

PRESS RELEASE FROM THE SAVE THE CABINET ACTION GROUP

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 8 April 2019

Relief among pub campaigners as proposal to split The Cabinet is refused

An application for permission to split the 400-year-old, Grade II-listed Cabinet pub in Reed has been refused planning permission by North Hertfordshire District Council. The associated application for listed building consent was also refused.

The proposal would have subdivided The Cabinet into two parts. The smaller part would have been a three-room pub, while the larger part would be a residence.

At the same time, The Cabinet has been re-listed as an Asset of Community Value (ACV) for a period of 5 years.

The latest application came just two months after the appeal by the owner – a property developer – against refusal of planning permission for change of use of the entire premises was dismissed. That culminated in a three-day Public Inquiry, and the local community had raised over £20,000 so that the Action Group could be fully represented.

50 objections were lodged to the proposal to subdivide the pub, with a further 20 concerning the application for listed building consent.

In January, the owner put The Cabinet up for sale or to rent. But the Action Group argued that the asking price of £595,000 was vastly more than the true market value given in evidence at the Public Inquiry.

Welcoming the latest planning decision, Mike Howes, Chair of the Save the Cabinet Action Group said

“We’re pleased and relieved that this exasperating proposal has been given short shrift by the planning officers. And once again, we are delighted at the wonderful support from the community in pursuing the campaign to save the pub.

“Now, hopefully, attention can turn to restoring The Cabinet to its proper place as a lovely village pub at the heart of this community. We know that there have been offers to buy from Reed Parish Council, as well as other enquiries. With common sense and goodwill on all sides, there is no reason why one of these expressions of interest should not bear fruit.”

For more information about the campaign to save The Cabinet, see the Action Group’s website: www.savethecabinet.uk.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

The Save the Cabinet Action Group was established in October 2016 to resist the application to turn The Cabinet at Reed into a house.

The Cabinet is a 400-year old building, considered a village icon – it even appears on the village sign. It is believed to be the only pub in Britain bearing the name. The Cabinet was a thriving, popular pub, widely known as “a little gem”.

It closed in 2011 and was put up for sale. The Action Group provided evidence of several offers by financially credible parties to buy or rent the building and run it as a pub, which were refused by the then owners. It was eventually sold at auction in late 2015 to the present owner, a property developer, for £375,000. Documents before the Planning Control Committee suggested that the building was, as a pub, valued at no more than £250,000.

The kitchen was removed during 2015, and further works were commenced in mid-2016, without the requisite planning or listed building consents, and have been ongoing since. Despite complaints by neighbours and by Reed Parish Council, the planning authority, North Hertfordshire District Council, took no enforcement action.

Retrospective applications for planning and listed building consent were submitted in September 2016. Planning permission for change of use was refused by the members of the Planning Control Committee of NHDC in July 2017. The linked listed buildings applications have not yet been determined.

The developer lodged an appeal against refusal of permission for change of use. The appeal was heard by a planning inspector independent of North Herts District Council.

The Planning Inspectorate, which determines such appeals independently of planning authorities, decided to decide this appeal by way of a Public Inquiry. The Save the Cabinet Action Group was granted “Rule 6 status”, which allowed it to be represented at the appeal and have equivalent status to the principal parties – the appellant and the District Council. On 10 December 2018 the appeal was dismissed.

Two new applications were submitted in February 2019. The first would have subdivided The Cabinet in two and provide for a new, small, car park at the northern end of the building. The second would have covered associated listed building consent. Both those applications were refused at delegated officer level on 4 April.

Assets of Community Value benefit from protection under the Localism Act 2011: there are limits to permitted development, there is provision for a community right to bid and there is the possibility of compulsory purchase by the local authority if there is a danger of long-term loss to the community. Just as importantly, the fact that a building is sufficiently loved to be an Asset of Community Value is a material consideration in any planning application.

According to the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA), 21 pubs are closing every week – see <http://www.camra.org.uk/pubs>.

More information is available on the Action Group’s web site www.savethecabinet.uk.

The Action Group is also on Facebook, “Save the Cabinet at Reed”, and Twitter @SaveTheCabinet.