

13 November 2021
Planning Application 20/02864/F

I have strong concerns about the ongoing planning process with regard to The Windmill Public House (20/02864/F) and the lack of scrutiny of 'evidence' provided by the applicant when it was last granted planning permission. Part of the Planning Officer's recommendation to grant permission was based upon the alternative provision requirements of policies BCS2, BCS12, DM5 and DM6 having been met, but as you will see below this is far from being the case.

Grass Roots Planning Ltd's Covering Letter (7 Oct 21) cites Policy DM6 as "*the primary policy which applies to the conversion of public houses*" and "*undoubtedly the policy which is the most relevant to the proposed development*". DM6 states:

Proposals involving the loss of established public houses will not be permitted unless it is demonstrated that:

- i. The public house is no longer economically viable; or*
- ii. A diverse range of public house provision exists within the locality.*

i. Economic Viability

The Publican Marketing Report annual survey of almost 1,000 licensees across the UK found the average pub relies on food for 52% of its turnover. Based on this we can assume that if the management hadn't made the decision to limit and then stop its popular and profitable food offering at The Windmill, the additional turnover in 18/19 would have been significant. Even if we estimate conservatively that food would have accounted for an additional 1/3 of turnover compared to other sales, that would still add around £100k to the turnover.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/foodanddrink/foodanddrinknews/7943076/Pubs-make-more-money-from-food-than-drink-for-first-time.html>

In addition, if income from the rental of the living accommodation that forms part of the premises (as confirmed in sales information) had also been included for completeness, then the balance sheet would have looked even healthier.

The loss of £13,736 in 18/19 does not prove that the pub was no longer economically viable (as required by DM6) only suggests that there were issues with the way the pub was being managed in this financial year. The apparent offer to purchase the business (rejected by the owner) from a national pub chain at asking price (£495k) based on these figures suggests that the business was viable (in addition to other offers of purchase and run as a pub by Nick James, which was also rejected by the owner).

ii. Alternative Provision

In discussing 'Alternative Provision', Grass Roots Planning Ltd defines 'locality' by referencing the Department of Transport's Manual for Streets (2007) as "*within 10 minutes' walking distance (up to 800m)*".

Whilst they further selectively quote from MfS1 that "*this is not an upper limit*" as "*walking offers the greatest potential to replace short car trips, particularly those under 2km*", they do not go on to quote from the updated document MfS2 (2010) which says that walkable

neighbourhoods are typically characterised according to the advice found in the Institute of Highways and Transportation document 'Guidelines for Provision for Journeys on Foot' which outlines professional guidance on planning for and providing for pedestrians (see below).

They also fail to include the further advice of MfS1 (summarised in the updated guidance MfS2) that:

- The propensity to walk is influenced not only by distance, but also by quality of the walking experience.
- Good sightlines and visibility towards destinations and intermediate points are important for way-finding and personal security.
- Pedestrian routes need to be direct and match desire lines as closely as possible (i.e. not be circuitous), including across junctions, unless site-specific reasons preclude it.
- Pedestrians should generally be accommodated on multifunctional streets rather than on routes segregated from motor traffic where the absence of vehicular traffic can give rise to personal security issues at night.

The IHT document 'Guidelines for Provision for Journeys on Foot' confirms the suggested acceptable walking distances in town centres, for those without mobility impairment and presumably when safe to do so according to light conditions, as:

- Desirable 200m
- Acceptable 400m
- Preferred Maximum 800m

Appendix B of Grass Roots Planning Ltd's Covering Letter shows distances plotted 'as the crow flies', which is unrepresentative of actual journey distances and times and should not therefore be relied upon as evidence for alternative provision in the locality of Windmill Hill. Instead the table below is a much more accurate summary of public houses which fit the definition of locality, laid out by Grass Roots Planning Ltd and presumably accepted as a definition by the Planning Officer and Committee when granting permission in November 2020.

From personal experience of working on East St, I would not recommend any lone female or other vulnerable adult walk on this street in the dark once the shops have closed, let alone walk into an unfamiliar pub alone. As of September 2021, Avon and Somerset Police have urgently recognised the security issues on East St and has made tackling the increasing level of anti-social behaviour in and around East Street a priority, stating:

"This anti-social behaviour has a negative effective, not only to local pedestrians and residents but it also attracts other anti-social and illegal activities, which compounds the issues police have to deal with".

