

Barton Parish Council
c/o 808 Garstang Road
Barton
Preston
PR3 5AA
11 July 2021

FAO: Jonathan Evans, Preston City Council Planning Department

An Application for 4no. dwellings and all other associated works, Former Boars Head Public House, 724 Garstang Road, Preston, PR3 5DR.

Barton Parish Council would like to submit its concerns to this planning application (planning reference number 06/2021/0543).

Preston City Council are well aware of the history of this site and so we do not wish to revisit this now and therefore base our comments on the current application that has been submitted.

Heritage Statement

The heritage statement submitted to support the application talks often of the Old School house as a 'non designated heritage asset' but fails to also recognise the Formers Boars Head Public House as a 'non designated heritage asset'

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| LLA 35 | The Boars Head Public House |
| LLA 36 | The Old School House |

As you will already be aware, Preston City Council has included the Boars Head Public House on its Local Heritage List due to its historical and architectural interest and its contribution to the character of Barton and its value to local people.

This lack of understanding of the importance of the building to Barton and its parishioners and its setting in the village has been repeatedly demonstrated through the applications submitted by the various owner's of the site in question. Indeed we believe that this will be the 4th planning application that seeks to demolish the main building with all others withdrawn on advice of the Council.

We note that the structural survey produced by Sunderland Peacock for a previous application is being referred to once again in this application although we believe this to be out of date.

Whilst we accept that substantial damage appears to have been caused, in particular to the extension to the existing building, the Parish Council did speak to a member of the City Council's Building Control Team earlier last year who confirmed that in their opinion the buildings on site were not classed as dangerous buildings in need of immediate demolition. Indeed had they been then we were reassured that the Building Control department would have dealt with this urgently at the time. So we maintain that the main building has not yet been

classified as unsafe by Preston City Council and the current application doesn't appear to offer an up to date structural survey to back up the claims that the building is unsafe and undevelopable.

Further to this the report mentions the need for 'significant investment' as a barrier to developing the Former Boars Head Building which in our opinion is irrelevant and not for the concern of officers or members. The site was marketed for a figure in the region of £1M with its current planning permission in place , so we would assume that if the current owners purchased the site for anywhere close to this figure that for that sum of money a detailed business plan would have been developed to look at how viable the development was before the site was purchased. The cost to redevelop the site whilst classed as significant is of no relevance to this application and holds no interest to the Parish Council who believe that the site was purchased with full knowledge of the current planning permission in place and the site's history and importance to the village and therefore a full understanding of the 'significant ' investment now required to retain the building.

To give the applicant their own words back but to acknowledge within them the Former Boars Head as a non designated heritage asset :

Paragraph 197 of the NPPF states: "The effect of an application on the significance of a **non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application**. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any **harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.**"

The Former Boars Head Public House is considered as a non-designated heritage asset in this case. Owing to the relative position of the proposed development, there would be a coherent argument to state that the proposals would harm the significance of the building. The heritage significance of the Former Boars Head Public House will therefore be affected.

The application for demolition when considered alongside the National Planning Policy Framework also raises the following concerns:

Paragraph 191 of the NPPF states: Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of, or damage to, a heritage asset, the deteriorated state of the heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision.

The structural report issued by Sunderland Peacock states that ' **The building and surround site has had to be fenced and cordoned off for the safety of the public due to the significant risk posed by entering the site and property which could result in injury or death given the serious risk of further collapse'**

We consider that the various owners of the site have not put in place the necessary protection for the building and site from the day that they acquired it. Windows and doors have not been secured properly with any form of robust material and metal fencing erected to the front of the site repeatedly fell down until it was eventually completely removed. If the various site owners had a genuine concern for the safety of our parishioners then they would have put adequate resource into securing the building from the day it was purchased.

Barton Parish Council contacted the Building Control department in early 2020 to outline our concerns around the lack of security fencing surrounding the site following the fire. We were

concerned that the metal fencing could be easily moved enabling someone to enter the site. The Building Control officer reassured us that they had visited the site and that they were happy with the controls put in place to protect the site.

We assume therefore that whilst the site has had to be fenced off that the fencing is of a sufficient standard to protect the building and site for the foreseeable future and that if the risk of injury or death was high then the Building Control department would, by now, of stepped in and forced the owner to secure the site further. We therefore can only conclude that the risk of injury or death has been dealt with through provision of the current metal fencing that surrounds the site and that this will continue to provide adequate security of the site going forward until redeveloped and therefore affords sufficient time for the new owners to invest the necessary money to bring the building back into use.

