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VENTURE BUSINESS SPACE LIMITED

**CHANGE OF USE OF EX-BELL PUBLIC HOUSE TO A SHOP (CLASS E) INCLUDING PART
DEMOLITION, SINGLE STOREY REAR EXTENSION & EXTERNAL WORKS**

**THE BELL INN, 33 CHURCH STREET, PINCHBECK, SPALDING, LINCOLNSHIRE, PE11
3UB**

Application No H14-0523-26

Comments on consultation responses

A new NPPF was published on the 24 August 2026. The response to consultation replies included a reference to NPPF. The document has been revised to add a reference to NPPF 2026 in the section responding to the comments of the Conservation Officer.

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AI (ChatGPT and Landstack) was used for research with the results being separately verified. AI was also used for proofreading and minor editorial improvements (grammar, spelling, clarity). No substantive content was generated by AI.

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Consultee Parish Council

The Parish Council objects to this application. Whilst recognising the desire to bring the building back into use, the Council considers that the proposed development, including the associated demolition, extension and external alterations, would not preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Pinchbeck Conservation Area. The Council is also concerned about the impact on highway safety arising from increased vehicular activity and parking pressure on Church Street, together with the adverse effect on the amenity of neighbouring properties and the wider area.

Applicant response

The County Council as Highway Authority has requested a plan demonstrating the width of the access and the available visibility splays. That plan was submitted and published on the Council's website on 8 July 2026. Further comments from the Highway Authority are awaited. The applicant has also had regard to the principles in Manual for Streets.

The demolition issue is discussed in the response to the Conservation Officer (below).

Consultee IDB

I am pleased to see that discharge flows from the site are being restricted to 2 litres/second as detailed on Proposed Surface Water Drainage Plan reference: 30340-GGP-XX-XX-DR-C-9004, Revision P02 prepared by GGP Consult dated 2nd March 2026. The proposed surface water discharge from the site requires the prior written consent of the Board should planning permission be granted. Any application is subject to the agreement of technical details, payment of the application fee as well as payment of the relevant development contribution. Based on an increase in impermeable area of 0.0208 ha and a maximum flow restricted to 2 litres/second, this results in a development contribution of £3,334.14 payable in advance of connection. Please note that development contributions are subject to annual increase in line with RPI. The receiving watercourse will need to be capable of taking potential additional flows, and if not currently suitable, then it would need to be brought up to standard. If any watercourses are to be altered in any way on site as part of the development then the prior written consent of the Board would be required.

Applicant response

The applicant notes the requirement to obtain the Board's consent before making the connection.

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Consultee Ecology

Summary: There are at least 2 bat roosts present within B1 on site. Before any development work commence, we will require a European Protected Species license from Natural England supported by a bat mitigation strategy to be provided pre-commencement. There has been sufficient evidence provided to determine this application, and we are confident that 10% net gain will be achieved onsite for this application. We will require a biodiversity gain plan and all the appropriate onsite details and a finalized metric to be provided for this application. Documents reviewed: ☐ BNG Metric ☐ PEA ☐ BNG assessment ☐ Bat survey report Comments Ecological Considerations: ☐ We support all mitigation and enhancement recommendations provided in section1, pages 3-7 of the PEA and request that they are required by condition. ☐ It was found within the bat survey report that there was at least one common pipistrelle non-breeding day roost and one Brown Long Eared Bat nonbreeding roost were both present within the derelict pub (B1). ☐ Bats are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and under Schedules 5 & 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Thus, the proposed works will require a submission for a European Protected Species license from Natural England supported by a bat mitigation strategy. Further, LPAs have a duty to engage with the directives, and it is our opinion that this proposal will successfully meet the 3 tests (1. Over-riding public interest, 2. No satisfactory alternatives, 3. Positive conservation outcome) provided that the recommendations and mitigation actions below are adhered to.

