



## Committee Report

**Planning Committee South – 6 March 2024**

**Application no** DC/23/2694/FUL

**Location**

The Ship  
Church Lane  
Levington  
Ipswich  
Suffolk  
IP10 0LQ

**Expiry date** 1 September 2023

**Application type** Full Application

**Applicant** Adnams Plc

**Parish** Levington

**Proposal** Alterations and extensions to provide additional dining and upgraded kitchen facilities and an outdoor seating area and extended parking area

**Case Officer** Jamie Behling  
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### 1. Summary

- 1.1. This application seeks planning permission to alter and extend The Ship Inn public house in Levington which includes an enlarged parking area and terrace.
- 1.2. The application was presented to the Referral Panel on 23 January 2024 as the officer recommendation of approval is contrary to the Parish Council's objection to the scheme. The Panel decided that the application should be determined by Planning Committee South due to the significant public interest of the application and its impact on the wider village of Levington.
- 1.3. The proposal is considered to comply with the Development Plan, it adds to the viability of this community asset and enhances the facility provided for the community and wider area, including the economic benefits to the area. The application is therefore recommended for approval.

## **2. Site Description**

- 2.1. The Ship Inn is a public house and restaurant located outside of the settlement boundary of Levington, which is slightly to the west, and the site is therefore within the countryside. The site falls within the Suffolk & Essex Coast & Heaths National Landscape (former AONB) and is a Grade II listed building.
- 2.2. The site lies on the north side of the road accessed by a single lane access point which leads along the side of the public house to the car park at the rear. The car park is currently quite an informal space with hardstanding which fades toward the rear. There are three other listed structures in close proximity; to the west are the Grade II listed war memorial and the Grade I listed Church of St Peter and to the south is the Grade II listed Hill Cottage.
- 2.3. The building is thought to have been in use as an inn from at least 1712 and was recorded by the name of The Ship in the Tithe Award of 1838; this use contributes to the historic value of the building. The ongoing use of the building as an inn/public house is important to the significance of the building.
- 2.4. There have been many alterations and additions in the 20th century. The large building to the east of the pub was built in the 20th century, its original function is not known; it was used for a time as residential accommodation for the pub but is now mostly redundant. New kitchens and utilities and a rear dining room were added to the rear (north) of the pub as an extension and with separate buildings in the style of traditional sheds. These elements do not contribute to the significance of the listed building but have been carefully designed to be in keeping with the character of the building and not to detract from the setting of the listed building.
- 2.5. There has been a car park behind the public house for a long time with an extension to it approved in 1979 under ref. C2252/2. It appears however that this has been extended further with the removal of some vegetation in 2020. The area extended into however appears as if it has been part of the same site and used for overflow parking historically.
- 2.6. This application has been submitted in conjunction with listed building consent application ref. DC/23/2695/LBC. It has been submitted by Adnams Plc who own the pub but the tenant is Deben Inns Ltd, who operate a number of pubs in this area.

## **3. Proposal**

- 3.1. The proposal seeks to alter and extend the public house by 240sqm in order to provide additional dining space and improved kitchen facilities. The new indoor dining space is expected to provide approximately 70 covers and the new external terrace approximately 60 covers. To accommodate this new seating, the car park is also to be extended to the north and formalised to provide additional parking.

## 4. Consultees

### Third Party Representations

4.1. 33 representations of Objection have been received raising the following material planning considerations:

- Traffic - The proposal would significantly increase the amount of traffic in the area which is mainly served by narrow roads with some places having no pedestrian path. The proposal potentially increases the amount of traffic beyond capacity of the road infrastructure. Increased traffic will also lead to increased air pollution.
- Parking and Access - There will be insufficient parking for the amount of new covers and the access is insufficient being only single lane. Cars which cannot fit in the car park will park on the roads outside the pub creating congestion and a danger to highway safety. The access is also insufficient as the visibility splays are poor and it exits onto a blind bend.
- The proposal promotes people travelling to a small village with poor public transportation leading to a larger carbon footprint with most people using cars.
- The area for the extended car park should be preserved and not tarmacked to preserve the AONB.
- The increased numbers of people visiting the pub increases the number of dog walkers in the area which subsequently leads to the deterioration of the surrounding footpaths and additional dog faeces being left.
- Lighting - Currently the lighting at the front of the pub gets left on late into the night affecting the neighbour on the opposite side of the road.
- Noise - The proposed new covers will create significantly more noise than the existing layout with the addition of a terrace. The new gate along the front of the property will also be constantly opened and closed leading to further noise issues. Noise from the car park also effect residents to the west.
- Odours - There are current odour issues from the pub's kitchen and an increase in the size of the kitchen may lead to greater problems.
- Sewage - The sewage system in the area is not robust and further increased use could lead to further problems which already exist.
- The increase in size would be out of character with its surroundings. The increase in noisy pub activities would sit incongruously within the nature of the surrounding historic cluster of the area.
- There are insufficient toilet facilities and the bar area should be extended.
- Inaccurate information.
- An additional extension will take away from the character, history and charm of this village pub.
- Parking near trees will cause damage to the trees themselves and the cars.

4.2. Four representations of Support have been received raising the following material planning considerations:

- Continues the financial viability of the business.

