
From:
Sent: 03 March 2023 10:27
To: Planning Comments (HPBC)
Subject: Comment Received from Public Access

Categories:

Application Reference No. : DOC/2023/0009 Site Address: THE FICKLE MERMAID Foresters Way Chapel-En-Le-Frith
Derbyshire Comments by: Tom Ross

From:
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Phone:
Email:
Submission: Objection
Comments: Dear sirs,

I am absolutely shocked to see that the Planning Inspecotate has approved plans to demolish the characterful and totally appropriate Fickle Mermaid public house and to replace it with a, wait for it, a petrol station and a Starbucks drive through¿ how can this be so? A new petrol station in this day and age? With 8 refuelling spots and only now a couple of EV charging points - as a token gesture by EuroGarages! That cannot be right.

While the location maybe a mixture of light industrial units and a small supermarket, this is ONLY on one side of the A6 roundabout. The location is indeed a boundary and a gateway to the Peak District National Park.

As the UK aims to achieve net zero, how does a new petrol station help to achieve this? It simply doesn¿t. There is a policy disconnect here. But we don¿t need a specific planning policy to state this, it¿s common sense. And these plans are by no means a community asset and to say such is completely ridiculous. We have a petrol station in this small town already. All the Planning Inspectorate has done is agree with Euro Garages planning consultants who have essentially highlighted minor loopholes in Planning Policy and minor gaps in High Peak Borough Councils refusal of the dreadful and completely inappropriate plan - one the majority of locals do not want. An 8 bay enormous petrol station - now with only a couple of EV charging bays¿ If granted, then it should surely be the other way around. Try with 2 fuel spots and 8 charging points.

The local community has not been listened to, and this is highlighted in the Planning Inspectorates brief reference to this in Section 23 - ¿Other Matter¿ of the Appeal Decision. However the sheer number of objections is significant. The Planning Inspectorate can surely see the strength of feeling from the public comments on the original planning application but has simply poo pood them. Just because certain references have not been mentioned by High Peak Borough Council to this does not mean that they were not seriously considered by them.

In Section 19, the Planning Inspectorate states that this design is 'utilitarian in appearance, being of typical design and scale for these type of buildings which can be seen in many areas, particularly existing commercial areas near main highways. The proposals are considered to be in a gateway position, and would be in a prominent location and visible from surrounding viewpoints however, they would not appear out of keeping with the commercial uses and appearance of existing buildings in the area.'

This is precisely why we do not want this ugly development here in this Peak District 'gateway' location! Why should we put up with an unappealing bland design that can be seen in so many other locations across the UK? This does nothing for the townscape nor the locality.

And so it feels like we, the residents, who will have to put up with this monster, bland and ugly site. We have been ignored - the residents of Chapel en le Frith have been left totally unaware that this appeal was in progress or had been upheld until the local press published the story.

How does a new petrol station benefit the local community? It really does not.

An American franchise coffee chain also has absolutely no place in the beautiful High Peak, where local independent business should be encouraged to thrive and grow. Instead, profits will be creamed off and taken completely out of the area. Local coffee shops and cafes WILL SUFFER as passing trade, from which they really rely upon is curtailed. Only a handful of new unskilled, low paid jobs will be available.

It doesn't take a planning consultant to tell you that Chapel en Le Frith town centre will therefore suffer as a direct result of this application. Here you will find local shops, independent cafes and even a petrol station. We should be supporting these independent businesses, especially during the current economic climate. Not granting plans to those that have the financial power to weather any storm.

And what is EuroGarages plan for external signage? Their other sites in general include bold, brash, tall, ugly and un-charming petrol station and Starbucks / fast food signage. The kind of bland corporate branding detracts from an area and can be found all over the USA and more recently the UK. I cannot see reference to signage in the planning material. If this rotten plan must go-ahead then I ABSOLUTELY object to any tall signage at this location, and certainly not by the side of the A6 facing the National Park itself. I would like to see council provided signage at the same location to encourage passing trade to use our town centre shops and cafes.

And what is the policy of Euro Garages to help towards the community and litter clear up? None - they don't care. They simply do no care. Their no doubt over paid consultants, from far far afield, have made absolutely no reference to this concern at all. And the Planning Inspectorate has not pressed them on the matter either. The litter generated by these establishments is absolutely shocking. And this will only add to litter in the town and within the Peak District National Park.