1 ☐ The preliminary roost assessment identified that tree T443 contains two potential roost features; however, no evidence of roosting bats was recorded at the time of survey. The proposed development includes the removal of this tree. Given the recorded bat activity within the area, we recommend that T443 is retained and incorporated as a feature within the car park. This would ensure the retention of two potential bat roosting features on site. BNG Comments and Notes to applicant ☐ Overall, the biodiversity assessment and metric calculations appear rigorous, and we can have confidence in their conclusions. In this case the metric indicates that 10% mandatory net gain cannot be achieved on-site, and therefore the proposals require 1.14 area-habitat units on-site. These will need to be secured pre-commencement and can be achieved via 2 routes:

1. Bespoke habitat creation/enhancement could be undertaken by the applicant on land they own elsewhere or in agreement with another landowner. To discharge the biodiversity gain condition the applicant would have to secure the appropriate habitat creation/enhancement by either entering a

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section 106 agreement with the local authority or through undertaking a conservation covenant with a responsible body pre-commencement.

2. The applicant could purchase the appropriate number of units from an on-site habitat bank and evidence this to the authority pre-commencement. This can be achieved through the applicant contacting an on-site unit provider, aka a habitat bank, (which has biodiversity units registered on the national gain site registry) to arrange a contract for the applicant to purchase the necessary units from the habitat bank. The habitat bank then notifies the national gain site register to allocate the specifically referenced units to the applicant. the authority requires 3 pieces of information to confirm the on-site unit allocation prior to discharging the biodiversity gain condition. □ a certificate/receipt/bill of sale that includes the unit allocation reference number(s) from the registered gain site to confirm the on-site unit purchase from the habitat bank. □ a finalized statutory metric that contains the on-site habitat information and habitat parcel references from the gain site. The applicant can obtain this information from the habitat bank by providing them with a copy of the statutory metric for them to complete. The finalized metric should then be submitted to the authority and posted on the public portal for transparency. □ the unit allocation must appear on the national gain site register prior to discharging the gain condition such that the authority can independently confirm that the unit allocation is valid.

□ If the tree T443 was to be retained as previously mentioned, the only 0.95 units would been to be secured pre-commencement. □ The metric indicates that 10% mandatory net gain can be achieved on-site with a predicted overall gain of 221.67% in Habitat units Specific BNG condition request □ We will require a biodiversity gain plan and all the appropriate onsite details and a finalized metric to be provided for this application.

Conclusion: There are at least 2 bat roosts present within B1 on site. Before any development work commence, we will require a European Protected Species license from Natural England supported by a bat mitigation strategy to be provided pre-commencement. There has been sufficient evidence provided to determine this application, and we are confident that 10% net gain will be achieved onsite for this application. We will require a biodiversity gain plan and all the appropriate onsite details and a finalized metric to be provided for this application.