## Parish/Town Council

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
Levington Parish Council	12 July 2023	14 August 2023
<p>Summary of comments:</p> <p><b>Headline</b> In view of the concerns outlined below, based on the information we have received, Levington and Stratton Hall Parish Council OBJECT to Planning Applications DC/23/2694/FUL and DC/23/2695/LBC which have currently been submitted.</p> <p><b>Introduction</b> Levington is a small rural village overlooking the river Orwell and Levington Lagoon Nature Reserve: <i>Simply one of the best places for estuarine birds on the Orwell. .... This sensitive site is a magnet for breeding, wintering and passage estuarine birds of which there are exceptional numbers and variety..... Levington Lagoon is cared for by Suffolk Wildlife Trust</i> <a href="https://www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org/levingtonlagoon">https://www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org/levingtonlagoon</a></p> <p>Levington village is designated a Small Village in the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan - Policy SCLP3.2: Settlement Hierarchy; it covers 5km<sup>2</sup> and has a population of 252, 43% of which are 60 years or older.</p> <p>The Parish Council recognise The Ship is a valued entity in our community; it has a strong reputation both within the community and far beyond. Many residents frequent The Ship. The Ship recognise the unique tranquillity of Levington: <i>Embrace the essence of Suffolk at our beloved public house in Levington. Nestled amidst the picturesque landscapes and surrounded by the soothing waters of the River Orwell, The Ship beckons you with its timeless allure and inviting atmosphere. Indulge in refreshing ales, delectable seafood, and unforgettable moments with friends, all while soaking in the riverside charm of Levington. Come aboard and make memories to last a lifetime</i></p> <p><b>Setting</b> The Ship is a historic thatched building with Grade 2 listed status. It is located next to the church; these two buildings are the photogenic icons of the village of Levington, from both land and the river Orwell.</p> <p>The Ship is located on Church Lane at the top of the hill leading down to Stratton Hall Drift. Travelling from Bridge Street, Church Lane is a narrow lane – less than two vehicles wide and involves a sweeping left-hand bend along the Church boundary which comprises of a very tall brick wall. As such, the bend is a blind bend. There is a narrow pavement on the opposite side of the road which begins at Trickers Wood and ends opposite The Ship.</p> <p>Church Lane has a 30mph speed limit, with an advisory 20mph sign located before the bend at the entrance to Trickers Wood. Past The Ship, Church Lane towards Stratton Hall Drift reduces to one</p>		

vehicle width, down a steep hill. This part of Church Lane and into Stratton Hall Drift is a designated Quiet Lane.

Church Lane is part of a designated cycle route, and in addition to cyclists, is frequently used by pedestrians and horses (there are several equestrian facilities on the outskirts of the village). The Ship has a car park at the rear. It is accessed via a single-track driveway between the Church and The Ship. This driveway also provides access to the Church and a residential equestrian property. The junction of this driveway and Church Lane is a safety challenge. Vehicles exiting the driveway do not have a view to the right along Church Lane alongside the Church wall, and a very limited view to the left along Church Lane down the hill.

Directly opposite this junction is a track which comprises a footpath to the river and private vehicle access to the rear of properties on Church Lane. This footpath is very popular with walkers, many of whom use The Ship car park – the only parking available in the village (The Ship advertises – *Whether you're looking for a hearty meal after a long walk with your dog...*).

Pedestrian entry into The Ship is presently via the front door, meaning people who have just parked their car in the car park have to navigate the narrow driveway with vehicles trying to enter or exit, and its junction with the road is often busy with walkers exiting the footpath from the river. Levington does not have any parking facility in the village except for The Ship car park. The roads are narrow and without kerbs. Roadside parking in any part of the village reduces the road width to one vehicle at best, in some places it is not possible without blocking the road. There is very evident damage to roadside verges caused by vehicles.

Levington does not have a train station and is served by one bus per day; most people have no option but to drive to or from the village.

### **Context**

The aims of the Parish Council Mission Statement:

- Ensure our historical, cultural, geographical, and natural assets are identified, protected and enhanced for current and future generations
- Establish and maintain a village plan that reflects the unique environmental and historic characteristics of our Parish and its surroundings
- Support initiatives to enhance the health, security and cohesiveness of our community, and to support individuals and families in need
- Ensure the Parish is welcoming to visitors who wish to enjoy its environment and surroundings and who contribute positively to its peace and prosperity
- Act effectively within the legal framework of local government to deliver these aims and ensure the social, economic and cultural needs of our community are met

Last year the Parish Council examined the issue of speeding in the village of Levington, the two main sites being the entry into the village along Bridge Street – a derestricted road to a 30mph limit, and Church Lane outside the Church – a 30mph limit. Residents had informed of many 'near-misses' along Church Lane, both compromising pedestrian safety while using the pavement or in the section of Church Lane between Bridge Street and Trickers Wood where there isn't a pavement and pedestrians use the roadway.

Suffolk Constabulary were consulted, and the problem was defined as 30mph being too fast for that section of road due to its width, the blind bend, the restricted access point to The Ship car park, and road use by pedestrians, horses, and cyclists. It was established that if the speed limit

were reduced to 20mph this would not be enforced by the police; the only viable option was to create a 20mph zone which would involve the installation of traffic calming measures. This was not pursued as a) it was seen as urbanisation and contrary to our mission, and b) it would be an expensive venture that the Highways Authority would be unlikely to prioritise. The Parish Council were left without a viable solution to this problem.

The Parish Council has previously raised concerns with the Highways Authority in relation to road safety, which has resulted in a central white line being installed at two locations in the village. Church Lane was another site of concern – Highways could not install a central white line as, in their view, the road was not wide enough to constitute two lanes.

### **The outcome of the Parish Council Planning Meeting**

The Parish Council recognise The Ship as a valued entity in the village as well as the challenges of operating as a viable business in the present economic environment. However, it also recognised that The Ship is presently a bustling pub and recent alterations particularly to the beer garden have already increased capacity. Information was provided by residents of both the pub and the car park regularly being full.

The Parish Council recognise the existing capacity of The Ship as:

- 60 internal covers
- 64 covers on the rear patio
- 16 covers on the front patio
- 90 covers in the beer garden
- 230 covers in total

As such, it is recognised most patrons are from beyond the village.

