

Dear Planners,

PLANNING APPLICATION LA/05/2024/0524/F - EXTENSION TO BOB STEWART'S PUBLIC BAR/RESTAURANT

I am writing to object to the proposed expansion of the existing public bar/restaurant, on the following grounds:

1. The size and impact of the proposed extension.
2. Traffic and safety issues.
3. The negative impact on wildlife and habitat within the Lagan Valley Regional Park.
4. Potential risk to the flood plain, the River Lagan and Belfast Lough

1. SIZE AND IMPACT

- The proposed extension more than doubles the existing public house and restaurant, thus dwarfing the existing listed building.
- The hamlet character of the area will lose significant amenity.
- Noise and odour from the premises are likely to impact negatively on the surrounding area causing a loss of amenity.
- The "take away" food arrangements will increase litter and food waste. This in turn will attract vermin, causing an increase in their populations detrimental to the habitat of a range of animals, some of which are protected.
- The impact on the River Corridor used by foraging animals, such as bats, is also a significant concern.
- The previous application for this site (LA05/2021/1323/F) was withdrawn. At that time a highly negative report was provided by Environmental Services relating to that proposal.

2. TRAFFIC AND SAFETY

- The extension and the increased dining and lounge bar areas are proposed alongside a reduction in the number of parking spaces from 59 to 44.

- In October 2023, with its existing capacity and parking arrangement, including access to Drum bridge car park, patrons parked along Ballyskeagh Road. A number received parking tickets from the PSNI who were called because of noise emanating from the premises. To propose a reduction in parking while at the same time more than doubling the size of the premises is inexplicable.
- The entrance and driveway into Bob Stewart's car park is narrow and has no footpaths. It is too narrow to permit vehicles to enter and leave the site at the same time. With increased patrons the safety of pedestrians, cyclists and those in cars is compromised by the internal road and access arrangements both entering and within the site.
- Patrons of Rose Cottage will use toilet facilities within the extended building. Given the absence of footpaths and the nature of the entrance their safety would be compromised.
- The current road infrastructure on Ballyskeagh Road is a 'B' road, which does not support safely the proposed increase in traffic associated with the proposed developments.
- It is unclear how the proposed Hatch Service will operate. The idea is to serve food and drink for consumption away from the premises. This will impact negatively on throughput of traffic, litter and noise, again representing a significant loss of amenity.
- Proximate to Bob Stewart's premises is a bend in the road which restricts visibility. Plans to increase the flow of traffic onto Ballyskeagh Road would significantly increase the possibility of accidents and traffic congestion and tailbacks.

3. WILDLIFE AND HABITAT

- To protect the flora and fauna of the Lagan Valley Regional Park Bob Stewart's planning application needs to be considered strategically. Other pending planning applications in the area, such as those for a boutique hotel, restaurant and spa located directly behind Bob Stewart's (LA05/2022/0946/0) and a housing development on the Quarterlands Road (LA05/2022/0033/F) must be viewed holistically to ensure the protection of the Lagan Valley Regional Park.
- The increases in noise, light and human activities will impact negatively on the breeding cycle of animals within the Lagan Valley Regional Park, an area of outstanding national beauty.
- Issues relating to noise, light, food waste and increased human activities and the resultant detrimental impact on the Lagan Valley Regional Park and its habitat are set out at Paragraphs 1 and 2 above.

4. POTENTIAL RISK TO THE FLOOD PLAIN, RIVER LAGAN AND BELFAST LOUGH

- The proposal is to connect the extended premises into the existing foul sewage system which is serviced by the Drumbeg WwTw. The increased Population Equivalents resulting from the proposed increase in patrons and staff is not specified. It would, however, place significant extra pressure on Drumbeg WwTw.
- The expansion of Bob Stewart's site increases the potential for increased risk of flooding in the area which is proximate to a flood plain.
- The planning application provides no information about stormwater drainage from the proposed development. Drumbeg WwTw discharges into the River Lagan and courses to Belfast Lough. Any further increase in treated and/or untreated sewage into the Lagan and Belfast Lough are harmful to the sites of special scientific interest and the Ramsar international wetland site located within the Lough.

Signed: