

Response to Officer's Comments

Chippenham Road – Public House Demolition Application

1. Introduction

- 1.1 London Plan Policy HC7 (Protecting public houses) states that applications that propose the loss of public houses with heritage, cultural, economic or social value should be refused unless there is authoritative marketing evidence that demonstrates there is no realistic prospect of the building being used as a pub in the foreseeable evidence.
- 1.2 The information submitted alongside the planning application sought to make the case that The Alderman PH is not of such value and can therefore be demolished without authoritative marketing evidence.
- 1.3 LB Havering Planning Officers have requested further information to demonstrate The Alderman PH does not carry value as listed in the London Plan that would protect its use.
- 1.4 The remainder of this note sets out the comments received from LB Havering on the application to demolish The Alderman Public House (LB Havering Ref. P1274.23) and the additional information we consider addresses the points raised.

2. Heritage Value

Officer's Comments

- 2.1 I agree the site is not in a Conservation Area, the building is not either a Listed Building or within a setting. Furthermore, I agree the building itself in architectural terms would not hold a heritage value.
- 2.2 However, pertinent to the other topics I would hold reservations if the use of the building as a public house from a social history perspective can be discounted on the information provided.
- 2.3 The Harold Hill estate represents a post war housing extension and the public house I have assumed would have been constructed during the same period as the surrounding housing and the Farnham Road shopping precinct, almost acting as a social hub.
- 2.4 Given it is during the era of the new town movement as the catalyst of development following the second world war I feel further research is required to establish if the public house holds any social history which would contribute towards its heritage value. Although I have placed this paragraph into the heritage section, the social history aspect of the public house may cross over into a cultural and social value as it is more associated with the lives of people than the building itself.

Policy Context

- 2.5 The NPPF (2023) notes that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.
- 2.6 The London Plan (2021) defines Heritage Assets as valued components of the historic environment, including buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes positively identified as having a degree of historic significance meriting consideration in planning decisions. Heritage significance is defined as the archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic interest of a heritage asset.
- 2.7 The Guidance of Listed Buildings Identification and Extent¹ notes that *“To be of special historic interest a building must illustrate important aspects of the nation’s social, economic, cultural, or military history and/or have close historical associations with nationally important people”*.

Additional Information

- 2.8 Whilst The Alderman was constructed in 1957 as part of the wider estate in Harold Hill and has been in use as a public house since its construction, this in itself does not signify heritage value, nor does the age of the building or its use. As noted by Historic England, special historic interest is derived from encompassing important aspects of social, economic, cultural or military history.
- 2.9 The Alderman does not illustrate important aspects of the local area’s social, economic, cultural or military history and it therefore cannot be attributed heritage value that would warrant its retention.
- 2.10 The Harold Hill Estate was completed in 1958 and incorporated nine sites for public houses². These were established as: The Saxon King, The Duckwood, The Pompadours, The Morris Dancer, The Bow and Arrow, The William the Conqueror, The Alderman, The Plough, The Bear (now the Deer’s Rest). A number of these public houses remain in operation as public houses, whilst others operate as restaurants/bars and some have been converted to other uses or demolished.
- 2.11 There is no evidence available to suggest that The Alderman is of heritage value from a social history perspective. Indeed, many recollections of public houses of significance in Harold Hill return to The Saxon King (the first purpose-built pub)³, The Morris Dancer (the first pub, albeit converted),⁴ The Pompadours (for its notoriety)⁵ and The Bear (for its age)⁶.
- 2.12 This position is supported by the lack of designation of The Alderman as a listed building and, more notably, as a local heritage asset or local listing. The Historic England Local Heritage Listing: Identifying and Conserving Local Heritage (Historic England Advice Note 7 (Second Edition)) notes that *“Social and communal interest may be regarded as a sub-set of historic interest but has a special value in local listing. As noted in the PPG: ‘Heritage assets ... can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as fair and cultural identity’. It*

¹ Historic England: <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/hpg/has/listed-buildings/>

² The History of Harold Hill and Noak Hill, Brian Lingham (1969): <http://www.friendsofdagnampark.org.uk/lingham-intro.htm>

³ Harold Hill Libraries: <https://www.facebook.com/HavLib/posts/the-saxon-king-harold-hill-1967the-morris-dancer-was-the-first-pub-to-open-in-ha/3268724023175625/>

⁴ Harold Hill Libraries: <https://www.facebook.com/HavLib/posts/the-saxon-king-harold-hill-1967the-morris-dancer-was-the-first-pub-to-open-in-ha/3268724023175625/>

⁵ Odeboyz’s Blog: <https://odeboyz.com/2017/03/02/the-flying-bottles/>

⁶ Harold Hill and Noak Hill: A History, Simon Donoghue and Don Tait (2003)

[Historic Interest] therefore relates to places perceived as a source of local identity, distinctiveness, social interaction and coherence, contributing to the 'collective memory' of a place".

