

# Application for Listing as an Asset of Community Value

## Localism Act 2011

### The Assets of Community Value (England) Regulations 2012

#### DECISION NOTICE 2019/35049

22<sup>nd</sup> July 2019

**Proposed Asset of Community Value** – The Raven Inn, 341 Warrington Road, Glazebury, Warrington, WA3 5LA.

**Nominated by** – The Raven Inn Community Pub Project Ltd

**Current Owner** – Elaine Rosling and John Norman Leach

**Action Taken Prior to Decision:**

- Notification to current owners of nomination (Elaine Rosling and John Norman Leach)
- Consultation with Parish Council & Ward Members (Councillors Davidson, Grime and Smith)
- Publication of application on the Council's Website

**Nomination**

On 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2019 Warrington Borough Council registered an application for the nomination under Section 89 of the Localism Act 2011 to list The Raven Inn, 341 Warrington Road, Glazebury as an Asset of Community Value. The nomination was made by The Raven Inn Community Inn Project Ltd. A map setting out the boundaries of the asset nominated to be listed is provided as Appendix 1 to this Decision Notice.

**Description of the proposed Asset**

The proposed asset is a building in private ownership purchased by the owners in 2016. It is not currently operating having ceased trading in September 2018, at that date it had operated as a restaurant. Prior to that it is understood that it had operated as a public house.

The Raven Inn is said to date from 16th Century with later additions. It is a brick and timber construction under a pitched slate roof. The building fronts on to the A574 (Warrington Road) in Glazebury. Until September 2018 it had operated as a restaurant, although for most of its life it had been an inn/public house.

Despite a previous application to have the building listed by Historic England, it is at present an unlisted building. However, Warrington Borough Council do include the building on its list of Locally Listed Buildings in the 2014 Local Plan. These are buildings that have been identified as contributing to their local area whether in or out of a conservation area but that do not necessarily meeting the requirement for statutory

listing.

### **Consultation Responses (Summary)**

Within the 21 day consultation period 22 letters and on line responses were received by the Council from local residents all **in support** of the application these include:-

Responses in general support for the application including:-

- A. The Raven is an iconic building, dating back 450 years. One thing the recent publicity has done is to make us all aware just how much history and heritage is associated with the building.

According to page 77 of Warrington's Local Plan of July 2014, the Raven Inn is a locally listed building and is therefore classed as an historic asset.

Not only should we protect it as an asset of community value, we should press to have it listed as a heritage site.

I really do not see any argument against making it an asset of community value. It has so much history and heritage, as you would expect for such an old building. if it were ever to go, it would leave a hole in our local fabric. It could never be replaced.

In addition to listing it as an ACV, we should actively seek to maintain and preserve the building. The ACV must be granted and it must be just the first step.

- B. The first point is the history of the Building. It is said to date from 1562. As such it is one of Warrington's oldest surviving buildings. Pevsner, in his 'Buildings of England' states that 'beneath the mock timbers of the pub are the double pile brick walls dating from the early 1700s' It was part of the former Holcroft estate, as such it has links to Colonel Blood.

There is so much history and heritage tied up in this building, it would be criminal to destroy it. Once the Raven has gone, it is gone for ever. We simply cannot allow everything it stands for to be lost. It must be preserved for the local community to enjoy, now and for the benefit of future generations.

Granting this application will go a long way to ensuring the survival of this building and making a statement as to how all of us, locally, view our heritage.

- C. I believe the Raven Inn should be designated as an Asset of Community Value. The historical importance of the Inn is indisputable, with reference being made to its existence going back to the 16th century and tales of a nearby battle during the Civil War with evidence of bones and weapons being found in a nearby field. As one of Warrington's locally listed heritage assets, I believe it would be criminal to allow its demolition and/or development for residential purposes, denying future generations the opportunity to enjoy its important heritage and pleasing visual impact. There is evidence to show that it has served the local community for almost 200 years as a public house, providing employment for members of the local community as well as providing a meeting place promoting community cohesion and the well-being of local residents. The Inn existed as a thriving public house until it was turned into a restaurant around 3 years ago and its regular customers were no longer welcomed unless they were dining. This, along with irregular opening hours and almost total lack of provision for smokers after the smoking ban, led to the Inn's sad demise, leading to its eventual closure in September 2018.