The application seeks to increase the above by:

- 70 internal covers
- 60 external covers
- 130 covers in total – a 57% increase

The public and the Parish Council agreed they wanted to support The Ship, but the key challenges with the application as submitted are its scale and absence of detail of how resulting issues would be mitigated. To consider the question of ‘when does The Ship become too big for its surroundings’, it was agreed this application seeks to do that.

The Parish Council recognise the possible increase in employment at The Ship because of this application, and how that may be seen as compliant with Suffolk Council’s strategy for growth. However, the Parish Council recognised that as is presently the case, these new jobs are unlikely to be desirable to residents, meaning most will be occupied by people outside of the community.

The Parish Council recognised the plans submitted with the application were vague at best and lacked any comment or detail on important and obvious issues such as traffic volume/road safety, car parking, limited access, noise, lighting.

One resident informed the meeting of their conversation with the architect about the plans that day.

The architect acknowledged the plans needed significant remodelling, for example in relation to

disabled toilet facilities and workable disabled access to the building. This remodelling when explained to the meeting by the resident evidenced the plans presently before the Parish Council for consideration were inadequate and were likely to change significantly.

It was disappointing that neither the applicant nor their representative were in attendance to help explain, reassure, and hear from the public.

The points of objection are:

## 1. Growth

This is an application for growth – a 57% increase in capacity. The SCLP vision contains some aspects relevant to this application:

*'Maintain and sustainably improve the quality of life for everyone growing up in, living in, working in and visiting East Suffolk'.*

*'Significant levels of growth which maintain the distinctive character and role of settlements, while conserving and enhancing the built, historic and natural environments will have been planned for and delivered.'*

*'The stronger and more diverse economy will provide more and better paid local earnings and job opportunities, ensuring that people can stay within their communities.'*

*'Appropriate growth in rural areas that will help to support and sustain existing communities.'*

The Parish Council is clear that this growth is not needed by and will not help to support and sustain our community, it only serves the commercial interests of a private business. Indeed, because of the subsequent points of objection listed, this application poses a key threat to the quality of life of the residents of Levington and detracts from, rather than improves the distinctive character and natural environment of Levington.

## 2. Traffic volume / road safety

A 57% increase in covers and associated deliveries, will naturally result in a significant increase in vehicular traffic and the Parish Council are extremely concerned about this. This will dramatically change the character of the village and the quality of life of residents – no longer will The Ship be *"Nestled amidst the picturesque landscapes... and riverside charm"*.

It was noted that Highways Authority had yet to submit a response to the application. This must be a key consideration for the Highways Authority.

The Planning Authority has pledged to not adjudicate on the application until receipt of Highway's response, and the Parish Council were offered an extension to their submission pending this. The Parish Council decided to continue and ask the Planning Authority to:

1. Keep to their pledge to await the Highways Authority's response before adjudicating
2. Provide a copy of this objection to the Highway Authority so they are aware of the detail contained prior to making their response.

The context of the location and associated road safety issues is recorded above.

## 2. Single-track driveway entrance/exit to the Ship

The absence of any acknowledgement of this as an issue is concerning; this must be a core

consideration in this application. There are 2 key elements to this issue:

1. The safe transfer of the public into and out of the site presently is problematic, such an increase in covers and thus vehicles will exacerbate this and will create a backlog into the road affecting the road safety issue above, and altering the character of the village.
2. The safety of pedestrians using this access to transfer from the car park to the front door or to the footpath for a walk to the river; this should include disability consideration also.

The Parish Council have grave concerns about the inadequate access to the car park, the absence of acknowledgement and any mitigation intended.

### 3. Car Parking

Present information shows the car park is only suitable for the existing capacity of The Ship. No acknowledgement is made in the application of the additional car parking capacity needed because of the increase in the pub capacity, nor arrangements to mitigate this (extension of the existing car park). The public were particularly concerned about the car park being extended into existing meadow land and thereby its destruction, should this become part of the plan.

Sufficient car parking is a core concern for the Parish Council – insufficient provision will push patrons onto the roads to park. The viability of this is recorded above, and the implications are an adverse impact upon road safety, and a change of character to the village, impacting on quality of life for residents.

The Parish Council request:

1. Highways Authority consider this when forming their view on the viability of the Application
2. The Planning Authority require sufficient provision as a condition of the application

In conversation with residents the applicant / their representative has informed there is no intention of the car park being subject to charging, such is the case at other pubs in the Deben Inns group. The Parish Council would like the Planning Authority to consider a condition that if charging is introduced, patrons are refunded the cost to prevent a motivation to try to park elsewhere to avoid charges.

### 4. Light Pollution

Several residents informed of disturbance of existing lighting at night from The Ship into their homes / bedrooms, as flood lights are presently used by The Ship. Management at the Ship have been repeatedly informed about this, yet it continues.

The Parish Council recognise the reassuring comments in the Planning Applications about lighting, specifically that flood lights will not be used. Concerns about this are not resolved given existing practice.

### 5. Noise Pollution

The Parish Council is concerned about additional noise due to:

1. The increase in traffic accessing to the Ship, including the likely horns and reversing due to the inaccessibility of the single-track driveway
2. The increase in traffic travelling over the gravel surface of the single-track driveway



and car park

3. The addition of a new gate to the side beer garden and the noise it is likely to create open and closing with each pass

4. Increased vehicular associated noise - cars accessing and leaving the car park, car doors banging, additional noise from visitors' voices when accessing and leaving

The Parish Council would welcome some kind of mitigation to deal with the issue of noise.