Therefore, the establishments on East Street that have been suggested by Grass Roots Planning Ltd as appropriate alternatives, have been discounted from a personal security perspective. I have though left in the Barley Mow as it is in the non-pedestrianised part of East St where it joins Bedminster Parade and therefore less secluded.

I have also only included pubs, as the protection of public houses under SADMP policy DM6 is the "primary policy which applies to the conversion" according to Grass Roots Planning Ltd, which stipulates the need to evidence of the range of pubs in the locality. Windmill Hill

Community Association and Social Club is a members' club which only opens occasionally and Fiddlers, which is a music venue.

When the establishments in Appendix B are plotted according to MfS guidelines i.e. not over simplistically 'as the crow flies', and putting personal security at the fore for protected groups (i.e. only using well lit, multifunctional streets, avoiding parks, alleyways, underpasses etc.), then the distances below should be used as evidence of pubs that are in the locality of Windmill Hill and the advice to Committee urgently re-assessed.

N.B. Google Maps uses an average walking speed of 5km/h to calculate walking times and does not take into account topography or mobility issues. Starting points are based on the residents on the furthest side of Windmill Hill from the destination.

Destination	Approx. Walking Distance (meters)	Approx. Walking Time	Route
1. Victoria Park	1187m	16 minutes	Cotswold Rd Paultow Rd Kensel Rd Holmesdale Rd Raymend Rd
2. The Rising Sun	483m	6 minutes	Cotswold Rd Quantock Rd Alfred Rd
3. Brunel	805m	11 minutes	Cotswold Rd Brendon Rd St John's Ln
4. The Black Cat	1127m	14 minutes	Somerset Ter Orwell St Fraser St Windmill Hill Hereford St Malago Rd Sheen Rd West St
5. The London Inn	1287m	16 minutes	Somerset Ter Orwell St Fraser St Windmill Hill Hereford St Malago Rd Sheen Rd Cannon St
6. The Robert Fitzharding	1287m	16 minutes	Somerset Ter Orwell St Fraser St Windmill Hill Hereford St Malago Rd Sheen Rd Cannon St
7. The Tap & Barrel	1448m	17 minutes	Somerset Ter Orwell St

			Fraser St Windmill Hill Hereford St Malago Rd Sheen Rd Cannon St Dean Ln
8. Steam Crane	1287m	16 minutes	Somerset Ter Orwell St Fraser St Windmill Hill Hereford St Malago Rd Sheen Rd Cannon St North St
9. The Barley Mow	1287m	17 minutes	Cotswold Rd Dunkerry Rd Alfred Rd Windill Hill Hereford St Dalby Ave Bedminster Parade
10. The Apple Tree	1287m	17 minutes	Cotswold Rd Dunkerry Rd Alfred Rd Windmill Hill Hereford St Dalby Ave Bedminster Parade Philip St
11. The Star & Dove	1931m	24 minutes	Cotswold Rd St John's Ln St Luke's Rd
12. Bristol Distilling (This is not actually a pub – only open Thu-Sun)	1287m	16 minutes	Somerset Ter Dunkerry Rd Cotswold Rd St John's Ln Malago Vale Trading Estate

As you can see, only 1 of the 12 pubs listed in Appendix B (The Rising Sun) falls within the convenient/preferred maximum walking distance of up to 800m or within 10 minutes and therefore outside the Grass Roots Planning Ltd's own definition of 'locality'.

DM6 specifies that the applicant **will need to provide evidence of a range of pubs in the locality** and the **applicant has not done so** (contrary to statements by the Planning Officer within the report to Committee of 11 Nov 20 and 21 Jul 21). For the Committee to accept Appendix B on face value (having seen the above evidence) would also be contrary to equalities legislation, as the change of use would have significant adverse impact upon protected group/s, having proved that there is only 1 public house easily accessible and within safe walking distance.

A separate document has been emailed to Democratic Services which shows the routes plotted and measured on Google Maps as evidence of more realistic distances and walking times.

As the applicant has been unable to prove the lack of economic viability and/or the diverse range of public house provision in the locality, the loss of an established public house should not be permitted under BCS12, BCS2 DM5 and DM6.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to hearing from you.

Regards



Hannah Klewin

([REDACTED] Windmill Hill)