

**Post to (deadline 21 Feb)**

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**Objection from**

Name	
Address	
Signed	
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**(1) I object to planning application reference 08/00240/CA (demolition) on the following grounds:**

**Historic**

- The Summercross is located on a strategic ancient route, with important historic connections, running down Wharfedale and beyond. It is also situated at the end of the more recent Otley-Tadcaster turnpike.
- The historic importance of the site and the building, is reflected in the prominence of the Summercross Cottages (now incorporated into the pub) on old maps of Otley.
- The origin of the name Summercross may (or may not) be linked to a nearby historically important ford across the river Wharfe. The name is however clearly unusual and historic. It is unique as a pub name.

**Conservation Area**

- The Summercross and its grounds lie within the official Otley Conservation Area. The Conservation Area appraisal recognises the Summercross, its position and its surroundings as "forming a fixed and positive eastern boundary to the Conservation Area". The Conservation Area appraisal plan formally recognises the Summercross as an "important building", the trees in the garden as "significant trees" and the high boundary wall behind the pub as an "important wall". Within the garden is a Yew tree with a tree preservation order, a majestic sycamore tree, a large pear tree and a smaller apple tree. These trees are all are protected by the Conservation Area status.
- The Summercross, with its beer garden and trees, combines with the adjacent park and trees plus the tree-lined boundary of the cemetery opposite to provide an important strong visual break in (and a natural focus for) the housing along the Pool Road.
- Application **Drawing 11 (Demolition Plan)** shows the pub demolished, the felling of all the trees except the Yew tree (the other drawings suggest the pear tree may also be retained) and the total decimation of the remaining section of "warming wall" (nearly half the length demolished and the rest reduced in height from 2.8m to 0.95m).
- Application document **Design & Access Statement and Conservation Area Assessment** contains many incorrect or questionable assertions. On the subject of the Otley Conservation Area, the document's author appears to be totally unaware of the above quotes from the from the official documentation of the Otley Conservation Area. For example, the loss of the Summercross will have "little impact" and the existing boundary walls are to be "reduced in height". Similarly the (closed) Summercross is repeatedly portrayed as being a problem for the community when it was developers who forced the closure. It currently looks a mess (boarded up, fenced-off and roughed-up by digging trial pits) and now has security problems due to the actions of developers. "Noise and disturbance", "security", "vandalism and associated anti social behaviour" were never a significant problem when the pub was open so they can hardly be "improved" by the proposed development. The statement that the loss of the Summercross through redevelopment "will not be missed" is equally ridiculous.
- The proposed demolition will substantially degrade the character of the eastern side of the Conservation Area. The proposed housing development (planning reference 08/00239/FU) will dominate the surroundings due to its size, location and elevation. Perhaps significantly, none of the drawings appear to show a roof ridge level for either of the proposed terraces (or for the existing Summercross). Scaling off the ridge heights from the various sections on application **Drawing 8** gives different levels: 53.0m+12.2 or 12.7 = 65.2m or 65.7m (say only a meter lower than Somerville Terrace) for the main block and 55.0m+12.5=67.5m or 53m+13.8=66.8m (say 0.5m higher than Somerville Terrace) for the smaller block. The existing houses in the vicinity will be dwarfed, the adjacent park and trees will be hemmed in and its views onto the Chevin will be lost while the existing "open break" in the ribbon of housing down Pool Road will be severely truncated.

• Application **Drawing 1 (Development Plan)** and others clearly **contain a major error** because tree 20, which should be in the park, is drawn as being located near the kerb edge of the footpath to Pool Road. Correcting the error in the location of this and other Conservation Area trees within the park will **make the proposed housing totally infeasible** due to the proximity of the protected trees in the park. Also see my objections to planning application 08/00239/FU.

- Other relevant concerns will be raised when responding to the housing development application but two are particularly relevant to the Conservation Area: the impact on-street parking and pedestrian access also (see the previously submitted right of way evidence).
- In line with planning policy N18A, demolition should be refused because of the officially acknowledged contribution of the Summercross and its garden to the Otley Conservation Area.

**The Summercross Orchard**

- The fruit trees and the high south facing "warming wall" are remnants of the Summercross Orchard which extended for some 5 acres and dates back at least to 1851. The pear tree is a "Winter Windsor", a variety that was first recorded in the 17th century and is extremely rare in the North. The apply tree is possibly Peasgood's Nonsuch but experts have been unable to identify it positively - it may be a 'lost' cultivar.
- Photographic evidence in Otley museum shows that there was an entrance into the orchard at the end of the remaining length of warming wall, and that beyond the entrance the high warming wall appears to continue down the side East Busk Lane (possibly for a total length of 250 m).
- The Summercross garden is the best remaining physical evidence of the lost orchards of Otley which must once have been of considerable economic significance to the town. The 1851 map suggest that these orchards totalled some 160,000 square yards (33 acres) in area. This represents some 43 square yards of orchard for each person then living in Otley.

