

## **Supporting and Heritage Statement**

### **Change of use of existing public house to provide 8 holiday lets including reconstruction of part of the building in the same form at The Fitzwilliam Arms, Hill Street, Elsecar**

#### **Introduction**

It is proposed to change the use of the public house to provide 8 holiday lets (4 two bedroom and 4 single bedroom). The change of use proposes to take down part of the original public house building, not by choice but due to severe structural instability, this is to be rebuilt in the same location, on the same footprint and to the same external appearance/dimensions. It's also proposed to be rebuilt using the existing materials by carefully taking down the existing façade and side elevations and pelleting the existing materials onsite for reuse. The existing car parking area will be retained to serve the holiday lets while the beer garden and outside sitting areas will be utilised for communal and private open space.

A pre-application submission was submitted with regard to the previous scheme to convert the rebuilt building to apartments rather than holiday lets. The response to this indicated that while the site is within the urban fabric, evidence that the pub is no longer required for its current use would be required, the demolition of the building would need to be fully justified and the number and mix of apartments would need to be justified.

#### **The Application Site**

The site is located on the western side of Hill Street within the settlement of Elsecar. The original public house building is a two-storey building facing the road with a brick frontage, rendered south elevation and painted brick north elevation. There are a number of later brick-built extensions to the rear which are two storeys (but lower than the original building) closest to the original building, and single storey in the rearmost section. To the north of the building is a car park together with a timber hut, beer garden, an outdoor eating area and playgrounds.

Immediately to the south of the site is a small car sales area with an open grass area beyond. To the north of the car park and beer garden is a small area of new housing that is currently under construction. On the opposite side of the road is housing, a takeaway and a church.

The site is within the recently extended Elsecar Conservation Area and the original public house is identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal as a "positive building" with the extensions to the rear being identified as a "neutral building".

#### **Planning Policy**

The development plan for the area is currently the Barnsley Local Plan which was adopted in January 2019. The site is shown as being within the settlement boundary for Elsecar but with no specific allocation. It is also shown as being adjacent to an area of undevelopable land due to the impact on the historic environment and is within the Elsecar Conservation Area.

Policy SD1 sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Policy GD1 sets out the criteria for development to be acceptable which include that there should be no significant adverse effect on the living conditions and residential amenity of existing and future residents and that the proposals should be compatible with neighbouring land.

Policy LG2 gives a priority to development in urban Barnsley and the principal towns.

Policy E7 relates to the loss of local services and community facilities in villages. It allows for the change of use of local service facilities only if the business cannot be economically successful or if the change of use would not have a significant effect on the ability of local people to access local services.

Policy E5 promotes tourism and encourages the growth and development of cultural provision by a number of means including by promoting the existing cultural provision and tourism including accommodation and hospitality.

Policy D1 requires that development should respect and reinforce the distinctive local character and features of Barnsley.

Policy HE1 encourages developments that help in the management of Barnsley's historic environment which can be achieved by supporting proposals which conserve and enhance the significance and setting of the Borough's heritage assets including the Elsecar Conservation Village, and the designated conservation areas. Proposals that preserve or enhance the character or appearance of a conservation area will be supported.

Policy HE5 states that the demolition of buildings that make a positive contribution to a conservation area will not be approved unless certain circumstances exist including that the building is structurally unsound and dangerous and cannot be viably repaired, where it is shown that every effort has been made to secure, repair or re-use the building, and where no opportunities for grant funding, charitable ownership, sale or lease is available.

### **National Planning Policy**

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the government's national policies relating to specific topics and may be a material consideration in considering specific proposals.

The Framework sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development. To achieve this there are a number of requirements for the planning system including to have an environmental role by protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment.

Paragraph 124 gives substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs and promoting and supporting the development of underutilised land and buildings.

Section 16 of the Framework relates to conserving and enhancing the historic environment. Paragraph 203 sets out the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness and paragraph 200 requires that applicants should describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made to their setting and that the level of detail submitted should be no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. Paragraph 206 requires that any harm to or loss of the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification.

### **Assessment**

The site is shown as being within the Urban Fabric of Elsecar (part of the principal town of Hoyland) where the principle of new development is acceptable subject to detailed considerations. A use for holiday lets here will be a viable use in a sustainable location. Future users of the holiday lets will have easy access to local facilities and to public transport with regular bus services along Hill Street and it is within easy walking distance of Elsecar station. It is also within walking distance of the Elsecar Heritage Centre which is an

established heritage attraction. It will also be in keeping with surrounding uses. The adjoining land to the north is being developed for residential purposes and there is a residential area on the opposite side of Hill Street. The provision of 8 holiday lets would be a viable use that could be accommodated in the re-constructed building without requiring any further extension.

The applicant has chosen to provide 2-bedroom and single bedroom units within the building as this is the type of unit that is appropriate for this type of use. This is backed up by discussions with the heritage centre who have recognised the need for such accommodation. The proposal will enhance the viability of the Heritage Centre and other local tourist attractions by providing accommodation for guests.

With regard to the details of the scheme it is proposed to convert the building into four two-bedroom units and four single bedroom units (including one duplex unit). With the exception of the removal of some small items of the existing signage, the alterations to window positions on the side elevations of the building and the reinstatement of four chimney pots on the existing stacks, the external elevations of the original building will remain unchanged. The appearance of the modern extensions will also remain largely unchanged with the exception of some minor alterations to window and door openings on the northern side elevation of the building. The appearance of the area will generally be retained.