## 6. Sewerage

Levington and Stratton Hall parishes experience considerable difficulties with water and drainage problems. There is a history of sewerage backing up downstream of The Ship, such that Anglian Water had to install and maintain a one-way valve at one dwelling.

The increase in dining proposed by this application will create two pressures:

1. Increased toilet use
2. Increased kitchen sink waste

The Parish Council have grave concerns about the fragility of the sewerage system and request:

1. The Planning Authority include Anglian Water as a consultee to this application, with a copy of this objection to sight them on issues
2. The Planning Authority require the applicant to make provision in the application for congealed fat to be diverted away from the sewerage system

### **Non-Material Considerations**

The Planning Applications do not provide sufficient provision for people with disabilities. This includes:

1. Access to the building from the car park – presently over a gravel surface
2. Access into the building
3. Toilet facilities
4. Access within the building to toilet facilities

### **Consultative process**

The Parish Council recognise key parties have not been included as consultees by the Planning Authority.

These are:

1. Sarah and Fiona Heath The Paddocks, immediate neighbour (also owns the Holly Lodge)
2. St Peters Church Levington, immediate neighbour
3. Anglian Water – responsible for the sewerage system

The Parish Council request the above 3 parties are included as consultees by the Planning Authority.

In the expectation that the existing plans will be changed, the Parish Council request opportunity to be consulted fully on subsequent plans, including opportunity to hold another meeting with the public.

The Parish Council hopes the scale of the development as presented is recognised as being too

significant, and that a further application is submitted of more appropriate size, together with recognition and effective mitigation of the above concerns.

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
SCC Highways Department	10 August 2023	23 August 2023

Summary of comments:

For Suffolk County Council to assess the application, further information will be required to advise whether the proposed access road would be deemed acceptable or not. Please see the comment(s)

below that need to be addressed.

Clarification is required regarding the public floor area that exists currently and is proposed for this development to ensure there is a sufficient amount of vehicle and cycle parking provision available. It is anticipated that the additional seating/dining area would likely have an increase in vehicle trips.

Please refer to page 41 of Suffolk Guidance for Parking (2019) to understand the minimum parking requirements for this proposal.

Until the above concerns have been addressed, a holding objection to the proposal will be maintained.

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
SCC Highways Department	6 September 2023	14 September 2023

Summary of comments:

No objections, conditions recommended.

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
Anglian Water	6 November 2023	6 November 2023

Summary of comments:

Standardised response of no comment.

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
East Suffolk Environmental Protection	24 November 2023	29 November 2023

Summary of comments:

Comments included within officer's considerations.

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
East Suffolk Landscape Team	4 October 2023	5 October 2023
Summary of comments: Comments included within officer's considerations.		

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
East Suffolk Design And Conservation	12 July 2023	18 July 2023
Summary of comments: Comments included within officer's considerations.		

### Reconsultation consultees

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
SCC Highways Department	4 October 2023	18 October 2023
Summary of comments: No objections.		

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
Levington Parish Council	4 October 2023	20 October 2023
<p>Summary of comments:</p> <p>Levington and Stratton Hall Parish Council held a Planning Meeting on Thursday, 12th October 2023 to which 5 members of the public were present. Parish Councillors voted to OBJECT to the two applications is based on the original submission which was made and also the amendments submitted by the applicant primarily based on comments made by Suffolk County Council Highways. Please see copy of the original submission made by Levington and Stratton Hall Parish Council.</p> <p>The following are the additional comments the Parish Council wish to make which relate to the changes the applicant are proposing to issues highlighted by Suffolk County Council Highways.</p> <p><u>Increased Traffic</u></p> <p>The number of potential increased customers' needs to be addressed. Levington has had numerous issues with speed on very narrow roads with poor visibility and little or no footpaths. There are many walkers and horse riders. The impact of doubling the capacity of the seating areas will obviously affect the very narrow lanes.</p>		

### Parking and Concealed Entrance

The proposed parking reorganisation has several issues that do not seem to have been addressed:

The dangerous entrance – Suffolk County Council Highways have not addressed this as an issue. The only requirements they have made are to provide cycle spaces, electric charging points and 1 parking space per 5 square metre. This equates to 32 car spaces and 8 staff parking spaces.

Gravel – noise is an issue and however slowly people drive tyres slip and kick up the loose shingle. The Ship should adopt the plastic gridding to maintain the shingle in place. The steel markers will soon get covered by the loose shingle, then the allocated spaces will become haphazard and potentially cause overspill onto Church Lane at peak times.

The amendments have been worked on averages, however, the applicant has not addressed the days the Ship is fully booked where the car park will not have the capacity.

The increase is potentially another 520 customers per day based on two sittings. Obviously this will alter dependant on the season, however there is not the capacity in the current car park for this level of customers.

Increased staffing, which is beneficial to the economy however these staff will not be employed from Levington due to the age range of employment within hospitality. This will also impact the amount of spaces in the car park, it has been submitted that staffing levels will increase by 50% taking staff up to 45 cars over a weekly period.

### Lighting

The flood lighting that is currently there has not been addressed so it's questionable if any new lighting will be any better.

### Trees

Ruth Chittock from the Senior Landscape Officer has highlighted that Tree C on the plans is being removed and trees A,B,D,E and H will have parking within their root protection area. She has requested a Arboricultural Assessment to confirm this which has been organised for next week. The applicants plans state that no trees are to be removed, however this again seems to differ from the plans.

### Disability Provisions

Residents have made comments on the ESC portal and an individual comment has come through re disability access. The shingle car park is very difficult for wheelchair manoeuvrability and the doors do not enable easy access. The amended plans do not show the surface of the new disabled parking spaces.

