

**PRESS RELEASE FROM THE SAVE THE CABINET ACTION GROUP**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 25 February 2019**

**Villagers' fury at new planning applications on village pub**

Just two months after plans to turn the 400-year-old Cabinet pub in Reed into a house were refused after a Public Inquiry, two new planning applications have been submitted.

The latest scheme is to split The Cabinet into two. The smaller part would be a three-room pub, while the larger part would be a residence. A small car park would be built to serve the pub. The owner has offered the three rooms to the Parish Council at a peppercorn rent.

But the proposal has been greeted with scepticism and fury by Reed villagers. Mike Howes, chair of the Save the Cabinet Action Group, said

“This is a scheme designed to fail. It would be a pale shadow of the old Cabinet that we all love. A tiny pub without any facilities for preparing food and with nowhere for a tenant or manager to live would not last long.

“Nobody should imagine that the owner has suddenly been converted to the Save the Cabinet cause. This is a ruse designed to deliver the money-making scheme he’s been pushing forward all along – to make the whole of The Cabinet into a house, and to build on the existing car park too.”

The Cabinet was originally turned into a house without planning permission or listed building consent. Retrospective applications were made in September 2016. Permission for change of use was refused on appeal in December 2018 after a three-day Public Inquiry. The Action Group raised over £20,000 in donations to resist the appeal.

In January, the owner put The Cabinet up for sale or to rent. But the Action Group argued that the asking price of £595,000 was vastly more than the true market value given in evidence at the Public Inquiry.

Mike Howes added

“After all the effort and the generosity by the Reed community in resisting the planning appeal, this latest application feels like a kick in the teeth. We trust the local planning authority, North Herts District Council, will see straight through it.”

Reed Parish Council has invited villagers to attend a meeting at Reed Village Hall on Wednesday 6 March (8pm) to discuss the application.

Interested parties have until 12 March to submit comments to NHDC.

For more information about the campaign to save The Cabinet, see the Action Group’s website: [www.savethecabinet.uk](http://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, 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 lodged an appeal against refusal of permission for change of use. The appeal was heard by a planning inspector independent of North Herts District Council.

The Planning Inspectorate, which determines such appeals independently of planning authorities, decided to decide this appeal by way of a Public Inquiry. This is a formal procedure with similarities to a court process. The Save the Cabinet Action Group was granted “Rule 6 status”, which allows it to be represented at the appeal and have equivalent status to the principal parties – the appellant and the District Council.

On 10 December 2018 the appeal was dismissed.

Two new applications were submitted in February 2019. The first would subdivide The Cabinet in two and provide for a new, small, car park at the northern end of the building. The second would cover associated listed building consent and aim to regularise the listed building implications of the unauthorised works already carried out.

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

More information is available on the Action Group’s web site [www.savethecabinet.uk](http://www.savethecabinet.uk).

The Action Group is also on Facebook, “Save the Cabinet at Reed”, and Twitter @SaveTheCabinet.