**The Summercross in the Community**

- The Summercross is the only public facility that serves the substantial and relatively isolated community that lies in a ribbon along the Pool Road. It has been a focus for the community for 140 years, it predates most of the housing and is key to maintaining a vibrant and sustainable local community.
- As a consequence of frequently changing and remote ownership and disinterested management, the pub had been in decline for a number of years. Following another change of ownership it was briefly closed at the start of 2006. However, it subsequently re-opened with a committed new landlord who very successfully developed the business by re-establishing the former pivotal role of the Summercross within the local community. The landlord, with a profitable and growing trade, tried to exercise his option to renew the lease but was effectively forced out by procrastination and two further changes of ownership.
- To justify the closure the applicant has incorrectly claimed in a letter to the local MP that trade was declining and the landlord did not wish to renew the lease. They also claimed that areas like the bar, cellars and particularly the kitchens where "in a poor state of repair" and "certainly not fit for the preparation of food for the general public". These assertions are not true. The kitchen are in good condition the pub having been refurbished about ten years ago, the equipment was only three years old and the pub had the necessary Leeds City Council environmental health certificates for the preparation of food. The Summercross was awarded the prestigious Casque Mark accreditation for the quality of its beer keeping, the Black Sheep Flagsheep award for the high standard of its beers and the coveted Leeds CAMRA "most improved pub of the season" award. Note that in considering the impact of the proposed housing development on traffic levels, the application **Transport Statement** uses an estimate of pub traffic of 61 vehicles each way during the 12 hour peak period.
- Before the forced closure, the Summercross was a viable and buoyant business that served the local community. It has a good location, a sizable car park, a magnificent beer garden and is not competing for trade with the Otley town centre pubs. It could and should re-open as a successful pub serving the community.

**(2) I also object to planning application reference 08/00239/FU (housing) on the following grounds:****Conservation Area**

- The recommendations made in the application document **Arboricultural Survey** have been largely ignored. For example Conservation Area tree 2 (Sycamore) is to be removed and the fate of tree 6 (Pear) is unclear. Similarly, the constraints that the trees represent to development by the tree canopies and roots have been ignored (the tree canopies are incorrectly located and the root spreads are not even shown on the application drawings). The survey states that consideration should be given "to the effects of future growth within the context of the proposed development", "the potential nuisance caused by shading the new buildings both after construction and also once trees reach their ultimate size", "within the tree root protection area there should be a presumption against excavation, construction, or changes in ground level" and "the tree canopies of the park trees generally overhang the site therefore any development should be set back outside the estimated root protection areas and tree canopies which should be fenced off during construction". The locations of the new buildings and retaining walls and the proposed groundworks appear to disregard these recommendations.
- Other comments have been made under this heading in relation to planning application reference 08/00240/CA. Additionally, planning policy N19 states that "the string and scale of the buildings" should be "in harmony with adjoining buildings" which they are not. The houses have a natural store facing but there is extensive use of Artstone details.

**Traffic, parking and road safety**

- The development will clearly generate significantly more traffic than the "considerably fewer" than the existing site usage as predicted in the application **Transport Statement**. The site is well located for walking into town, but the distances are increased by (a) the discouraging footpath layout within the development, and (b) the local geography which considerably increases the as-the-crow-flies distances to the nearest primary and secondary schools. Additionally, the Otley bus service into Leeds (the main location of jobs for Otley) is regarded as poor. The houses have four bedrooms - similar houses on East Busk Lane have two or three cars per dwelling and each generates considerably more vehicle trips each-way than the predicted 2.9 average per 12 hour peak hour. The Summercross mainly serves the local community thus much of its custom arrives on foot.
- The design of the road network and the terraced houses in the immediate vicinity predate the car. East Busk Lane is a no through road that has experienced three substantial housing developments in recent years plus other lesser developments and business developments further down the lane. The net increase in traffic volumes on East Busk Lane has been very marked, with road safety now being a considerable concern. The junction of East Busk Lane with the Pool Road is dangerous, traffic habitually speed on that road while the bend in the road means that sight lines are poor for emerging traffic. Additionally, Ings Lane emerging right at this junction adding to the problems. The development will significantly add to the traffic at peak times.
- Danefield Terrace and East Busk Lane both have major parking problems due to the number of terraced dwellings without off-street parking. The new housing developments have very considerably added to the problem due to their high car per dwelling ratios, their limited off street parking and the reduction of available on-street parking spots. Both roads are frequently parked solid, with the on-street parking at the side of the Summercross frequently being used. This level of parking already has substantial road safety implications. The proposed development will eliminate the parking by the Summercross. Additionally, only one (small) garage and one parking spot (in front of the garage and with generally poor geometry) is proposed for the new development. Experience of the existing housing development demonstrates that people do not use the garages for their cars, thus parked cars spill out onto the street. The most recent housing development is similar to that proposed but each house has a garage and 1.5 better parking places per house yet cars are still regularly parked on the road.
- The popular right of way (formal evidence has been submitted) for pedestrians across the pub carpark from the junction of Danefield Terrace and Ings Lane to either East Busk Lane or Pool Road has been blocked and is not reinstated by the development. This forces pedestrians to walk along Ings Lane which has no footpath, is narrow and fenced, wet and leafy underfoot and forces pedestrians to walk near the Pool Road Junction.
- If built, the housing proposal will result in car parking chaos and increased road safety problems.

**Other**

- Relative to the existing usage, the ratio of roofed/paved areas to grass/garden appears to have increased significantly with no provision made for onsite storage of runoff. This raises sustainability and flooding concerns, particularly for lower lying properties such as those on Pool Road.
- Given the geometric and planning limitations, the proposed housing density is too high.

**(3) The comments on both planning applications are interlinked and thus they should be read in conjunction with each other.**