

Comments from Councillor Kathy Bance in relation to Item 4.9 – Kent House Tavern, Thesiger Road, Penge, London SE20 7NQ

This planning application covers the ground floor of the former public house. The conversion into 2 x 1 bed and 1 x 2 bed units. Consent has already been granted for 6 x 1 bed flats on the first floor.

Residents are concerned about the intensity and quality of the accommodation with this application. There is a clear lack of amenity space. The applicant is using the distance to green spaces as an excuse to reduce the unit size and so increase the number of units. This application is no closer to a park than many other applications across the borough which have provided amenity space.

There is not much green space in Penge so this planning application with no outdoor space as amenity, offers cramped living conditions to the residents, just to squeeze in more poor quality units, making this an overdevelopment of a small site.

There are no parking spaces to support the increased number of units. There is already insufficient parking at this location. When visiting public houses, cars are not parked in the road for long periods of time. With housing applications, parking must have a different focus and so include parking spaces.

We cannot assume tenants will not drive and we cannot assume the units will be occupied by single professionals, students or couples who do not require as much private amenity space.

This is a tight-knit area and this is a small building. The applicant now plans to expand the building to 9 units. It is not unreasonable to say that this is too many units, even split on two floors and with no amenity space.

The evidence of advertising the property for commercial use is not clear.

I believe that on balance the scheme will cause harm to the character of the area and result in significant loss of amenity to local residents and does warrant a planning refusal.

Officers have indicated approval but we can still overturn this however, to go against this suggestion, we need to demonstrate planning reasons and the applicant's failure to comply with the new national housing standards and the London Plan are significant planning reasons.

If this went to appeal we could show that we had not acted unreasonably in reaching a decision and therefore are not liable to costs should an appeal be upheld.