In our opinion nothing has changed since the last application for demolition was withdrawn due to its recommendation of refusal and the opinions of the City Council are still relevant, whilst the building has incurred some fire damage it is still standing and planning permission was granted for housing in place of the demolition of the extension but not the main building. This application was heard by committee due to the importance of the site to Barton's parishioners, whom we assume are still a consideration for PCC when determining these applications. For this reason we have requested through our Rural North Councillors that the application be afforded the same consideration this time around and be heard again by the Planning Committee and its members.

As a Parish Council and a village we accepted that after a long battle to save the site for a mixed use community site that the battle to either purchase the site and buildings from the past owners or to work with them to develop something for the whole village, was lost. This was only conceded and accepted because of the decision of the planning committee and its officers and members to grant permission for housing on the site whilst retaining the old building, for which we were grateful.

This current application takes us back to where we were before this decision, trying to somehow convey to the owners, members and officers the strength of feeling towards the retention of some part of this former public house which holds memories and historical interest for most in the village.

The village is already set to receive a large amount of housing over the next few years in the administrative boundaries of both Preston and Wyre and as you will be aware the village currently awaits the high court challenge and public inquiry for two sites in the village which would provide in excess of a further 250 houses in the village. Both sites refused for planning permission by Preston City Council.

We acknowledge the comments of both the Parish Council and parishioners to past applications for housing where we state that Brownfield Land must be developed first and foremost and we accept that this application seeks to do just that. But what this application does not do is ***have regard to the scale of any harm or loss to the non-designated heritage asset.***

When considered alongside the application to redevelop the former car park we feel that the proposal for housing is not one we wish to object to and indeed the design is fitting to its surroundings but we do wish for the Former Boars Head Public House building (minus

extension) to be retained as a non-designated heritage asset for the village and to see a sympathetic conversion albeit to housing but without the need for demolition.

The issue of the gain of housing for the village in place of demolishing the building is not an argument we seek to accept. New housing is not in short supply in our village, as you will be aware, and this proposal does not even offer an element of affordable housing and therefore we would appreciate the support of the City Council in retaining some of the fabric of this site for our parishioners by not allowing the demolition of the Former Boars Head building. The income alone from the 5 large dwellings proposed for the rear will certainly go a long way towards the conversion costs in our opinion and we would point you in the direction of the old school house next door to see what a successful renovation can achieve.

Other concerns:

- For some reason the applicant has submitted the details for the car parking spaces for the development within the application for the 5 houses proposed at the rear of these properties. We are unsure why this has been done and feel that they should be included within the red edge for this site to clearly indicate that a permission would be granted that included dedicated parking for the dwellings proposed in this application. Should permission be granted for some form of housing that does include the Boars Head Public House building but not be granted for the development to the rear then we would be concerned that the dwellings roadside would not benefit from dedicated parking.
- The public footpath is currently showing on the site plan as being directed through the church yard. This is private land and therefore we believe cannot be included as a part of this application and instead should be resolved with LCC before permission is granted for any development and/or included as a condition of any development. The Parish Council is, alongside parishioners, keen to see the public footpath remain in some form and we believe that discussions were held with the church but we seek official confirmation of any diversion of the existing footpath.

In conclusion the Parish Council (for what it is worth !) does not object to housing being proposed for the site or to the conversion of the Former Boars Heads Public House building but does wish to raise serious concerns over its demolition which the community has been fighting against for some time.

Why should developers be able to suggest and imply money reasons for not converting non-designated historical assets and retaining them for the community. The site when purchased came with a full planning permission and history for the owners to read and understand and 'significant' conversion costs and the developers gift of 'housing' to a village already overflowing with new housing developments (some of which at least contain affordable housing to meet need) are of no concern or benefit our parish. What would be of benefit to our parish is the provision of suitably designed housing (of which we agree this is) but alongside and not in place of the Former Boars Head Public House Building (minus side extension)

If you have any queries regarding the above comments then please do not hesitate to contact us.

Many thanks

Yours sincerely

Melissa Thorpe

Clerk to Barton Parish Council

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