

From: Britney Ross

Sent: Tuesday, November 22, 2022 12:09 pm

To: Yvonne Boyle

Subject: URGENT - Planning Permission The Atlantic Bar

Dear Yvonne,

I am writing to you today to inform you of my firm opposition to the building of a new luxury hotel on the site of the Atlantic bar in Portrush.

The Atlantic is a vibrant part of the local culture and has been part of the music scene on the north coast for decades, many have fond memories of listening to local talent, or playing their first gigs there.

The building of a new hotel on the site of the Atlantic would be a disappointment to so many in the community and would leave a permanent scar on local culture. In addition, the hotel would not provide enough jobs to replace those lost at the Atlantic, and the lack of space for parking will cause traffic nightmares in the summer.

I would greatly appreciate it if you brought up this issue at the council or to other party members, the Atlantic is an important part of the community, and many would be deeply saddened by its loss.

I have attached a pdf highlighting my firm opposition to this proposal.

Kind regards,
Britney Ross

22/11/2022

Dear Sir / Madam,

My name is Britney Ross and I am a local resident in Portrush. I am writing to you with regards to the recently passed Planning Permission for a proposed hotel redevelopment of the Atlantic Bar and former Londonderry Hotel in Portrush. I understand the matter will be returned to the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council for consideration during a meeting on 23rd November 2022.

In the past, the proposal received 127 objections from the public and only 18 notifications of support. A petition titled 'Save The Atlantic' currently has 2,478 signatures and is increasing greatly on a daily basis. It is something heavily opposed by the locals and beyond. It is now a public matter.

Below, I have copied in the matters which 2,478 people have agreed with, in demonstrating their support for the petition. **The following matters have been written by the petition author and conveniently lay out the public's concerns.**

The Appearance

The Hotel frontage and Atlantic sidebar windows have so much character and add so much to Portrush that a 3-5 storey hotel will not provide. The building is currently listed but even introducing a taller building that looks similar in its place will remove that character from the main street and the Historic Environment Division objected to this proposal.

The heights and scale, massing and elevational treatment and roof profile of the proposal bears no relation to the adjacent and surrounding buildings and streetscape nor the townscape character of Portrush. A 5-storey development is out of scale in relation to the 2 storey residential properties on Atlantic Avenue and the 2 storey residential properties and garages on the junction of Atlantic Avenue/Mark Street Lane. Historic Buildings. It is out of scale and overbearing towards the adjoining 2.5 storey Listed Building of the Whitehouse department store, the Listed Buildings of Holy Trinity Parish Church & hall and the Northern Bank building.

Parking

No provision for parking for guests or staff. There is no space for an additional 130 car parking spaces. The Car Parking Statement submitted alongside the application highlights that 151no. Parking spaces would be the maximum requirement for hotel development of this size when fully occupied. The proposal has not demonstrated how it will promote the use of alternative modes of transport beyond the private car and also makes reference to the use of on-street parking on Kerr Street, Mark Street and Main Street which already operate at capacity during peak times of the year when the hotel is likely to be fully occupied. There is no vehicular access, accessible parking and/or drop-off, general drop-off or goods delivery within the curtilage of the application site. The current proposals do not address where hotel guests arriving by taxi etc. will be dropped off without impeding the flow of traffic on Main Street or blocking traffic completely on Atlantic Avenue.

Logistics / Town congestion / Disturbance to residents

Logistics wise the current proposal allows for deliveries to be made via a door opening onto Mark Street Lane which is not a public highway and current owners/occupiers of properties on Mark Street and Main Street have a right of way along it to access their properties, garages, car parking etc. The proposed application outlines that the average number of goods vehicles attending the premises will increase from 1 to 5 deliveries a day. As Mark Street Lane is a narrow, single-lane carriageway deliveries will not be possible without blocking access to the lane completely.

