2010 –
F/2010/0285 & LB/2010/0284	Proposed erection of a gazebo to provide smoking shelter.	C/A 31/03/2010 –
LB/2001/5524	Proposed internal alterations to listed building to enlarge trading area.	C/A 04/07/2002 –
F/1997/66724	Proposed construction of store building.	C/A 30/01/1998 –
36332 & 36333 (LBC)	Single storey side extension (toilets & lobby) & alterations to parking area.	C/A 31/10/1990 –
138/72	Door of car park	C/A 03/03/1972

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

WBC Conservation	Object on the following grounds: the alteration and part removal of historically significant timbers, and the removal of internal walling and fireplace/chimney breasts, would amount to less than substantial harm to the significance of the Grade II Listed Building.
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REPRESENTATIONS

Cllr Wayne Smith supports the application on the following grounds: The application is sympathetic to the original building and its surroundings. Compliant with policies and is trying to maintain the pub's economic viability for the future. *Officer's Comment: Cllr Smith listed this application to Planning Committee in the event that it was recommended for refusal by Officers. As the application is recommended for approval it can be determined under delegated powers.*

Cllr Katrin Harding supports the application on the following grounds: The proposal carefully considers how to most sensitively retain and restore this heritage building, while adapting to allow successful use as a country pub. It will restore a valuable community asset and give more people the opportunity to interact with the history of the building as it moves into a new chapter.

39 comments (not including duplicates) received from local residents in support of the application.

APPRAISAL

Site Description:

The site is a vacant 16th Century Public House within the loose settlement of Crazies Hill, a cluster of development within the open countryside and Green Belt to the north-east of Wargrave Village and the south-east of Henley-on-Thames. Crazies Hill is identified as an Area of Special Character, a non-designated heritage asset, where there is a consistent period of character reflecting the age of the settlement. The site

benefits from later alterations and additions, particularly to the rear, as well as a large garden and parking area.

The site was designated as a Grade II Listed building in 1983. The official list entry states:

WARGRAVE CRAZIES HILL SU 78 SE (West side) 1/30 The Horns Inn II Inn and barn, now public house. Late C16 with C19 and C20 alterations. Timber framed with painted brick infilling, part weatherboarded. Old tile roof, flanking chimneys. 4 framed bays. One and 2 storeys. South-east elevation: 2 bays C19 2-light casement windows with horizontal glazing bars on first floor with small gables breaking eaves: central entrance door on ground floor under board hood on brackets, antlers attached to carved wood skull fixed to wall above, C19 similar casements to left of door and 3-light to right. C19 single storey extension from right hand gable, former barn adjoining left hand gable part weatherboarded with one arch brace visible and one 5-light casement window on ground floor. Interior contains some exposed framing.

Appraisal:

This application proposes the refurbishment of the existing Public House facilitated by internal and external alterations including layout and fenestration changes, structural works to the timber frames, the removal of 3no. chimney breasts, the creation of en-suite bathrooms on the first floor, the addition of a porch canopy to the side and signage.

Policy TB24 of the MDD Local Plan outlines that the Council will conserve and seek to enhance the designated heritage assets in the Borough and their settings by supporting development proposals that will conserve the local character, setting, management and historic significance of designated heritage assets.

Paragraph 212 of the NPPF states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

Following the submission of the original plans, the Council's Built Heritage Officer objected to the proposal on the grounds of identified harm to the historic significance of the building. The following elements caused particular concern: the alteration and removal of historically significant timbers of the earliest historic part of the building to create the enlarged bar area, the removal of 19th century ground floor internal walling and fireplace/chimney breasts to create additional usable ground floor space, and insufficient information relating to the first floor en-suite bathrooms and how these would be achievable without harm being caused.

No harm resulting from the proposed external alterations and additions on the historic significance of the Listed Building or its setting was identified. Following significant discussions between the applicant and Officers, revised plans were submitted to improve the scheme from a heritage perspective and minimise the identified harm

resulting from the internal alterations.

The Built Heritage Officer has reviewed the revised scheme and following the submission of additional information on the first floor en-suites has withdrawn their objection to this element of the scheme. They have also welcomed the improved approach to the alterations of the historic timbers to facilitate the enlarged bar area, with the significantly harmful deep notching of the horizontal wall timber previously proposed removed from the scheme.

Nonetheless, the revised scheme did not fully resolve the concerns raised regarding the proposed works structural works to the central bar area which requires a slight loss of the bottom portion of the timber studs. The applicant has stated there is no alternative to the proposed approach without causing potential structural issues in the future. The proposed removal of 19th century ground floor internal walling and fireplace/chimney breasts has also not been amended, which the Officer advises would result in the loss of historic fabric and features with a detrimental impact to the historic planform and the legibility of the phased development of the historic public house.

In conclusion, the Built Heritage Officer advises that the proposal would amount to less than substantial harm to the significance of this designated heritage asset. Paragraph 215 of the NPPF states that where a proposal would amount to less than substantial harm, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimal viable use.

Of significance to this case is that the proposal would re-open the vacant building and return it to its historic use as a public house, serving as an important community facility that the residents of Crazies Hill, and the surrounding Hamlets, have not benefitted from for more than two years. The proposal would also provide employment opportunities for local residents. It is also acknowledged that members of the local community have bought the site with the aim of returning it to its former use while securing its long-term economic viability.

The re-opening of a key community facility is a significant benefit of the proposal which is supported by the NPPF and the local development plan. It is also acknowledged that an extended period of vacancy could result in further degradation of this important designated heritage asset.

The application is supported by an economic analysis report, produced by the applicant, which in more detail justifies elements of the proposal in terms of why they are essential for the long-term economic viability of the re-opened PH. The report also discusses why previous tenures of the PH prior to its closure have failed to make a profit, noting its restricted internal layout and lack of guest accommodation.

The submitted report argues that the refusal of any of the key elements of the proposed scheme would equate to an operational loss once the PH is re-opened. This includes the removal of the identified internal walling/fireplaces, which if not approved would result in the loss of 22% of potential additional seat covers with a subsequent reduction in patronage and sales. It is argued throughout the report that re-opening the PH without any of the proposed refurbishment works being allowed

would not be economically viable, meaning that the PH may have no viable future.

It is noted that the submitted report has not been independently verified. Nonetheless, it is accepted that a reduction of additional seat covers which could be created under this scheme would have a knock-on effect on the viability of the PH once re-opened.

It is also noted that significant amendments to the scheme have been secured through negotiation between the applicant and Officers, with the most harmful elements in terms of impact on the historic fabric of the building removed. The Council's Built Heritage Officer has also recommended several conditions to ensure no further harm during the proposed works and once the PH has been brought back into use.

The economic and social benefits arising from the proposal weigh significantly in favour of approving the application. On balance, it is considered that the public benefits from re-opening the PH as a vital community facility and ensuring its long-term economic viability outweighs the less than substantial harm to the designated heritage asset identified.

On the basis of the above, and all comments received on the application, the proposal would represent an appropriate outcome for the site. As such, this application is recommended for **approval** subject to conditions.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010):

In determining this application the Council is required to have due regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that persons with protected characteristics as identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application and there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

RECOMMENDATION

Conditions agreed:	Yes
Recommendation:	Approve
Date:	15 April 2025
Earliest date for decision:	28 February 2025

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	15 April 2025