Applicant response

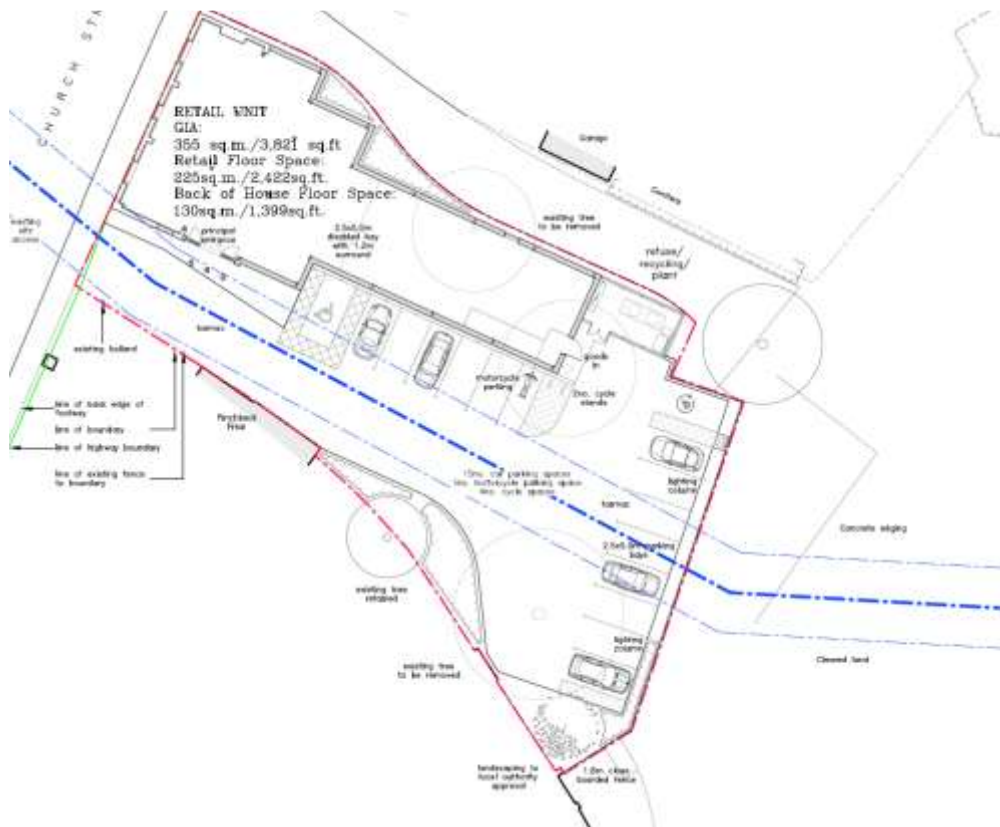
The Ecology Officer's comments regarding biodiversity net gain appear to contain contradictory conclusions. They state both that 10% net gain cannot be achieved on-site and that the metric predicts an overall on-site gain of 221.67%. The applicant would welcome clarification of the precise

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number and type of biodiversity units required. Subject to that clarification, any necessary off-site units will be secured from a registered biodiversity gain site and allocated to the development through the statutory biodiversity gain register.

Retention of T443 has been carefully considered. However, its retention would result in the loss of four parking spaces and the principal turning area, thereby potentially creating the highway and parking concerns identified by the Parish Council and previously raised by the Highway Authority. The layout cannot therefore reasonably accommodate the tree without prejudicing the safe and effective operation of the site. Appropriate ecological compensation will be incorporated into the biodiversity gain arrangements. This should also be weighed against the substantial benefit of securing the viable reuse and long-term retention of the former public house, which is identified as a non-designated heritage asset.



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The applicant accepts that a European Protected Species licence must be obtained from Natural England before undertaking any works that would affect the identified bat roosts. A detailed bat mitigation strategy will be prepared and the relevant mitigation and enhancement measures can be secured by condition.

Consultee Conservation Officer

I believe the principle of the conversion is supportable; however, additional information is required before I could offer full support for the proposal. The Bell Inn is a non-designated heritage asset that makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Pinchbeck Conservation Area. As such, any alterations should seek to preserve its significance and contribution to the historic environment. I am very supportive of the proposed works to the principal elevation, which appear to respect the building's historic character. However, I would require further justification regarding the proposed demolition of the existing rear structure. Whilst the Heritage Statement includes photographs and concludes that this element is of limited heritage value, the extent of demolition proposed is substantial and therefore warrants a more robust assessment. In particular, additional information should be provided to demonstrate why the existing structure is not capable of retention, repair, or adaptation. Given that the proposed replacement range is broadly similar in form to the existing rear addition, albeit single-storey and extending further, a more detailed explanation would help to justify any heritage harm arising from its loss. I would also like to raise the proposed alterations to the south elevation, specifically the introduction of the new shop entrance. As this elevation is visible from within the Conservation Area, it contributes to the character and appearance of the surrounding historic environment. Further details should therefore be provided to demonstrate that the design, materials, and detailing will be of an appropriate quality and sympathetic to the character of the host building. Any associated signage should likewise be carefully considered and designed to a high standard. Finally, I would welcome the retention of the existing historic signage that contributes to the building's identity and significance, including the hanging sign on the west elevation. The proposed drawings appear to indicate that this sign will be retained, but I would be grateful if this could be explicitly confirmed. Retaining such features would help preserve the building's historic character and its longstanding association as a public house within the Conservation Area.

