Kings Arms, 64 Bishopric, Horsham, RH12 1QN

Supporting statement from the Business owners ref: Garden Pergola application

To Whom Ever it may concern,

We wanted to provide a brief written statement in support of our application to retain the detached pergola in the rear garden at The Kings Arms, 64 Bishopric, Horsham. Our business, North & South Leisure Ltd acquired the pub in 2017, previously a failing tenancy for Hall & Woodhouse our vision was to invest in this 350+ year old building and reinvigorate the heart of the pub - using our many years of experience in investment, marketing and operating community led pubs. We are proud to report that we have, to date, spent around £140,000 on the property and that, largely, our vision to deliver a thriving public house for the West side of Horsham is being delivered. Unfortunately, it is not without it's challenges. Today's consumer/ pub visitor is far more discerning than they used to be and they will not accept less than well invested, well presented pubs – the underinvested pubs either attract the wrong clientele or fail, the first step usually leading to the latter.

Business summary:
We are a small community led public house on the Bishopric in Horsham. Winners of Horsham in Bloom the year before the pandemic we are proud of our little pub and run frequent live music nights and community/ social interaction events such as our Paint Club, Open Mic Nights, Craft Clubs and more. We also support local charities such as the Butterfly Project. Our ambition is to continue to grow our social wellbeing agenda with a consistently great calendar of events that make all comers welcome.

Why the Pergola is important:
Aside from stating the obvious, that being the Great British weather, we genuinely feel that Horsham needs more safe outdoor spaces that are actively monitored by responsible operators, what better solution than a premises that has obligations, under the terms of our licence, to provide this. This fantastic new structure in the garden serves to shelter and winter-proof our garden making our business more sustainable all year round. This space, albeit at the back of our premises and often coined the secret garden, undoubtedly makes the wider Town more attractive. It's another space that residents and visitors alike can use more often.
Business viability:
Unfortunately, Summer 2023 was one of those years when it rained far more often than any of us would have liked, but especially for marginal pub operators like us that rely on peak trading periods to offset the all too frequent quieter times. In addition, each Autumn and Winter, when customers can no longer use the garden, we see a significant drop off in customer visits and spend.
Employment and Economic benefits:
Whilst it is early doors we are already seeing the business benefits of the Pergola and if our projections are realised then not only will this structure help to secure our viability as a small pub business it will enhance our business enough to create at least one additional full time member of staff to help service the garden.
Impact of having to remove the Pergola:
Unfortunately, if we had to remove the Pergola our whole viability, as a stand-alone profitable site becomes marginal again, unfortunately our wider business cannot carry unprofitable sites and the ultimate risk is pub closure.

Medium to Long term Business aims:
We wish to continue being more than just a pub. We want to be a social hub for the good of all the community, hosting clubs, activities, live music, workshops, social and mental well-being events. For pubs to survive in this modern world we need to remember why they are so loved in the first place – by being the third space, one being home, two being work and three being the pub. But we need to provide more reasons than ever to give people a reason to visit, to meet new people and talk to friends and strangers alike, to ease their worries. If there is one thing the pandemic taught us, it's that Social and Mental well-being has a home in the Great British Pub! ***We must do all we can, not to just protect that, but to re-invigorate it***.

Thank you in advance for considering our application.

Yours Sincerely,

[redacted]

Richard Grady
Director
North & South Leisure Ltd