Minister urged to save high street pubs

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Campaign

Damaging new government proposals could see thousands of pubs turned over to developers. In 2017, CAMRA helped pubs in England gain landmark protection, giving communities the right to have their say through the planning process before a pub is converted or demolished.  Now this protection is at risk from a new scheme being proposed as part of the government’s levelling-up plans. The High Street Rental Auction scheme aims to bring empty buildings, including pubs, back into use, by letting councils auction off the lease. These leases would allow pubs to be converted to other uses, divided into multiple units, or gutted of their bars, cellars or other integral features. There would be no obligation to reinstate the pubs fittings at the end of the lease – in fact developers would be able to apply to make the conversion permanent. This could be devastating for urban pubs, and CAMRA national chairman, Nik Antona (above) has written to the minister for Levelling Up Dehenna Davison to ask her to think again about these plans. Nik Antona said: “The goal of bringing disused pubs back into use is one shared by CAMRA, but it is vital that High Street Rental Auctions are used to support and rejuvenate urban pubs, not to turn valued community venues over to the highest bidder. “We know that pubs can increase and expand footfall on the high street, and give communities a place to come together, but we need government to understand this too. “I’ve asked the minister to ensure pubs keep their planning protections under this scheme, so that communities can still have their say.” Full details of the campaign and a link to CAMRA’s easy-to-use e-lobby tool are available at: http://camra.org.uk/saveourpubs