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Conditions Should the Local Planning Authority be minded to approve the application prior to further information being provided, I recommend the following conditions:

1. Historic Building Recording: Prior to the commencement of works, a Level 2/3 Historic Building Record shall be undertaken by a suitably qualified heritage professional and submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval. A copy of the approved record shall also be deposited with the Lincolnshire Historic Environment Record.
2. Materials: Full details of external materials shall be submitted to and approved e.g. roof materials, shopfront materials. This should include a brick sample panel to be constructed on site showing brick, bond and mortar.
3. Portico Details: Prior to installation, detailed drawings and specifications of the proposed portico, including materials, dimensions and detailing, shall be submitted to and approved.
4. Retention of Historic Signage – The existing hanging sign on the west elevation shall be retained in situ unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
5. Window Joinery Details – Prior to installation, detailed drawings of all new window joinery, including sections, profiles, materials, and finishes shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Policy Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990: Section 72: Special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area. National Planning Policy Framework: Paragraph 208: ... to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal. Paragraph 216: The effect of an application on the significance of a nondesignated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect nondesignated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Applicant response

The Conservation Officer recommends a number of conditions if the Planning Officer wishes to approve the application despite her reservations. The applicant does not object to those conditions in principle.

The applicant agrees to the retention of the historic hanging sign and its supporting structure. However, Condition 4 should allow the displayed wording or commercial content to be altered from time to time, subject to any separate advertisement consent requirements. The heritage value lies

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principally in the retention of the sign and bracket rather than the continued display of former public-house branding.

The Conservation Officer expresses concern about the demolition of the rear projection.

The viable reuse of the building cannot be achieved without providing additional, efficient ground-floor trading accommodation. Existing GIA is circa 198m², which makes the assumption that all internal walls could be removed. The necessary GIA for this use is 355m². Even, if the internal walls could be removed the property is 45% too small for the proposed use.. Although the principal part of the former public house can be incorporated into the development, the existing rear projection contains internal structural walls and an upper floor that prevent the creation of the open, level and readily accessible trading area required for the proposed use.

The applicant has considered retaining and extending the rear projection. That option would, however, retain the internal structural constraints, leave the upper floor without a viable use and produce an inefficient and fragmented retail layout. Substantial structural intervention would still be required, while achieving a less satisfactory architectural and operational result.

Removing the rear projection and replacing it with a subordinate single-storey pitched-roof extension would provide the accommodation necessary to secure the building's viable reuse. It would enable the historically and architecturally more important principal range, including its principal elevation, to be retained, repaired and brought back into active use.

The applicant acknowledges that the loss of the rear projection gives rise to a degree of heritage harm. However, that element is of appreciably less significance than the principal range. The harm should be weighed against the public benefits of securing the viable reuse, repair and long-term retention of a positive non-designated heritage asset within the Conservation Area, together with the removal of vacancy and deterioration and the contribution made to the vitality of the locality.

The applicant can only achieve the improvements to the building and its retention by putting it to a beneficial use. ~~This approach is supported by paragraph 210 of the NPPE:-~~

~~In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:-~~

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- ~~a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;~~
- ~~b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and~~
- ~~c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.~~

HE4: Securing the conservation of heritage assets

1.

Heritage assets, as an irreplaceable resource, should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. To achieve this, development proposals which would affect the significance of heritage assets, including any contribution made by their setting should:

a.

Maintain or secure a use consistent with their conservation, taking into account the importance of maintaining the assets, the positive contribution they can make to sustainable communities including local economies, and the positive contribution they can make to local character and distinctiveness; and

b.

Avoid (or if that is not possible, minimise) harm to the significance of heritage assets, and instead conserve this significance.

4.

Proposals for enabling development, which would otherwise conflict with other policies in this Framework and/or those in the development plan, but which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset, should be considered on the basis of whether the conservation benefits outweigh the disbenefits of departing from the policies concerned.

Whilst it is not accepted that there would be substantial harm to the asset, even when there is such harm this needs to be balanced against the benefits of bringing the building back into use

5.

