

Application LDC/24/97588 - The Hut, Chandlers Ford, SO53 3DJ

Paul Ainsworth [REDACTED]

Mon 7/8/2024 8:34 AM

To: Planning @ Eastleigh Borough Council <Planning@eastleigh.gov.uk>

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Dear Sirs

I wish to object to the above application but can find no way to do so using your website. I understand that today is the closing date for representations. My objection is below and I trust it can be considered. Please let me know if you require further information.

Yours faithfully

Paul Ainsworth
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I am writing on behalf of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale to object to this application.

You will no doubt be aware that, last week, Whitbread plc closed 115 of its pubs that lie adjacent to Premier Inns. They have indicated that they wish to integrate these premises into the adjoining hotel by making them resident-only, or converting them to hotel accommodation or both.

Our main issue with the present application is that these pubs are exactly that, public houses and have been for many years, invariably since they first opened. The crucial distinction between a pub and a restaurant is that when visiting the former you can purchase and consume just a drink. In restaurants you generally have to purchase a meal if you also want to have a drink. The Hut has always operated as a pub - you could go to the bar, order and receive a drink and go and consume it, no questions asked.

You'll be well aware that since 2020 pubs have been in a Sui Generis class meaning that any change of use requires planning permission. Pubs also enjoy a significant level of protection under both national and local planning policy. Achieving planning permission to change the use of a restaurant to another use is much easier than if it were a pub and we are sure this is the reason for the certificate of lawful use application.

The applicants argue that the certificate should be granted because the majority of the business has been the sale of food. However, in this day and age, that applies to very many food-led pubs and accepting the principle of this argument would set a dangerous precedent.

I repeat our key contention - the Hut is, and always has been, a pub in the accepted sense of what constitutes a pub i.e. somewhere you can go to just buy and consume a drink. It is not, and never has been, a restaurant.