Amenities

The provision of amenities such as goods in and bin stores would be on Mark Street Lane which is narrow and continuously in use giving access to apartments and businesses, frequent deliveries and the presence of large bin storage will increase noise and odour in the area. There are other sites more suitable for building a hotel and it would be better to use a derelict site, such as the old Eglinton Hotel site, or the vacant properties near the Lansdowne.

Job prospects

The existing building should be retained and utilised and the current business is still open and providing services for the local community and those who visit Portrush. The proposed 30+ new jobs would not outweigh the number of jobs lost at the current premises: bar staff, door staff, management staff, DJ's, musicians etc.

Music and Local Community

The Atlantic Bar and Lounge has provided a space for musicians and performers alike, particularly young people interested in music who often play their first gigs there. The Atlantic also provides a venue for The Atlantic Sessions which is an annual event on the North Coast, attracting attendees from across the island, as well as they provide a space for charities to hold fundraising events.

This is one of the only music venues in the area, its loss would mean that locals will have to travel to Belfast or L'Derry to find similar events which isn't an attractive option due to many trains and buses ending their service after 11pm. Moreover, this would force many of the creative talents to move out of Portrush towards the cities. The Atlantic Bar and Lounge is a unique venue which welcomes all members of the community as it promotes equality and diversity and it is one of the only bars on the north coast to welcome drag performances. It is paramount to the social cohesion of Portrush.

Question of 'Growth' to the community?

The suggestion that this proposal will bring growth to the community is questionable. Andras are currently hiring for housekeeping team members at £10 an hour in Ibis City Centre Belfast. The average rent in Portrush is £700 - if there is rental accommodation available. What is the likelihood of 30+ jobs in Portrush and where will these people live if we don't have affordable housing? Hotels in the area already struggle in the winter with some even closing during the week. Recently the Premier Inn in Coleraine and the York in Portstewart have announced closures and hospitality is not attractive as even the British

Government's figures have found that 83% of hospitality businesses report difficulties with recruitment.

Further to these arguments, which I wholly agree with, I would like to add my own personal note.

Gentrification

In the recent years, locals have watched the gentrification of Portrush. As a result of apartments and hotel accommodations being built instead of investing in the housing crisis, local residents are being forced to move, and we cannot welcome anyone as residents as there is insufficient housing. Voting against this proposal would be a landmark decision in showing the support for the local community and wider area, in demonstrating that hotel and apartment facilities in Portrush currently stand as more than adequate.

Hospitality Sector

As a local, I see the hospitality sector struggle during the winter, and only truly benefit from the May - September period. Current hotels include the Royal Court, Portrush Atlantic Hotel, the Adelphi, the Port Hotel, the Golflinks Hotel, the Magherbuoy House Hotel and large BnB's including Albany Lodge and Beulah Guest House.

The Live Music Scene

Music is what the North Coast is known for. The Atlantic Bar is home to every genre, from dance, rock, acoustic, classical. There is something for everyone. It has provided a stage for new up and coming, and grassroots bands to build confidence and make a name for themselves. Voting in favour of this proposal is taking opportunities away from these musicians.

The Local Community

The Atlantic Bar provides a hub for the locals. It has been home to many charity events and fundraisers. If you have an idea for an event, it is always taken on board. It provides an all-inclusive environment for all ages, and it is a dog-friendly establishment. For some people, their visit to the Atlantic is the only social interaction they have. Since Covid, people have forgotten the importance of socialising, catching up with friends and being within good company.

Crucially, it is the only bar in Portrush to hold 'drag' nights, providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for the LGBTQ+ community on the North Coast. Further, it has demonstrated ongoing support to two major sports undertaken in Portrush; surf and sport. Notably, showing support to the Causeway Association of Urban Sports through providing skateboard racks for local skaters, and holding an event for the launch of Rawee, a North Coast founded skate brand. In addition, events are held during the weeks of the surf competition.

This Hotel Redevelopment proposal is removing the heart from the community of Portrush.

Speaking on behalf of the locals, we have faith in you, as a member of the Council to vote in opposition of this proposal, and trust that your vote will have the community's interests at heart.

Yours Sincerely,



Britney Ross