Where a development proposal would cause substantial harm to, or the total loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset, consent should be refused unless it can be demonstrated that the

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harm is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh the harm or loss, or if all of the following apply:

a.

The nature of the heritage asset would otherwise prevent all reasonable uses of the site;

b.

No suitable use for the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation;

c.

Conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is not possible; and

d.

The harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the asset back into use.

In accordance with, a balanced judgment is required having regard to the scale of the harm or loss and the significance of the non-designated heritage asset. In this case, the harm arising from the loss of the less significant rear projection is outweighed by the benefits of securing the viable reuse, repair and long-term retention of the principal historic building.

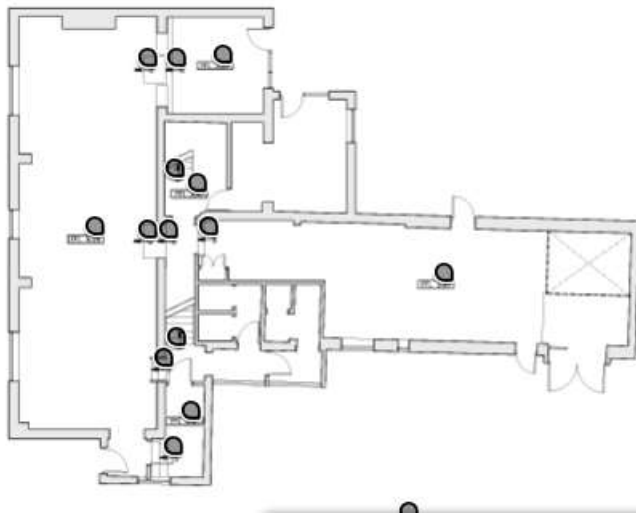
The applicant accepts that the detailed design, materials, proportions and construction of the southern entrance and associated signage must be sympathetic to the host building and the Conservation Area. Full details can be submitted and approved before installation through appropriately worded conditions.

The plans below illustrate the fragmented nature of the existing internal arrangement and the open, level trading accommodation achieved by the proposed scheme.