- 2.13 We note that the London Borough of Havering places a number of Public Houses on the Local Heritage List citing social value as a key reason of historic interest. The full details of these Public Houses are provided in table 2.1 overleaf.

Table 2.1: Public Houses cited for Social History Value in LBH's Local Heritage List

Public House	Architectural and Historic Interest (specific to Social History and Value)
The Durhams Arms	Interest includes the PH being a significant social hub.
The Angel Public House	Interest includes the PH being a door keeper of the historic centre.
The Bell Public House	Interest includes the PH being a door keeper of the historic centre.
The Bull Inn (Fatling and Firkin)	Interest includes the PH being one of the most popular meeting places on the High Street for many years.
The Cricketers (OJ's)	Interest includes the PH being a sizeable example of a 1930s domestic style pub which has been at the heart of the social life of Hornchurch for several decades.
The Crown Public House	Interest includes the PH being a prominent social landmark for the local area.
The Slaters Arms Public House	Interest includes the PH being a prominent social landmark for the local area.
The New Inn	Interest includes the PH being a prominent social landmark for the local area.
The Bull Inn	Interest includes the PH being an important venue in the centre of town, with a long association as a popular meeting venue.
The Mawney Arms	Interest includes the PH highlighting the period of growth of Romford associated with 1889 housing development.
The Chequers Public House	Interest includes the PH being an important social space for the surrounding community.
The Crown	Interest includes the PH being an important social space for the surrounding community.
The Coopers Arms	Interest includes the PH being an important social space for the surrounding community.
The Good Intent Public House	Interest includes the PH being an important social space for the surrounding community.
The Old Oak Public House	Interest includes the PH evidencing a particular stage in the town's development and for its long association as a social meeting point in the area, despite being of simple design typical of pub architecture.
The Moreland Arms (The Goose)	Interest includes the PH being notable for its social associations and value as it was often used as an after-show venue for artists performing at the nearby Havana/Odeon Cinema.
The Prince Albert Public House	Interest includes the PH being significant for its long association as a social meeting point.
The Victoria Public House	Interest includes the PH evidencing a particular stage in the town's development and for its long association as a social meeting point in the area, despite being of simple design typical of pub architecture.

Public House	Architectural and Historic Interest (specific to Social History and Value)
The Wheatsheaf Public House	Interest includes the PH being a prominent social landmark for the surrounding neighbourhood, and a site of social congregation.

- 2.14 We note the list is extensive and attributes significance to Public Houses on their role in social life, including congregation, meeting and particular advancements in development.
- 2.15 The absence of The Alderman Public House on this list along with a lack of evidence (anecdotal or otherwise) that demonstrates the Public House has a social history of any significance that would merit consideration in planning terms demonstrates that The Alderman does not hold a heritage value from a social history perspective. Whilst it was developed at the same time as the wider Harold Hill Estate, it was one of nine sites for public houses and did not evidence a particular advancement in the development of Harold Hill, and has not established a prominent role in social life since. Furthermore, paragraph 7.7.6 of the London Plan (2021) places weight on the consideration of the property being within a conservation area or being locally or statutorily listed for heritage value.
- 2.16 The Alderman is not an irreplaceable resource. It does not illustrate archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic interest and is therefore not of such heritage value that would warrant its retention.