### Environment

The Ship is situated in AONB and plays a big part of Levington's beauty; it is a stunning building and has a prominent position next to St Peters Church. The increased number of people visiting

Levington impacts the fragile infrastructure of the footpaths and number of dog walkers who do not clear up after their dogs. The Ship has removed the litter bin from outside the property.

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
East Suffolk Design And Conservation	4 October 2023	10 October 2023
Summary of comments: Comments included within officer's considerations.		

## Publicity

The application has been the subject of the following press advertisement:

Category	Published	Expiry	Publication
Listed Building	20 July 2023	10 August 2023	East Anglian Daily Times

## Site notices

General Site Notice	Reason for site notice: Listed Building Date posted: 17 July 2023 Expiry date: 7 August 2023
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## 5. Planning policy

National Planning Policy Framework 2023

SCLP4.3 - Expansion and Intensification of Employment Sites (East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, Adopted September 2020)

SCLP7.2 - Parking Proposals and Standards (East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, Adopted September 2020)

Policy SCLP8.1 - Community Facilities and Assets (East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, Adopted September 2020)

Policy SCLP10.2 – Visitor Management of European Sites (East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, Adopted September 2020)

SCLP10.4 – Landscape Character (East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, Adopted September 2020)

SCLP11.1 - Design Quality (East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, Adopted September 2020)

SCLP11.2 - Residential Amenity (East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, Adopted September 2020)

SCLP11.3 - Historic Environment (East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, Adopted September 2020)

SCLP11.4 - Listed Buildings (East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, Adopted September 2020)

Historic Environment Supplementary Planning Document (East Suffolk Council, Adopted June 2021)

## 6. Planning Considerations

### Principle

- 6.1. As a public house, this is a Community Facility. Many public houses are struggling to operate viably, and the vast majority rely on a good food trade or other added value (such as an attractive setting or being in a significant footfall area to be able to maintain a profitable business). The Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) has recently claimed that 29 pubs close every week, blaming rising energy costs and the cost of living crisis. In principle, opportunities which enhance community facilities should attract significant weight in support, subject to other considerations. Policy SCLP 8.1 (Community Facilities and Assets) does not provide any policy commentary on the enhancement of such facilities. It is instead focussed supporting new facilities and on protecting existing facilities when they are at risk of being lost.
- 6.2. In respect of 'supporting a prosperous rural economy' the NPPF states at Paragraph 88 that:  
*88. Planning policies and decisions should enable:*
  - a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed, beautiful new buildings;*
  - b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;*
  - c) sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and*
  - d) the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.*
- 6.3. The East Suffolk Economic Growth Strategy seeks to support all businesses across the plan area to ensure a successful and prosperous economy. The successful delivery of this strategy will be assisted by a positive policy which encourages sustainable economic growth and allows for the expansion, intensification or adaptation of existing premises. Some employment sites by their nature have a greater impact on their local environment and the economic operations anticipated to take place on a site is an important consideration in respect of expansion and intensification of premises.
- 6.4. Policy SCLP4.3: Expansion and Intensification of Employment Sites, states that proposals to expand, alter or make productivity enhancements to existing employment premises will be permitted unless:
  - a) The scale of development would cause a severe impact on the highway network; or

- b) There will be an unacceptable adverse effect on the environmental sustainability of the area; or
- c) The proposed use is not compatible with the surrounding employment uses in terms of car parking, access, noise, odour and other amenity concerns; or
- d) There is an unacceptable adverse effect on the living conditions of local residents and businesses relating to matters of noise, vibration, dust and light; and
- e) Potential adverse impacts can not be successfully mitigated.

- 6.5. While the site is not an allocated 'employment site' as such, the site does provide employment and this policy is considered to be relevant to the consideration of this application. The proposal seeks to enlarge the seating area and kitchen of the restaurant. This includes the extension of the building to create around 70 new internal seats and 60 outside seats on the terrace. This is in addition to the new picnic benches that have already been installed externally within the garden area which provides outdoor seating for approximately 90.
- 6.6. The use of the site would not be changing, remaining a public house and restaurant. This is an established use within villages, and The Ship being the only public house in Levington. It would be expected that any noise, odour or light at the site could be mitigated. It would not be considered that the proposal would cause significant harm to the environmental sustainability of the area.
- 6.7. Significant concerns have been raised by neighbours regarding the parking and impact the proposal would have on the amount of traffic in the area. The Ship Inn is an existing Public House and restaurant. The proposal would be expected to increase the number of visitors to the business however an extension of the building would be acceptable in principle. This is discussed further below.

#### Design, Visual Amenity and Heritage Considerations

- 6.8. Section 16 of The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 imposes a duty, in considering whether to grant planning permission, to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their settings or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess. The NPPF identifies the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment as an important element of sustainable development. The NPPF requires planning authorities to place 'great weight' on the conservation of designated heritage assets, and states that the more important the asset the greater the weight should be. The statutory duties of The Act and heritage objectives of the NPPF are also reflected in the Built and Historic Environment section of the Local Plan and the Historic Environment SPD.
- 6.9. There has been piecemeal development of the site over the 20th century with various extensions, alterations and outbuildings added to support the use of the pub. The pub has continued to grow in popularity and a wider overhaul is now being proposed to meet growing demand and to improve the kitchen and dining facilities.
- 6.10. The proposal to utilise the existing 'accommodation block' is positive, re-using and extending an existing building. The largest of the proposed extensions would be to the northern and eastern elevations of this building, furthest from the original building. The accommodation block and dense vegetation along Church Lane mean that there are

currently no views of the original building from the east. The church is also positioned to the west of the site. Therefore, the eastern elevation is the least sensitive in terms of impacts on heritage assets and it makes sense to locate the largest extensions in this position.

