

PRESS RELEASE FROM THE SAVE THE CABINET ACTION GROUP

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 10 April 2018

VILLAGERS DETERMINED TO RESIST PUB APPEAL

Campaigners hoping to prevent the Grade II listed Cabinet pub at Reed being turned permanently into a house were resolute, as the appeal against refusal of planning permission was published this week.

Mike Howes, chair of the Save the Cabinet Action Group, said

“We are determined to resist this appeal with all the fortitude we can muster. The campaign to save The Cabinet has generated huge community support and we are quite certain there is a rosy future for The Cabinet as a viable pub.”

The current owner of The Cabinet – a property developer – turned the building into a house without planning permission or listed building consent. Last July, North Hertfordshire councillors refused his retrospective application for planning permission for change of use after the Action Group submitted evidence that The Cabinet was viable as a pub. He has now appealed.

Over 90 written objections were submitted to NHDC by concerned villagers and others. Objectors will have the opportunity to make representations to the Planning Inspectorate, which will consider the appeal.

A petition launched by the Action Group designed to make sure the appeal is heard in public rather than in writing has gathered over 1100 signatures.

Mike commented:

“It should never have been allowed to reach this stage. It is scandalous that the owner of The Cabinet should have been allowed to do all the damage he has done to the property – a listed building – with scant regard to the impact permanent loss of the pub would have on the local community, and without any action being taken by NHDC. Now the community is faced with having to finance a potentially complex and costly planning appeal in order to save its last pub.”

The Action Group is stepping up its fundraising activities to meet the costs of resisting the appeal. A pop-up pub night will be held at Reed Village Hall on Saturday 28 April. And a dedicated Golf Day will be held at Barkway Park on 11 May.

More information about these events and the campaign more generally can be found on 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, and is 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 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 has lodged an appeal against refusal of permission for change of use. The appeal will be heard by a planning inspector independent of North Herts District Council.

Planning appeals can be dealt with in three ways: in writing, by way of a hearing (at which the parties, including interested third parties such as objectors, may be represented), or by way of an inquiry (a more formal procedure during which evidence may be given on oath and the parties are typically represented by lawyers). The decision as to the appropriate procedure is for the Planning Inspectorate, which must take account, among other things, of the wishes of the appellant and the planning authority, and the level of local interest.

Under Section 9 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, carrying out work to a listed building without first obtaining the necessary consent is a criminal offence.

According to the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA), 21 pubs are closing every week – see <http://www.camra.org.uk/kc2-pub-protection> .

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.