3. Cultural Value

Officer's Comments

- 3.1 I note the comments regarding the public house is not operated by a sports club or team and it is difficult to find a website or indeed a social media presence.
- 3.2 It does become less clear in the covering letter in how there to be no cultural value. The covering letter states there appears to be a low cultural offer at the premises but offers no clarification how it came to that view. The section continues into a more generalised section about music and TV events etc before jumping to poor attendance, advocating it does not have actual value to merit its retention (heavily summarising).
- 3.3 I feel that this aspect does need further exploring given it has a licence for entertainment (either televised or live) where events can take place in the public house which would suggest a more cultural value than as reported in the covering letter to being limited.
- 3.4 This I admit could be an endless list but as a suggestion and from my own experience are there any teams such as darts or pool which regularly use the public house for events? Have there been events, either for commercial purposes or for charity that have taken place recently within the public house? In respect of televised events are there any particular sport or non-sports that are shown? The pub manager / landlord / landlady might be better placed to help with the types of answers.
- 3.5 The findings can help articulate if there to be or not to be a cultural value.

Policy Context

- 3.6 Paragraph 7.5.4 of the London Plan notes that pubs, night clubs and venues that host live or electronic music and rehearsal facilities are considered essential spaces and venues for cultural production and consumption. Paragraph 7.5.1 notes that the vibrancy of London's culture is integrally

linked to the diverse communities of the city, and grassroots venues and community projects. Paragraph 7.5.3 goes on to note that London's culture sector delivers both economic and social benefits, and that culture also plays a role in building strong communities, increasing healthy life outcomes and generating civic pride. Paragraph 7.7.6 includes consideration of whether the pub has a licence for entertainment, events, film, performances or sport as part of the assessment of its value.

- 3.7 At a local level, the Havering Local Plan defines culture as the attitude, customs, and beliefs distinguishing one group or area from another, and notes that it plays a valuable role in place shaping with cultural developments creating a sense of place and belonging within the community.

Additional Information

- 3.8 As noted in the original submission, The Alderman does not host live or electronic music, nor does it generate civic pride or a sense of belonging within the wider community. As part of the wider consultation on the redevelopment of Harold Hill, a number of residents expressed their support for the demolition of The Alderman due to poor perception, little contribution to civic life, its negative visual appearance and negative impact on the neighbourhood. Most residents supported its removal and welcomed alternative plans for the space.
- 3.9 The Alderman is not operated by a sports club or team and does not have a social media presence.
- 3.10 Whilst The Alderman benefits from a license for televised sporting events, this in itself does not mean that this gives the Public House any cultural value. Cultural value, as noted in the development plan, derives from civic pride, belonging and creating a sense of place. Notwithstanding, the provision of televised sporting events at the site is low with streaming limited solely to TNT sport⁷, which fails to capture all popular sporting events in England⁸. TNT sport does not stream the Olympics, the Commonwealth Games, the London Marathon, Wimbledon or the Fifa World Cup⁹. Noting that The Alderman does not stream some of the most popular sporting events, it fails to compete with neighbouring pubs such as The Saxon King which has Sky TV and Sky Sports Live¹⁰.
- 3.11 Similarly, whilst The Alderman incorporates one pool table, there is no evidence to indicate that it is used regularly by a team for events. Indeed, there does not appear to be any evidence of regular events being held at The Alderman. This is in contrast to The Deer's Rest in the vicinity which hosts a range of events, including charity events, live music events, Christmas markets and televised sporting events¹¹. There is a clear cultural value associated with The Deer's Rest that is over and above the offering at The Alderman.
- 3.12 The provision of community and charity events is also available in the immediate vicinity at St George's Parish Church and Centre, which offers a strong civic presence. The Centre offers a youth club and coffee mornings for the local community and televised the King's Coronation live for all to enter free. Additionally, the Centre plays an active role in food bank and baby bank collections, providing a betterment in sense of place and delivering cultural value that increases healthy life outcomes.

⁷ What Pub, The Alderman: <https://whatpub.com/pubs/ESW/10171/alderman-harold-hill>

⁸ YouGov, The Most Popular Sport Events Q3 2023: <https://yougov.co.uk/ratings/entertainment/popularity/sport-events/all>

⁹ Daily Mail: What events are on TNT Sports: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sport/football/article-12310207/What-events-TNT-Sports-watch-including-TV-channel-numbers.html>

¹⁰ All in London, The Saxon King: <https://www.allinlondon.co.uk/clubs-bars/pubs/5768-the-saxon-king>

¹¹ Facebook, The Deer's Rest: https://www.facebook.com/deersrest/?locale=en_GB

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- 3.13 The cultural value of The Alderman is not compelling, nor irreplaceable – it is insignificant in the context of the cultural offering in the area and does not warrant its retention.