- 6.11. The original building remains unchanged and therefore there would be no impact to the historic fabric. Therefore, the main assessment of the proposal is on the impact to the setting of the listed building.
- 6.12. Consolidating the two existing structures to the east of the original building - the accommodation block and the outbuilding to the north - into a single linear form would be acceptable. The existing outbuilding overlaps with the original building in views from the north, the proposal would move this away to the east allowing the form of the original building to be more legible in this view. The increase in height of the northern element would be mitigated by this shift away from the original building and reading as a single element with the existing 'accommodation block'.
- 6.13. The extension to the east of the 'accommodation block' that would form the dining space has been broken up into two connected gabled elements. It would be traditional in scale and form but would have contemporary touches with gable windows, sliding doors and roof lanterns, this approach is acceptable, providing a contemporary contrast while being visually subservient.
- 6.14. The extension that houses the refrigeration units is now proposed to be expressed as a separate, weatherboarded 'shed'. Again, this avoids the need for a deep, lean to structure previously proposed and breaks up the massing of the extensions. This would have a north-south roof creating contrast with the dining room extension and contributing to the feeling of a collection of outbuildings rather than a single mass.
- 6.15. The kitchen extract flue would be accommodated on the eastern roof slope of the 'accommodation block' partly obscured within the valley between this and the refrigeration structure, minimising the visual impact of this often-prominent feature. It would be clad in matte materials to reduce shine which further mitigates its visual impact. The existing external space between the rear extensions and the accommodation block would be infilled with a flat roofed extension. There is an existing flat roofed extension on the rear of the original building so this proposal is to extend this northward. This would be acceptable as there would still be a recess between the existing northern extensions and the extended 'accommodation block' allowing the different elements to remain visually distinct.
- 6.16. An outdoor dining area is proposed to the east of the proposed dining room extension. This would be paved in sandstone and would connect with the side gate access to the front of the pub allowing level access to the dining area without the need for interventions into the original building which is positive. There is a change in level to the east of the site so this external dining area would be raised approx. 1m from the lawned area to the east. The change in level would be softened by planting (full details to be agreed by condition), balustrades around the seating area would be required for safety, a simple metal fence is proposed, this is acceptable. The seating courtyard to the rear is proposed to be enclosed - details are required of this boundary treatment. Close-boarded fences should be avoided in favour of high quality, contextual treatments, no more than is required for safety/screening purposes.



- 6.17. The proposed extensions are substantial in scale, but the massing has been broken up by the use of different roof forms. This has resulted in the current design where the site retains the sense of ad-hoc development of outbuildings surrounding the listed building. The gable roof form is repeated across the site creating the sense of distinct elements. These elements are connected by flat roofs to allow the uninterrupted internal space required by the business. The flat roofs are set back to ensure they are subservient and it is the gabled forms that draw the eye. The key view of the principal elevation of the original building and views of the original building when approaching along Church Lane will be unchanged by the proposals and the interior of the listed building will also not be impacted.
- 6.18. The relevant heritage considerations are stated within the NPPF (2023), Chapter 16: 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment'. The heritage statement includes all relevant information in regard to the site and satisfies the requirements of Paragraph 200 of the NPPF (December 2023).
- 6.19. This proposal will preserve the special interest of the Grade II listed Ship Inn and would have a neutral impact on its setting. There would be no harm to this designated heritage asset, in conformance with the requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

#### Residential Amenity

- 6.20. The site and the proposed extensions are positioned a reasonable distance from neighbours. The physical size and position of the extensions would not harm neighbouring properties in terms of loss of light, oppression or overlooking, with the closest neighbour being approximately 12 metres to the south on the opposite side of the road. A number of concerns however have been raised in regard to noise, odour and light.
- 6.21. Comments were received regarding odour coming from the kitchen and whether a bigger kitchen would increase the problem. An application was approved (ref. DC/18/4459/FUL) in 2018 for a replacement ventilation system at the premises. If this has not been installed correctly or is not working this should be raised with Environmental Protection. No details have been supplied of a new ventilation system, however, it has been agreed with the Council's Environmental Protection Team that a pre-commencement condition could be added to ensure that the ventilation system complies with modern standards. This was agreed with the agent.
- 6.22. Concerns were raised over new lighting which may be installed at the site. No new external lighting is proposed within this scheme, however, a condition has been added requiring details of any new external lighting to be submitted to and agreed by the local planning authority prior to installation. Concerns were also raised that the extended car park could lead to light from headlights shining onto the rear of the properties to the west. When assessing the site, it was noted that there are hedges all around the boundaries of the car park and further out beyond the site. As the site slopes down to the north, this would also angle headlights down rather than up towards nearby properties. As such, it is considered very unlikely that any neighbours would see a noticeable difference in light spillage towards their properties.
- 6.23. Comments were received regarding noise and the potential for increased noise coming from the seating areas, the car park and the gate to the side of the main building. A seating area

already exists to the rear of the building so it is not expected that significantly more noise would be experienced beyond the existing situation. The addition of a gate to the side of the pub is also not considered to cause such excessive noise that it should be omitted. It is likely that most visitors of the pub would not use this gate as the car park is to the rear and most other visitors would enter the pub via the main entrance at the front. This would also be likely to be required for security to stop dogs and children from running out into the road. The existing car park at the rear is to be extended.

- 6.24. The distance to the closest residential neighbouring property to the west is approximately 55 metres. It is considered unlikely that extending the car park to the north would lead to a significant increase or unacceptable noise levels at this distance from a restaurant car park. Environmental Protection have confirmed they would not require noise assessments for the car park or gate.