The Planning Inspectorate has essentially agreed to further litter in the Peak District. I litter pick close by to this location frequently - and it's always the same non-biodegradable coffee chain cups with a plastic lining in them that are thrown from car windows, along with plastic packaging from fast food. These chains haven't even bothered to invest in compostable cups and lids which are widely available but might cost them a couple of pence more - once again highlighting that all they are interested in is profitability. Funnily enough most of the independent cafes have done this.

I cannot emphasise enough what a mistake the Planning Inspectorate has made here, it is a huge oversight. He has absolutely no idea about our High Peak locality and the community needs. Therefore I urge both High Peak Borough Council, the Parish Council, local councillors, the Peak Park, residents, environmental groups, and small businesses to push back against these corporate chains in the High Peak and help find a more suitable, less intrusive, truly carbon neutral solution for this site (or keep it as a nice pub!). Think farm shop, think local produce fair, think independent traders. Not over priced all for profit corporate nonsense.

Lets get this to the High Court and win against these greedy corporate bullies.

This is my original Objection

This proposal is just urbanising our beautiful Peak District National Park and historic townscape, and I believe it to be totally inappropriate and unnecessary for the area and for the A6.

The Peak District National Park Authority should be consulted on these plans as the boundary of the park is so close to the proposal. It appears that they have not been given the opportunity to comment.

We should absolutely be supporting new local businesses, like independent coffee shops and shops, not American bland brand chain stores (with rubbish mass produced and marketed coffee to boot), nor lining the pockets of the already stinking rich owners of ASDA who already own in excess of 300 plus EuroGarage petrol stations and coffee, subway, burger type franchises already. This picture across the UK is just so dull and unimaginative.

Chapel en le Frith already has a petrol station that is never too busy and this brings in much needed trade to the town centre, but mainly serves the local population well.

Plus the UK seems to be steering away from petrol engine vehicles over the next few years ‐ so their argument for sustainability is nonsense if they are building it to predominantly sell petrol!

Massive branded signage, a boring, bland, uninspiring building which is totally unsympathetic with the local character (no mention of any local building materials in use). It just is not right for this location and for Chapel en le Frith. This is not an urban centre like Stockport nor Macclesfield, and it is simply not needed.

Think about all of the additional litter that would be created in the area too (it is bad enough on the A6 with McDonalds, KFC, Starbucks, sandwich wrappers, energy drink type junk that is thrown out of car windows as it is!).

Those driving into the Peaks will pick up their take away coffee, avoid local businesses, and enjoy mass produced factory made expensive coffee and cake to take to the picturesque tourist spots, and then you can imagine what will happen when those that do not like to take their litter home will do with it! Extra light pollution is also a massive factor.

Can we just promote something independent and different, even repurpose the Fickle Mermaid existing stone building if needs be. This building went through planning hurdles itself but it is stone and is built in a traditional manner, in keeping with the area.

Keep this boring bland junk in the urban cities ‐ yes. But it is not for the edge of the Peak District National Park ‐ absolutely not.

Morrisons Fuel Station in Chapel certainly is not an origin or destination for mass HGV refuelling, and I am fairly sure people do not drive to Chapel just to refuel their car (Whaley and Buxton have their own stations!), except perhaps from out lying hamlets such as Blackbrook and Combs.

And in order to get out of Chapel, you have to drive through the centre of Chapel anyway. So there is no argument for this proposal reducing local traffic in Chapel at all.

A Shell or BP branded garage certainly will not see lower pump prices in the town centre either. These stations usually sell a few pence more per litre than the local supermarket.

We need a planning application that is imaginative, using local materials, has a truly inspiring and unique design and is not just about creating minimum wage low skilled employment and further lining the pockets of enormous companies. These jobs will mainly be part time, perhaps zero hour contracts.

Any new proposal should be imaginative, and more importantly environmentally friendly ‐ harvested rain water for lavatories, Reed bed filtration, solar energy, lambs wool insulation ‐ we are just seeing concrete, metal and glass here. And it lacks anything other than poor architecture and uninspired design and build to the absolute lowest budget. Once again putting profits before anything else.

I beg you not to let this happen in our beautiful High Peak.

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