





revision	revision notes	date

project
Regeneration of The Dove, Micheldever Station

stage title
Sketch Scheme

drawn by ...

chdp
 architecture

CHDP Architecture
 32, The City Business Centre, Hyde Street,
 Winchester, Hampshire, SO22 7TA
 T: 01962 184 1404 W: chdp.co.uk

scale	date	job no.	stage no.	rev.
1:200@A3	Mar 2019	1492	100	T1

A statement by Kim Gottlieb, of Lochstill Ltd,
regarding The Dove Inn, Micheldever Station
for the consideration of Micheldever Parish Council
meeting on 17th April 2019

I am here this evening to seek the support of Micheldever Parish Council for a proposal to ensure the future of a community facility on the site of the Dove Inn.

As things stand, the current facility is not sustainable, and it has no future. It is commonly known that the pub industry has been in decline for many years with roughly a quarter – mostly independent traders – closing down in the last decade. The reasons for this occurring vary in each case but generally include; the ban on smoking; the domination of the major pub chains; the cheapness of supermarket beer; changes in lifestyle; ‘austerity’ and so on.

The unfortunate reality is that the Dove has never been a viable trading operation since before Lochstill bought the freehold more than 15 years ago. During the period of our ownership we have had a number of tenants and we have even tried operating it ourselves. The latest incumbents, Charlie and Joanna, have been brilliant and very hardworking but told me last summer that after two years of trading they would like to leave.

I don't believe that we would find anyone better, or who would do or try anything Charlie and Joanna haven't already tried. It's not a matter of the level of rent, though the business rates, heating and lighting costs, insurances and daily bills don't help. Problems specific to the Dove include a limit on passing trade, the tightness of industry margins and the size and the cost of maintaining the building, and other issues such as the shared sewage treatment plant.

At one point recently, virtually all the pubs in the locality were on the market. The Ship Inn, the Spread Eagle, the Wonston Arms and the Northbrook Arms have all been available. What's happened at the Wonston Arms has been exceptional and, of the others, only the Northbrook is regarded by operators as an attractive proposition in today's market, and even that is taking a long time to be re-let.

The Dove has been on the market with an agent since last September, but we have received no interest from anyone wanting to buy it or to rent it, at any price. This is not the first time I have tried marketing the Dove. We tried unsuccessfully several years ago, and all the agents have known how to contact me if they had ever received any interest.

I fully appreciate why the Parish Council has applied to register the Dove as an Asset of Community Value but, in practice, this would achieve no benefit. When Charlie and Joanna do leave later this year, if I can't find a tenant or a buyer who thinks that the site can work and is prepared to make the investment needed, the place will simply go to rack and ruin.

I know that the above all paints a miserable picture, but I do believe that, with your patience and your help, there is a positive way forward and, hopefully, a happy ending in sight.

The chief problem amongst many is the condition of the main building. It is approximately 200 years old and it reached the end of its expected life span many years ago, but it was listed in 1983 and it needs to be retained. I wouldn't argue with this because, whilst it has been often altered over the years, it is an attractive and prominent building that reflects the history of the locality.

The difficulty is that to put the property in a good condition – from its foundations to its roof – will take a very considerable financial investment. A pub, even with a restaurant and bedrooms, would never produce enough value to justify the investment needed. The numbers simply don't stack up. In the current market, and for the foreseeable future, the only use of the building that would generate the value needed is if it is converted into residential flats.

However, as part of a comprehensive proposal for the whole site which comprises four distinct elements, I propose to rebuild and convert the coach house into a flexible-use community facility.

The building hasn't been properly used for decades. It is in a very poor condition and bits of it are close to collapse. It is, however, a sizeable building of approximately 1450 square feet, which makes it at least as large as the existing bar/restaurant area within the Dove, and larger than the Wonston Arms and the Hyde Tavern which is a popular drinkers pub in the city.

My initial idea is to convert the coach house into a drinking-only establishment with either a very small kitchen or none at all, but with a one-bed flat at the rear to provide for an owner-occupier. There are enough gastro pubs in the area, and tastes are changing so that there is now a gap in the market for smaller and interesting places, that don't look like Weatherspoons. At the Wonston Arms it is the personal touch that is making it a great success. The theme I have in mind would be quite different and wouldn't rely on customers from far afield. By being much more locally based and less ambitious in the food offering, and less costly overall the new bar would attract many more potential tenants.

I describe this as an "initial idea" because rather than make assumptions, I want to find out what is really needed within the local community. I know that there is a nursery school at East Stratton but is there a need for a creche facility? Is there any use not currently covered by Warren Hall? I also want to fully explore the hospitality market, and I have already had a range of ideas put to me, some involving different uses at lunchtime and in the evening.

To assure the Parish Council that the building will be put to such a community use, I would be happy for the planning permission to contain a condition to say that the coach house must be ready and available to be let before any of the flats are sold. This would effectively guarantee your position.

The other elements of this proposal besides converting the coach house to a bar and the main building to 10 flats, are to build two small houses to the rear to continue the Brunel Close frontage, and to install a new sewage treatment on site. Disconnecting the Dove from the existing plant next to the station would provide a major benefit for the residents of Brunel Close, as it would greatly reduce the strain on that facility.

In summary, this proposal seeks to generate sufficient value by the development of 12 residential units so as to enable the expensive restoration of the fabric of a notable listed property; plus the installation of a new sewage treatment plant; and the provision of a new community facility / bar / pub which would be of a scale and nature that would have a long-term future.

I very much hope that the Parish Council will support this proposal, and if it does, we expect to submit a detailed planning application within the next three months.

Kim Gottlieb
17.4.2019