#### Landscaping/Trees

- 6.25. The alterations to the pub require some landscaping of the surrounding garden area. An indicative plan has been supplied to show the general arrangement, but further details will need to be supplied prior to commencement, to be secured by condition.
- 6.26. One young tree is to be removed to provide better parking however this was assessed by a tree surgeon and classified as damaged, with a severe laceration caused by a chain link fence wrapped around the trunk. As this will only get worse with age, it is recommended to remove it now and replant to the east among the other existing trees. This has been shown on the plans. Parking has been amended to protect nearby trees from harm and has been agreed by the East Suffolk Arboricultural Officer.
- 6.27. Overall, the landscaping is considered to preserve the setting of The Ship Inn, retaining as much of the vegetation on site as possible and allowing the car park to expand in an organised manner.
- 6.28. The parking area to the north which is to be expanded into is currently a grassed area surrounded by trees and hedges around the boundary of the site. There is a grassed area to the east with a number of trees within it which is to be retained. The formal expansion of the car park to the north is a progression as it currently has no separating boundary and appears to have historically been used as an overflow car parking area. Surrounded by the church yard to the west, a field to the north and the grassed area of the site to the east, its expansion is relatively well insulated and would not substantially affect the appearance of the National Landscape from public views outside of the site.

#### Parking and Highway Safety

- 6.29. Many of the objections raised by the public were in regard to the expansion of the Inn leading to significantly more traffic in the area and on street parking. The car park expansion was not part of the original submission but has been included to try to alleviate concerns of on street parking. The increase in the number of available seats internally and externally by 130 (not including the new existing outside benches) has raised concern that the narrow village roads would become congested. The access to the car park is also narrow and only allows one car to drive along the side of the Inn at a time. The exit also has the wall surrounding the church yard on the right-hand side, obscuring views to the west.

- 6.30. The SCC Parking Technical Guidance recommends that public houses should provide 1 vehicle space for each 5sqm of public floor area. The proposed public floor area is approximately 200sqm. This means that at a minimum The Ship Inn should provide 40 parking spaces. The proposed new parking layout allows up to 61 including 2 disabled spaces and 8 electric vehicle charging stations.
- 6.31. SCC Highways were consulted and raised no objections to the application within their most recent comments. Although the proposal is likely to increase the number of visitors to the site, it has also provided a larger parking space, that is also better organised than the informal open space presently. It is not expected that by enlarging the seating area, that all seats will be filled at all times of the day throughout the year. It is accepted that the proposals would lead to more visitors, however, it is out of the control of the applicant how those visitors behave on the roads outside of their property. All they can do is try and mitigate this harm by providing a better parking area which they have done.
- 6.32. It is not possible to alter the access due to the constraints of the site, and it is not considered reasonable to refuse the proposed expansion of the public house, at the scale proposed, on highway safety grounds given the above considerations and in the absence of any objection from the Highway Authority in terms of highway safety. It is also not possible for the applicant to make any changes to the street themselves. It would be for the SCC Highways department to determine if further restrictions, such as double yellow lines or speed restrictions, were necessary; however they have not indicated that they would be required. With no objection from SCC Highways on safety grounds there is no reason to resist this application.

#### Other matters

- 6.33. Any potential increase in dog walkers is being considered in respect of recreational effects on the Orwell Estuary SPA, in consultation with the Council's Ecology team, and further comments will be provided in the update sheet.
- 6.34. The impact of the extension to the public house on the capacity of the sewage system in the area is not considered to be of a scale to have a significant effect. However Anglian Water were consulted due to the request from the Parish Council and have chosen not to comment.
- 6.35. Concern was raised there were insufficient toilets however this is not a material planning consideration and cannot be controlled through the planning process.
- 6.36. It was raised that the application has not shown how it is disability friendly and provides disabled toilets. As this is an application to extend a listed building, it is unlikely that all doorways and corridors could comply with the required widths in order to allow disabled access without significant harm to the heritage asset. It is also not within the remit of planning to ensure disabled toilets are provided within the expansion of an existing public house.
- 6.37. All information submitted is considered to show a clear picture of what the applicant is applying for, for which planning permission is required, and it is not considered that the information is misleading.

## **7. Conclusion**

7.1. The design is acceptable and would preserve the historic interest and setting of the Grade II listed building. The principle for expansion is acceptable on the existing site and it is not considered that the expansion would lead to considerable harm to the residential amenity of neighbours. The car park has been expanded to help mitigate the increased visitor numbers and without any objection from SCC Highways there is no justification to refuse the expansion of the business on highway safety grounds. Overall, it is felt that the potential harm from the expansion of the business can be mitigated, and that the application should be supported as it is in compliance with all relevant policies listed above.

## **8. Recommendation**

8.1. Approval subject to the conditions below.

### **Conditions:**

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun within a period of three years beginning with the date of this permission.

Reason: In accordance with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in all respects strictly in accordance with the following approved plans, for which permission is hereby granted, or which are subsequently submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority and in compliance with any conditions imposed by the Local Planning Authority:

Site location Plan received 07/07/2023

Proposed Layout Plan received 07/07/2023

Proposed South and West Elevations received 07/07/2023

Proposed East and North Elevations received 07/07/2023

Proposed Site Block Plan received 07/07/2023

Proposed Parking Reorganisation Rev C received 26/10/2023

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt as to what has been considered and approved.

3. The materials and finishes shall be as indicated within the submitted application and thereafter retained as such, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure the satisfactory appearance of the development in the interests of visual amenity

4. No development shall take place until full details of both hard and soft landscape works have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and these works shall be carried out as approved. These details shall include proposed finished levels or contours; means of enclosure. Soft landscape works shall include planting plans; written specifications (including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass

establishment); schedules of plants, noting species, plant sizes and proposed number/densities where appropriate; implementation programme.