4. Economic Value

Officer's Comments

- 4.1 Firstly it should be noted that the licence for the public house allows trade to continue past 9pm and in fact is able to serve alcohol and run licensable activities until 11.30 Monday to Sunday with the premises being closed at 12am (later times for Christmas Eve, patron saints days and Burns Night).
- 4.2 I feel more explanation is needed to why the public house cannot contribute towards the night time economy given the potential of opening later under licence. Although closing at 9pm currently, is there a particular reason and evidence to support the reason? Furthermore, what about daytime trade and employment opportunities?
- 4.3 In the absence of further information I remain unconvinced that closing at 9pm and not being on a main thoroughfare being the reasons to suggest that it does not have an economic value.

Additional Information

- 4.4 The supporting text to Policy SD6 of the London Plan identifies town centres to be central to the lives of Londoners. It notes that the agglomeration of town centres gives rise to formal and informal networks that can provide mutual support, advice and economic benefit. They play an important role in terms of local economic and social infrastructure, providing employment opportunities and promoting community and cultural exchange. There is a strong policy impetus for a town centres first approach, which promotes the enhancement of town centre vitality and viability.
- 4.5 The Havering Local Plan notes that the borough's town centre provide important opportunities for social interaction, and community life, and as good places to live. The supporting text for Policy 14 (Eating and Drinking) recognises that drinking establishments are an important part of the local economy in providing jobs and business opportunities as well as opportunities for entertainment and socialising. Policy 14 recognises that such establishments can make a contribution to the diversification of town centres and the attractiveness of centres as a whole.
- 4.6 The Alderman does not contribute to town centre activity due to its isolated position with no visual or other link to the town centre. In the absence of a link, The Alderman cannot be seen to function as part of a wider town centre network, that may otherwise indicate some mutual economic value.
- 4.7 Part f of Paragraph 7.7.6 of the London Plan requires an assessment of whether or not a public house is currently making a positive contribution to the night-time economy. The Alderman closes at 9pm, it is situated in an out-of-centre location, physically isolated from the town centre and surrounded by residential uses. It therefore does not make a positive contribution to the night-time economy.
- 4.8 It is important to note that the Applicant is not responsible for operating the pub and the operator has made a decision to close at 9pm. From our conversations with the operator, we are aware that The Alderman has low footfall, has been unable to recover since Covid-19, has low revenue, and low staffing numbers.

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- 4.9 The Alderman does not have an economic value such to warrant its retention. Whilst it offers an opportunity for consumption (albeit limited), it does not play an integral role in the economic value of the town centre, local community or area.

5. Social Value

Officer's Comments

- 5.1 I feel using evidence from nine years ago (2014) to purport anti-social behaviour remains high and has no social value to the community is difficult to support. Whilst the public house did have its licence removed, it is now operational with its licence enabling the public house to remain open until 12am. Given also the period of time and intervening events that have happened, so much has changed from nine years ago to cite as evidence for the application.
- 5.2 When doing a simple web search my attention is drawn to the public house being used as a warm space and news stories about the loss of the public to the detriment of the community. Some of the news stories outline that patrons may have to travel further afield or that it is not possible to go further afield thereby preventing residents the use of the public house.
- 5.3 I acknowledge that the web search results could be considered anecdotal but nonetheless they suggest an element of a social value for the public house which the covering letter has not demonstrated.

Additional Information

- 5.4 The NPPF (2023) identifies a social objective to sustainable development that is to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being.
- 5.5 As identified above, The Alderman is not unique, nor intrinsically valued by the wider community. As part of the Applicant's initial public consultation with the community, the Applicant sought the local community's views as to whether The Alderman is a valuable community asset. The responses set out a complete lack of support for its continuation in its current guise, and many described it as an eyesore that needs to be removed. Indeed, many residents were concerned about the pub's negative impact on the neighbourhood as a whole and favoured alternative places for the space.
- 5.6 Furthermore, The Alderman's offerings are limited in the context of services available at key social assets in the vicinity. St George's Parish Church and Centre, which offers opportunities for real improvements in social progress, i.e. school uniform drop-offs, and promotes healthy life outcomes, i.e. collections for food and baby banks. The Harold Hill Community Club provides a wide range of services ranging from housing advice, money advice, employment support and wellbeing, and a Community Food Shop – both of which promote social progress and healthy life outcomes.
- 5.7 The Deer's Rest and the Saxon King also host a range of charity events, such as monthly Charity Jukebox Parties, family events and special functions to support specific charities¹². Such services are not offered at The Alderman and there is a lack of intrinsic social value attributable to the public

¹² Facebook, The Deer's Rest: https://www.facebook.com/deersrest/?locale=en_GB

house. Social functions and value are evidently present in the immediate vicinity which are of significant scale and kind in relation to The Alderman. The social value of The Alderman is insignificant in relation.