The Inn's loyal customer base would have continued to support the Inn had it not been made to feel unwelcome, and given the right business plan those loyal customers will return. Members of the local community not only want to save the building but are also working hard towards turning the Inn into a community pub. The community pub model is rapidly growing across the country and is proving to be very successful. It is true to say, therefore that the Inn has recently furthered its community social well-being or social interests (which include cultural, sporting or recreational interests) and is likely to do so in the future.

The following points from the recently published Local plan also support the retention and rejuvenation of the Raven Inn as a social meeting place of benefit to the local communities of Culcheth and Glazebury.

#### Vision

6. The character of Warrington places will be maintained and enhanced with a vibrant Town Centre and main urban area, surrounded by attractive countryside and distinct settlements. The unique elements of the historic, built and natural environment that Warrington possesses will be looked after, well managed, well used and enjoyed.

#### Policy INF4 - Community Facilities

##### General Principles

#### 2. The Council will:

- a. Safeguard existing social and community infrastructure, subject to a continued need or likely future need or demand for the facility in question; and require alternative comparable or improved provision where a development scheme would result in the loss of important social and community infrastructure;

#### Policy DC2 - Historic Environment

##### General Principles

1. The Council will, through planning decisions and in fulfilling its wider functions, proactively manage and work with developers, the local community and others to support proposals which conserve or, where appropriate, enhance the historic environment of Warrington.

#### 3. As well as fulfilling its statutory obligations, the Council will:

- a. Seek to identify, protect and enhance local heritage assets through the review and update to its Local List;
- b. Promote heritage-led regeneration including in relation to development opportunities;
- d. Develop a positive strategy to safeguard the future of any heritage assets that are considered to be at a great risk

#### Assessing Development Proposals

4. Proposals affecting a designated heritage asset, or an archaeological site of national importance, should conserve those elements which contribute to its significance. Harm to such elements will be permitted only where this is clearly justified and outweighed by the public benefits of the proposal. Substantial harm or total loss to the significance of a designated heritage asset (or an archaeological site of national importance) will be permitted only in exceptional circumstances.

8.2.8 The Council recognises that it needs to undertake a more proactive role to managing and promoting heritage in the Borough. The Council has therefore commenced the preparation of a Conservation Strategy, working with Historic England and local communities, to set out clear priorities for its heritage work.

8.2.9 The Council will take positive action to secure the retention, repair, maintenance and continued use of heritage assets.

8.2.14 Once lost or altered, features of the historic environment cannot be replaced. It is therefore important that decision making is based on a full understanding of the significance of heritage assets affected by development, the impacts arising from those proposals and the wider public benefit arising from the proposed development.

I hope the Council will support the local community in its efforts to retain this heritage asset and return it to community use for the benefit of all.

No responses have been received from the Local Ward Councillors or the Parish Council.

***Does the proposed asset meet the definition of an asset of community value specified in Section 88 (1) paragraphs (a) and (b) of the Localism Act 2011 i.e. the main (i.e. non-ancillary) use furthers the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community, or has recently done so, and is likely to do so in the future?***

The applicant has provided evidence as part of the application to suggest that the proposed asset could further the social wellbeing of the local community as it has done in the past.

Nomination application from The Raven Inn Community Pub Project Ltd submitted the following Comments :-

This alienated a considerable number of local residents who used it primarily as a traditional public house and this fact, along with ever shorter and at times irregular opening hours, indubitably contributed to the establishment's sad demise. Also when the smoking ban came in, there was no attempt made to cater for smokers apart from an ashtray in the wall by the entrance - no sheltered area was provided.