Reason: To ensure the provision of amenity afforded by appropriate landscape design.

5. Prior to installation of any lighting, details in respect of the following shall be submitted to and approved by the Council as Local Planning Authority:

- Details of any external lighting proposed on the building or within the site, showing location, on plans and elevations, including the type of light unit, numbers and illumination levels to be supplied and agreed in writing prior to installation.

The lighting shall be installed in accordance with such approved details.

Reason: In order to safeguard the dark skies and tranquillity of the landscape within the Suffolk & Essex Coast & Heaths National Landscape.

6. Prior to commencement of any works, details in respect of the following shall be submitted to and approved by the Council as Local Planning Authority. The work shall be carried out in accordance with such approved details:

- Representative door and windows and details to show materials, finish, appearance, ironmongery, type of glazing, glazing bar profile

Reason: In order to safeguard the special architectural or historic interest of the building.

7. Prior to the installation/modification of any extract equipment, air conditioning, refrigeration or any other fixed plant, details of the equipment and a noise and odour impact assessment shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority in accordance with the updated current guidance: Control of Odour and Noise from Commercial Kitchen Exhaust Systems-An update to the 2004 report prepared by NETCEN for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

The risk assessment shall identify potential sources of odour/noise, pathways and receptors and make recommendations regarding the level of mitigation needed. The LPA will be expecting that a rating level (LAeq) of at least 5dB below the typical background (LA90) is achieved.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity and protection of the local environment

8. Prior to development a detailed Tree Protection Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved tree protection measures.

Reason: In order to safeguard the trees on site.

9. Prior to the first use of the proposed extension, the car park shall be laid out and completed as shown on drawing - Proposed Parking Reorganisation Rev C, unless otherwise agreed by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In order to provide sufficient parking for the intended use.

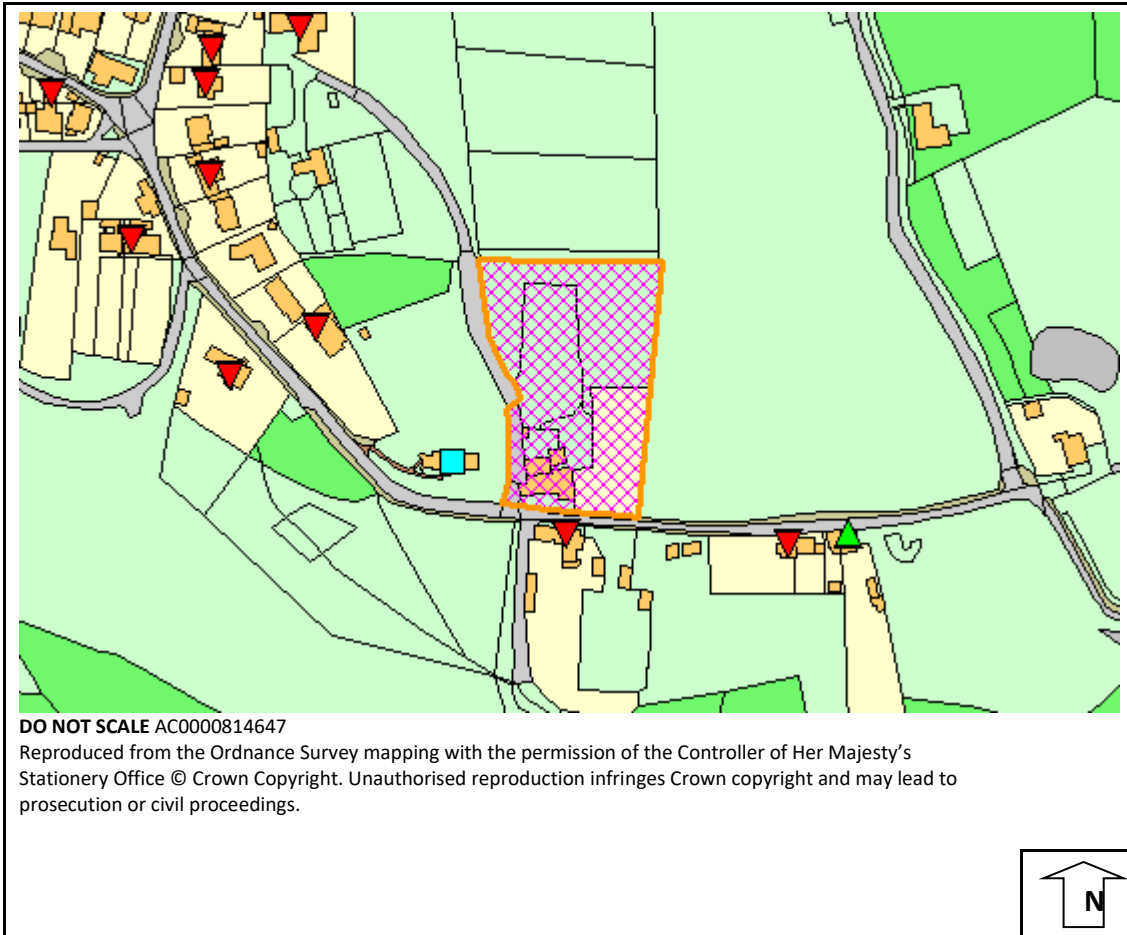
**Informatives:**

1. The Local Planning Authority has assessed the proposal against all material considerations including planning policies and any comments that may have been received. The planning application has been approved in accordance with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework and local plan to promote the delivery of sustainable development and to approach decision taking in a positive way.





**Background information**

See application reference DC/23/2694/FUL on [Public Access](#)

## Map



## Key

-  Notified, no comments received
-  Objection
-  Representation
-  Support