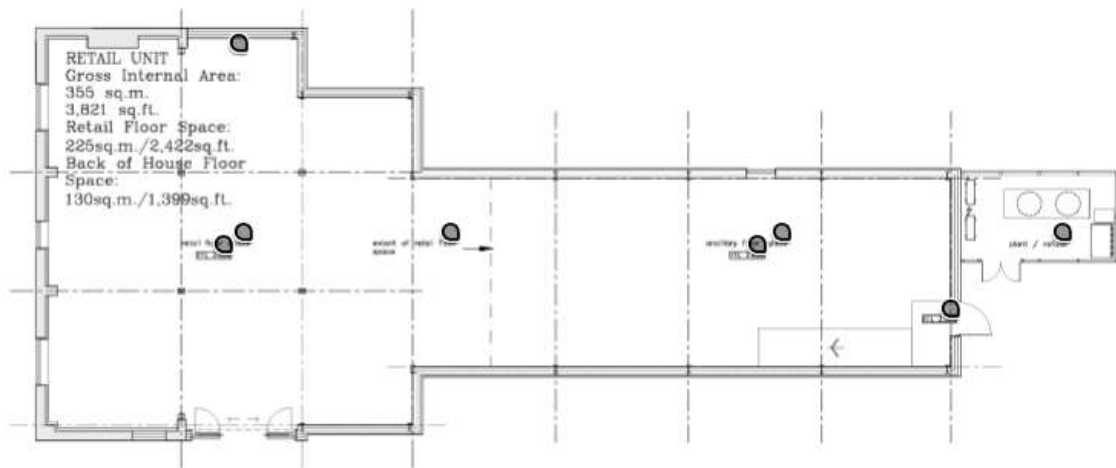
Existing

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Proposed

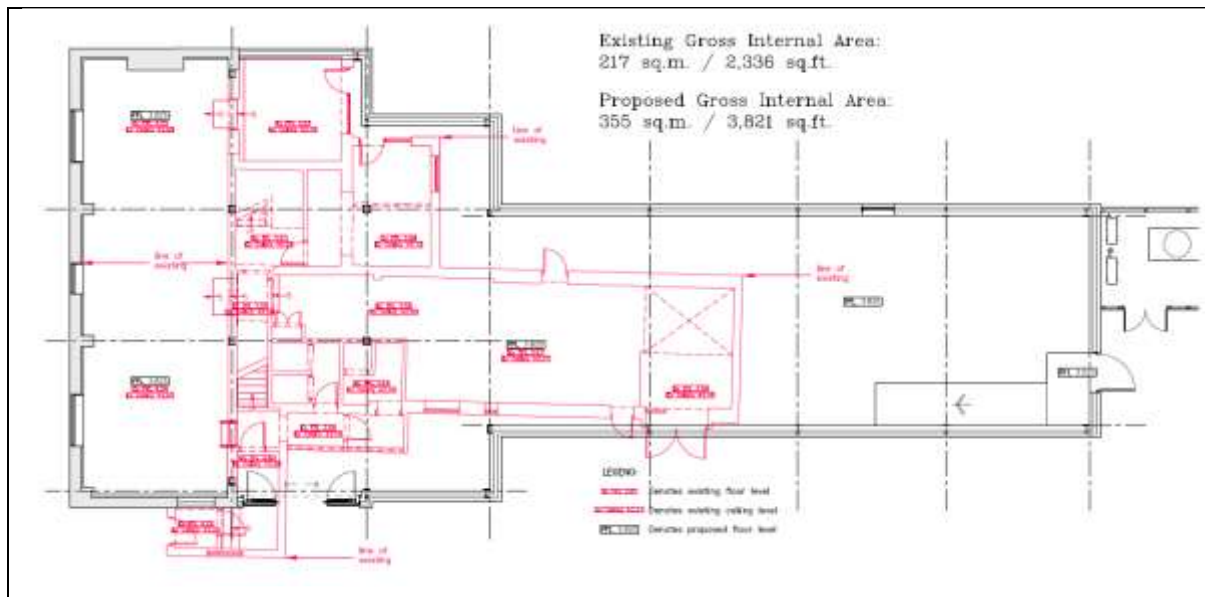


Existing and proposed overlay. Floor and ceiling heights shown.

Not only is the floor area insufficient for the proposed retail operation but the many variations in floor and ceiling levels would make the operation of a retail unit an impossibility in many respects, not least disability access.

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Consultee Environmental Protection

No Observations no concerns

Applicant response

The comment is welcomed.

Consultee Archaeology

Having reviewed the application documents and the updated available Historic Environment information for this application, the proposal is unlikely to have an impact on significant archaeological remains. An adjacent trial trench evaluation was undertaken in November 2025 in connection with application H14-0219-22, during which archaeological remains were exposed. However, while the proposed parking area is adjacent to that site, due to the nature and limited impact of the proposed development, an impact upon any archaeological remains is considered unlikely. Consequently, no further archaeological input is necessary for this application. It is not necessary to consult us on this application again, unless there are material changes to the proposals. However, if you would like advice from us, please contact us to explain your request.

Applicant response

The comment is welcomed.

Consultee Environmental Protection - Contamination

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I have reviewed Solmek Ltd, Phase 2:Site Investigation for The Blue Bell Inn, Pinchbeck, Report Ref:M25-083, Dated: Sept 2025. This report has highlighted possible ground gas contamination which may pose risk to future site users. However this report indicates that ground gas monitoring is still in progress and therefore the report is incomplete. I am therefore unable to make a comment on land contamination until I have received and reviewed the completed report and must object.

Applicant response

Additional information is being prepared.

Consultee SUDS / Highways

Deferral: LCC is not currently in a position to support the application and requests further assessment, supporting evidence, revisions and/or dialogue, as set out in the response. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REQUIRED Can the applicant demonstrate on a plan the width of the access and visibility splays.

Applicant response

A plan has been submitted and was published on the Council website on the 8 July 2026. Further comments from the County Council are awaited.

Christopher C Kendall
Dip TP MRTPI

~~24 July 2026~~

28 August 2026

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