The external layout of the site will also largely be retained unchanged with the car parking area and areas of amenity space utilising the existing car parking area and external facilities. This will ensure that there is no encroachment of built development into the area shown to be retained free from development in the Local Plan. Two of the units will have private areas of open space while the remainder will share a communal lawn, sitting area and playground. This is a generous amount of amenity space to serve the units. A total of 13 car parking spaces will be provided (2 spaces per two-bed unit and one space per single bed unit). Access into this area will be unchanged from the current situation. The fact that the building will have a viable use will maintain it in good condition which will be a benefit to the vitality of the area.

It is recognised that planning policy seeks to retain community facilities but, in this case, demolition of the original structure is the only safe option for the building. While the public house has been operating on this site for many years the trade has declined significantly and it is no longer a viable operation. There are other public houses within walking distance of the site the closest of which is the Crown approximately 100m to the south of the site on the same side of Hill Street. Further to the south are the Milton Arms and the Market Hotel and there are others within the town centre of Hoyland to the north such as The Official Cobcar on St Helens Street. There are also a mixture of cafes and takeaways within the area, and a range of refreshment outlets and event venues within the nearby Elsecar Heritage centre. These provide alternative facilities for local residents.

The applicant has not advertised the building for sale for continuing use as a public house due to the unviable operation, the poor structural state of the building and the availability of a range of alternative community facilities within the local area. These are factors which would inevitably mean that in the unlikely event of a sale being agreed it would involve a significant loss and the factors would still exist and require to be overcome under different ownership.

In view of the circumstances in the local area with a wide range of public houses and other refreshment facilities the proposal for holiday flats/apartments would seem to overcome the need for the building to be retained as a public house.

### **Effect on the character and appearance of the Elsecar Conservation Area and the setting of nearby Listed Buildings**

The site lies within the extended Elsecar Conservation Area and the response to the pre-application submission expressed concern at the demolition of the existing public house and questioned the need for this.

Two structural surveys have been carried out on the building by independent competent engineers. These concluded that the building had suffered from severe movement in the past to the extent that the building leans to the south by an amount that gives serious cause for concern. The reports also conclude that restoring the building is next to impossible given the extent of the movement and the dangerous instability of most of the internal piers, walls and the external walls. The building is close to collapsing. This conclusion from two qualified engineers must overcome the Council's wish to retain the building in circumstances where any attempted repair could easily lead to severe health and safety issues. It is also understood that a building control officer from the Council has visited the site and agrees with the structural engineer's conclusions.

The Conservation Area Appraisal describes the public house as a "positive building", although it has no formal designation. It was constructed at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century at a time when the western side of Hill Street was more densely developed than it is today. Other buildings around the site have been removed leaving the public house building as a reminder of the historic character of this part of the conservation area albeit with a much more open character than existed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is appreciated that the loss of the building with no rebuilding would remove all links to the former character of the immediate area and detract from the historic pattern of development in this part of the conservation area.

The proposal is however to rebuild the structure to the same appearance as the existing building. Furthermore, the part demolition will be carefully undertaken to retain all existing materials for use in the re-build. The existing bricks will be removed individually and palletted on-site for re-laying (see existing material features document). Where the bricks are blown, painted or rendered these will be flipped to expose the good face. The existing bricks on the façade are laid in a Flemish bond pattern, this pattern will be retained when re-laid. The existing stone detailing will be carefully removed, labelled and sent off for specialist restoration, this includes the central stone front door surround containing two crests on the head, window stone heads and cills and stone corbels (see existing material features document for photographs). The existing slate will also be saved and used for the re-roof. Where slates are found to be cracked or damaged these will be replaced with reclaimed slate to match. The existing UPVC casement windows will be replaced with mock sash horned windows with a single vertical glazing bar. The existing north elevation contains disproportionate windows which have been added over the years, it's proposed to replace these with period correct window proportions. The timber front door and fittings (brass no42 & door knob) look to be original, these will also be restored and reinstated.

While overall this would not represent the retention of a heritage asset and the use would be different, the appearance of this part of the conservation area would remain unchanged, and a

viable use in the building would do more to retain the character of the area than would a derelict, vacant public house.

There are many listed buildings within the Elsecar Conservation Area but none of these are close to the application site. The proposal will have no adverse impact on the setting of any listed building.

The pre-application response indicated that there is clearly considerable historic and archaeological interest on this site and that an Archaeological Assessment should be submitted with any application. The proposal will not involve any significant excavations on the site. There will be no increase in the footprint of the building, but rather building on the existing footprint and potentially using the existing foundations by introducing strengthening measures such as filling in the cellars, underpinning and ring beams prior to the reconstruction. In view of this lack of disturbance to the ground the applicant is not submitting an Archaeological Assessment but would accept an archaeological watching brief condition should permission be granted.

### **Conclusion**

This is a site in a sustainable location within the built-up area of Elsecar. The partial rebuild of the original building is essential to ensure its safety and longevity. To maintain it as a public house would not be viable. The redevelopment as holiday let apartments will be in keeping with the character of the area, will provide a type of accommodation that is in demand in the area, and will have no adverse effect on the character or appearance of the conservation area, all in accordance with development plan policies and planning policy guidance.