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From: planningcomments@highpeak.gov.uk
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To: Planning Comments (HPBC)
Subject: Comment Received from Public Access

Application Reference No. : HPK/2026/0074 Site Address: Shady Oak Inn LONG HILL FERNILEE DERBYSHIRE SK23
7HD High Peak Comments by: S & D Mellers

From:
Toll Bar Cottage
Long Hill
Fernilee
Whaley Bridge

Phone:

Email: [REDACTED]

Submission: Objection

Comments: We are writing to object to the retrospective planning application for the Shady Oak.

We have lived in Fernilee since 2007, within walking distance of the Shady Oak, and in that time have made/met many friends at the Shady Oak and attended weddings, christenings, karaoke nights, live music events, charity events, quizzes, Harvest auctions and other events in support of Fernilee Chapel. There was also an extremely well-attended Platinum Jubilee party in 2022, organised with the help of the local community. It is a much missed community asset.

The pub has also been used by many holidaymakers in the area staying at holiday lets, and the facility is missed by them too.

There are no other non-religious community facilities in Fernilee.

We agree there is a lack of local footfall to the pub, as stated in the Planning Statement, but its position on the busy A5004 ensures it is visible to all passing traffic, and the countryside views outside mean it is somewhere people would drive to for a good meal and well kept beer. When the meals/beer/atmosphere are no longer good however, people no longer drive there, hence the downturn in business in recent years.

There has also been a busy bed and breakfast business running from the pub in the not too distant past, and it is well positioned as a stop off for walkers/runners/cyclists. As mentioned above, the pub was also used regularly for various celebrations and also funeral wakes. The location is not the issue.

Much weight in the application is given to statements given by two former landlords of the Shady Oak, and to one former landlord of the White Hart in Whaley Bridge, who have all concluded that the pub is not a viable business.

We question the relevance of a statement from the former landlady of the White Hart. This pub is not comparable to The Shady Oak in location or facilities.

It's true that in recent years the Shady Oak was not running to its earlier high standards. We are of the opinion that this is not necessarily down to the pub itself, but the fact that it hasn't been well managed for a number of years. Meals, atmosphere and service have not been up to the levels expected of a country pub, and have not even been at the bare minimum at times, and customers have not returned and have presumably told others not to go. This would obviously not be admitted by the two sets of previous landlords on their statements, but was it clear to anyone drinking or eating there. Opening times from the last set of landlords were also erratic, and stocks of drinks and food dwindled to almost nothing during the usually busy summer season. Unsurprisingly, people stopped going there.

However, if managed by someone with the necessary skills, the pub could once again have been a success. There could have been a real chance for it as a Free House & no longer tied to a brewery with expensive charges for beer.

We know that it is not an easy time for pubs, but around the local area some of them are thriving eg The Swan at Kettleshulme, The Beehive at Coombs (a location much more remote than The Shady Oak), the Old Hall/Paper Mill Inn near Chinley. These places are successful and busy.

The Duke in Burbage, Buxton was empty for a few years, and now it has been taken over and is running as a pub again. It can be done.

Permission for change of use should only be given when all opportunities and efforts to keep the public house have been exhausted. Converting a property like this without permission, including changing external windows that don't seem to match the property, should not be condoned or approved by the Planning Authority.

S and D Mellers

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