- 5.8 Anti-social behaviour has been a longstanding issue with the Harold Hill Estate¹³ and it is well-recognised by local residents¹⁴. This sits within the context of wider aspirations to regenerate the estate to overcome the anti-social behaviour and improve safety, legibility and a sense of place. The social value of The Alderman is not sufficient to warrant its retention, particularly in the context of the impending delivery of a 100% affordable housing development in its place that would make a significant contribution to social progress and wellbeing in the area.

6. Mitigation Package

Officer's Comments

- 6.1 I note the covering letter does provide mitigation measures to be taken into account. Although the measures are not sufficient to outweigh the loss of the public house I do wish to provide comments should it be considered to revised the supporting information and continue the current application.
- 6.2 The covering letter mentions a Memorandum of Understanding with the current operator. I understand a MoU to be a statement of serious intent which is agreed voluntarily by equal partners of the commitment, resources, and other considerations that each of the parties will bring. Although this has a moral force, it does not create legal obligations.
- 6.3 No other information has been provided except that it gives first refusal for a different site on the Farnham Road development site. A MoU is not a legally binding document and does not guarantee a public house would be on the Farnham Road development site given uncertainty of scheme being brought forward which would align with the ongoing operation of the pub.
- 6.4 I do feel this needs to be further explored and further information provided to give more certainty there would be a unit in the proposed Farnham Road development if this is to be given more weight for this application in the planning balance.
- 6.5 I take on board the proposal to establish a meanwhile use within the existing Farnham and Hilldene estate, however in the absence of any further information it is difficult to consider if this is a material factor for this application.

Additional Information

- 6.6 The demolition of The Alderman sits within the wider context of redevelopment proposals for the Harold Hill Estate. This is a corporate aspiration for the London Borough of Havering and the regeneration programme has been approved by the Council's Cabinet.
- 6.7 At this time, the proposals for the Farnham and Hilldene Estate (Stage 3 of the masterplan) are at a very early stage of development. The Applicant is committed to the delivery of a town centre that supports the community and establishes a social hub for the community, including the delivery of outdoor seating and a range of restaurants and bars. The Applicant will therefore reprovide a unit for

¹³ The Havering Daily, Horrendous Harold Hill flats have always been full of drug users:

<https://thehaveringdaily.co.uk/2023/07/04/horrendous-harold-hill-flats-have-always-been-full-of-drug-users/>

¹⁴ Harold Hill Town Centre Public Consultation Report 2021

a public house in the town centre as part of the Farnham and Hildene Estate proposals. First refusal will be offered to the current occupier.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 The purpose of London Plan Policy HC7 is to protect public houses that have intrinsic value. The Alderman is not intrinsically valuable from a heritage, cultural, social or economic perspective for the reasons set out in this note, nor does it contribute to the wider policy objectives for town centre or night time economy areas. It stands to reason that any value that a pub has must be clearly identifiable and of some significance to justify its retention. The Alderman does not meet the threshold for retention.
- 7.2 Additionally, the benefit of retaining The Alderman would not outweigh the benefits of clearing the site for the provision of affordable housing, which is a significant and demonstrable need in the London Borough of Havering. Clearing of the site will enable the faster delivery of much needed affordable homes for the borough as part of a wider estate renewal, both of which will make a significant contribution to the social and economic progress and value of residents and Havering.
- 7.3 The regeneration of the Harold Hill Estate is a long-standing intent of the Council and the demolition of The Alderman must be considered in that context. The loss of the Public House, which is supported by a number of residents, allows the delivery of affordable housing, which is essential for addressing the needs of the 1,922 households on LBH's housing waiting list. It would also enable the delivery of a more successful estate renewal that is able to strengthen the Town Centre as a social hub, provide a similar facility that does have value in the Town Centre and create a legible and safe development for residents. These benefits significantly outweigh the loss of The Alderman as a public house with no heritage, social, cultural or economic value of any significance.

Avison Young
31 January 2024