Given a different business plan and new management it is clear that this much prized historic asset which is highly valued within the community would soon return to its former glory. There is much local support for the creation of a community pub. At a public meeting with over 100 people in attendance, opinion was sought via a quick hands up vote. The majority of people raised their hands when asked if they would support the Raven being a community pub. There is also evidence of support for this idea via a poll on the Facebook group 'Help Save the Raven Inn' where over 100 members of the group express a willingness to buy into the Raven as a community pub. A community owned facility would return to a more traditional approach, operating primarily as a traditional public house offering food and drink to customers. There would also be much scope to offer a wider range of activities and facilities in order to engage and support the local community. This could include:

- Singles nights
- Quiz nights
- Curry nights (and other themed food nights)
- Themed nights - 50s, 60s, 70s etc
- Charity events
- Darts, dominoes, pool teams
- Bridge club

- Small scale arts and music festivals
- Craft / art exhibitions for local crafters/artists
- Book lending facility
- Wine tasting events
- Beer festivals
- OAP lunches
- Cookery lessons
  
- Games / jigsaw clubs
- A repair cafe
- Banking facility
- Mental health drop in facility
- Shop selling local produce
- Parcel collection/drop off facility
- Meeting room for community groups e.g. cricket club
- Activities for children during school holidays
- Small cafe with facilities for cyclists, walkers, dogs etc.

To sum up, the Raven Inn has always existed as a popular, vibrant and well-loved community asset. It should be re-opened along more traditional lines and be allowed to continue to serve the community as it has done for hundreds of years.

The Local Authority is not obliged through the localism regulations to assess whether the local community will take up the option to purchase the Raven Inn and run it successfully as a public house. The Local Authority must simply look at its current use; make a judgement as to its value to the community and the realistic prospect of that use continuing, whether the same use or another community use.

The test does not require the likely future use of the relevant building to be determined; it simply requires the Local Authority to determine whether future community use is one of a number of realistic options for the building.

It is clear from the letters of support received as part of the listing application that the community would support the use of the building as a public house. The realistic possibility of a future commercial use, either its current use or another community use, is sufficient to meet the requirements of the Localism Act.

No letter of objection has been received from the owners Elaine Rosling and John Norman Leach, nor any agent acting on their behalf. Discussions with the owners have highlighted that a potential purchaser for the site has withdrawn from an agreed contact to purchase which had been subject to the obtaining of a planning consent for a redevelopment scheme. Planning application 2019/34189 was declined. There were a number of public objections to the planning application and it is understood that this, along with the nomination of the Raven Inn as an Asset of Community Value, led the prospective purchaser to decide not to appeal the planning decision withdraw from the purchase.

The Raven does at this time remain on the market to let or for sale with property agents Reed Property Associates ([www.readproperties.co.uk](http://www.readproperties.co.uk))

***Does the proposed asset meet any of the criteria for exemption specified in Section 88 (3) and associated regulations?***

There is no evidence that the nominated Asset meets any of the exemption criteria set out in schedule 1 of the regulations.

**Conclusion**

Following a review and detailed assessment of all of the information provided in support of the nomination, it is considered that The Raven Inn, Warrington Road, Glazebury could, as an operational public house, further the social interest and social wellbeing of the local community.

It is also considered that it is realistic to think that The Raven Inn will continue to further the social interest and social wellbeing of the local community in the future.

Therefore The Raven Inn should be **Listed as an Asset of Community Value.**

**Decision**

**Having considered all the factors above, it is my view that the nominated asset, being The Raven Inn Glazebury, falls within the category of an Asset of Community Value as defined by the Localism Act 2011 and associated Regulations and should therefore be listed as such by this Council.**

*Michael De Bell*

**Michael Bell**  
**Planning Policy and Programmes Manager**

**22<sup>nd</sup> July 2019**

# Appendix 1: ACV Site Boundary

