

Petitioner:	Suzanne Hunt
Petition:	Save the White Swan, Protect and Boost Charlton Village!
Number of signatures:	1183
The petition read as follows:	<p>We, the undersigned, call on the Royal Borough of Greenwich to take immediate action to stop the White Swan in Charlton Village being turned into residential flats and to force the owners to restore the premises to a working pub with function rooms. We are appalled at the dereliction and disrepair that the White Swan has fallen into, and that Charlton Village is about to enter its seventh year as an “at risk” conservation area. We are pleased to see that the Council has designated the White Swan a local community asset and local heritage asset. We believe that the White Swan should remain a community asset now and in the future, and the Council should reject all attempts to change its use or change to residential use.</p> <p>We further request that this petition should be treated as a material consideration in any future planning application with regard to The White Swan.</p> <p>As such, we ask that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The Royal Borough of Greenwich’s Planning Enforcement team takes immediate action to ensure that the White Swan’s owners restore the property’s first-floor function rooms. 2) The Council ensures the restoration of the Charlton Village Conservation Area and economic regeneration area is included in the revised and updated Charlton Riverside Masterplan. 3) The Council works with Charlton residents and community groups to develop an

	economically prosperous Charlton Village, to attract external funding and bring a community-led White Swan back to life as the heart

Cabinet Member:	Ann-Marie Cousins/Mariam Lolavar/Aidan Smith
Ward(s):	Charlton Village & Riverside
Directorate:	DRES

Submitted to Council on:	06 December 2023
Presented by:	Councillor Jo van den Broek

I. **Petition Response**

I.1 **Current Planning Application**

I.1.1 The current planning application (Ref: 23/2374/F) that was with the Council, proposed the following:

‘Change of use of the existing Public House providing a commercial unit (Use Class E) at ground floor and 7no. residential units (Use Class C3) at upper levels, erection of a two-storey roof extension, part-two/partsingle storey extension to the rear, and all associated external and internal works’

I.1.2 Unfortunately whilst officers had been trying to work with the applicant and agent, delays in providing responses and information from the applicant on certain elements (including a viability report and its independent assessment) so that officers could conclude their recommendation (particularly relating to the principle of the proposal and loss of the public house use), they decided to appeal against nondetermination.

I.1.3 At the time of writing this, the Planning Department had just received the start letter from the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) (dated 12/01/2024).

1.1.4 In December 2023, we had advised the applicant that had the Local Authority been able to finalise our full assessment of the application, officers would have recommended refusal based on the following reasons and considered it not to comply the NPPF, relevant policies of the London Plan and Core Strategy, the Mayors Housing SPG, the Charlton Village Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2016) and The Charlton Village Conservation Area Management Strategy (2016):

- Viability assessment provides insufficient and inaccurate evidence and justification provided for the loss of the public house;
- insufficient information has been submitted in order to demonstrate that the site has been reasonably and actively marketed for a period of two years. Therefore, inadequate justification has been provided for the loss of a social community asset to the detriment of the local area;
- By virtue of the unsympathetic design and scale of the proposed two-storey roof extension, the overly-dominant design of the proposed dormer windows and the unsympathetic design, roof form and scale of the proposed rear extension, the proposed development would appear overly dominant and would fail to appear subordinate to the host building. The development would result in considerable harm to the character of the locally listed building, the surrounding character of the area and the Charlton Village Conservation Area;
- Inappropriate living standards for prospective occupiers; and
- Impact on neighbouring amenity.

1.1.5 This will form the Council's defence for the appeal and an Appeal Statement would be submitted based on these reasons.

1.1.6 As requested, this petition has been registered against the application. It should be noted that whilst it is requested this petition is used as a material consideration for any other application received, we are unable to make this commitment. Each application would be consulted upon separately and representations should be made for each application and would need to address the merits of the proposed development.

1.1.7 Now the appeal start letter has been received, those that have registered an interest in the scheme will be notified and provided with details of how they can comment on the appeal to the Planning Inspectorate.

1.2 Enforcement

- 1.2.1 This has been discussed and looked into with our Planning Enforcement team. However, the works that have take place are all internal.
- 1.2.2 Therefore, whilst works have been done internally, as it is not a statutory listed building, such works would not require planning permission. In order for the Council's Planning Enforcement team to consider taking action, an alternative use of the first floor would need to commence and not continue as a public house. If this is in breach of the permitted/lawful use enforcement action could be considered.
- 1.2.3 In addition, whilst it is noted that they may have unintentionlly allowed the internals to be damaged by various squatters and cannabis farms, this is also not sufficient for Section 215 action (untidy land) to be taken, as the issues raised relate to the internal state of the building.
- 1.2.4 However, whilst there is nothing at this time that can be done, the Planning Enforcement team are fully aware of the site and situation, and will continue to review.

1.3 Revised and updated Charlton Riverside Masterplan

- 1.3.1 The Council will not be seeking to review the Charlton Riverside Masterplan SPD (dated June 2017). As part of the Local Plan all aspects of planning policy will be reviewed. This will have implications for any material planning guidance. Whilst the Council is considering the development of a new Urban Regeneration Framework for Charlton Riverside, this would not be looking to expand the area currently covered by the Charlton Riverside Masterplan SPD.
- 1.3.2 As such, this would not include the Charlton Village Conservation Area, which is covered and protected by Council's relevant Core Strategy Policies, the Charlton Village Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2016) and Charlton Village Conservation Area Management Strategy (2016) (https://www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/downloads/download/652/charlton_village_conservation_area_map_and_appraisal).

1.4 Council working with Charlton residents and community groups to develop an economically prosperous Charlton Village

1.4.1 The Council when developing any guidance seeks to work with the public including community groups / amenity societies.

1.4.2 As has been highlighted in the petition the White Swan is an Asset of Community Value
(https://www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/directory_record/87810/the_white_swan).

1.4.3 In addition, the White Swan is now Locally Listed , which adds another layer of consideration to any planning application that comes forward. This is evident from the Council's response to the most recent application (Ref: 23/2374/F) and why it would have been recommended forward as a refusal, but how we would defend this at appeal.

1.4.4 It is considered these elements, alongside the Council's Core Strategy policies and Charlton Village Conservation Character Appraisal and Management Strategy, help to resist inappropriate changes of use and development.

1.4.5 Work has also started on a new Local Plan. The new Local Plan will be the Council's main planning documents, which provides the framework for management of development in the borough. There will be future opportunities to help shape the future planning policies of Royal Greenwich and a future formal consultation, date to be determined. In the meantime, further information on this can be found on the Council's website (<https://royalgreenwichnewlocalplan.commonplace.is/>).

2 Current actions being taken in relation to matter raised in petition

2.1 The Council is defending the appeal against non-determination of planning application reference 23/2374/F.