

61 Coast Road
Cushendall
Ballymena
Co Antrim
BT44 0RX

25-February-2024

Subject: LA01/2020/1390/F Planning Committee Report

Denise, Zoe and the Planning Office of Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council,

I refer to the Planning Committee Report LA01/2020/1390/F posted on the Planning Website. This report contains a number of material inaccuracies and unrealistic conditions.

I wish to ensure that the Planning Committee are made aware of the inaccurate content of the report produced by the Planning Office. Failure to bring such inaccuracies to the attention of the Planning Committee, who would be expected to rely upon this report for guidance and recommendations could be construed as negligent.

I request that the following inaccuracies are brought to the attention of the members of the Planning Committee.

1. Height of Proposed Distillery

8.17 of the Planning Report states that the building is 2-storey with a ridge height of 9.5m.

8.20 of the Planning Report states that the proposed ridge level will be approximately 1.3m above the ridge level of No 61 Coast Road. A reduction in height of 1m of the section of buildings closest to this dwelling was also requested to ensure the scale and design is appropriate to the setting.

No such reduction has been included in the plans at any stage. The request from the Planning Office has been ignored. Further this one metre reduction is not in the conditions listed with the Planning Report.

I request that the Planning Office insist that their height reduction request is incorporated into site plans.

2. Use of First floor function space

8.26 of the Planning Report states that 'It is advised that the first-floor function space will not be used for entertainment purposes. A condition is recommended in line with this (Condition no. 23).'

Condition 23 only addresses Hours of Use and there are no conditions on Purpose of Use.

I request that the Planning Office correct Condition 23 to reflect their earlier statement limiting purpose of use.

3. Use of bar and function space

8.40 states that 'The bar/function space is to be used for corporate events which will promote the distillery.'

There is no restriction on use within the conditions outlined in the report thus making use of function space unrestricted. I request that the Conditions appropriately reflect the restricted use to prevent abuse.

4. Insufficient Parking

8.43 of the Planning Report states that parking has been provided on site with 23 car parking spaces and space for 1 coach. 'Parking Standards' require a total parking requirement of 58 spaces, a shortfall of 35 spaces. The report states that overspill car parking is provided at the GAA Club on an unrestricted basis. Letters have been provided from the GAA Club confirming full access during opening hours.

Condition 8 states that additional parking provided by Ruairi Og CLG shall not be used for any purpose other than the parking and such areas shall remain free of obstruction for such use at all times.

The Planning Report also refers to a Bowling Green on page 35 which was discontinued 23 years ago and where a gym has recently been built.

Given the recent change in usage and reduction in parking available on the GAA grounds, an assurance should be sought from the GAA Club in advance of Planning Permission being granted, to confirm that 'such areas shall not be used for any purpose other than parking and such areas shall remain free of obstruction for use at all times.' Please note that car access to the grounds is restricted when gates are locked and when some matches are being played. The letter from Chairperson of the GAA club, dated 15 Oct 2021, pre-dates the construction of the gym and the introduction of the new gates.

Also, 8.43 refers to 'pedestrian crossing points in place' on the Coast Road. Please can you identify where such crossing points are? I am not aware of any Zebra, Pelican, Puffin, Toucan or Pegasus crossings in the vicinity.

5. Hazardous Substances

Condition 30 states that the maximum aggregate quantity of hazardous substances (Alcohol) that may be present at the site at any one time shall not exceed 40 tonnes. This incorporates the agent's assertion that the total tonnage of alcohol to be held on site at any one time will be 36.15 tonnes.

The agent's assertion directly contradicts information from the distillery website confirming that 300 founders' casks will be displayed in the Founders' Cask Room. The tonnage of alcohol alone within Founders' Casks is conservatively calculated at 53.58 tonnes (300 casks x 190 litres x 0.94 kg/litre density).

Additional tonnage would arise from alcohol held within the bar, gift shop as well as alcohol produced by distillation.

It is remiss and negligent of the Planning Office to not take safety matters controlled by the Planning (Hazardous Substances) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1993 seriously. A proper independent safety assessment should be conducted rather than relying upon the word of an unqualified, conflicted agent.

6. Cooling Tower operation

I note the Planning Office's restriction that the Cooling Tower must not operate outside of daytime hours. RSK observed is an earlier submission to the Planning Office that, in their experience, cooling towers do run 24/7.

I therefore request that Condition 25, requiring a noise verification report being submitted, within one month of operations commencing, also confirms that the Cooling Tower and the Oil-Fired Steam Boiler are not operational outside of the restricted hours covered in Condition 15

7. External lighting

I request as with Conditions 27 and 28, relating to investigating noise and odour breaches, that a suitable condition covering the investigation of light breaches is included, particularly in relation to satisfaction of Condition 5 on external lighting.

8. Balcony Usage

8.20 of the Planning Report states that the use of the balconies will be limited and controlled by way of condition.

Condition 21 refers to 'The Balcony Area'. There are two separate balconies and Condition 21 should refer to balcony areas to avoid any confusion and abuse.

Many thanks for your consideration and I await your response.

Patrick Clerkin