# Councillors push to restore historic Royal Oak Hotel name in Sevenoaks



Councillors in Kent are advocating for the reinstatement of the historic name of a hotel that has been converted into six flats, highlighting concerns over the potential erasure of over 300 years of local history. The Royal Oak Hotel, situated on the High Street in Sevenoaks, has been a significant landmark in the town since at least 1775. Its historical value was recently defended by Sevenoaks Town Council after it was announced that the new residential flats would be designated as Flats 1-6, Hanover House.

The council has expressed its "surprise and deep disappointment" over the decision to remove the name associated with the Royal Oak Hotel. As stated in a recent council communication, the Royal Oak is deemed an important "landmark and reminder of the town's heritage." The hotel is not only known for its name but also for its storied past; it was built in the 18th century as a coaching inn and once hosted Queen Victoria during her visit to nearby Knole.

Sevenoaks History Hub contributes to the narrative by noting the significance of the Royal Oak, describing it as a "grand and important building" within the heart of the town. According to a former employee interviewed in the 1980s, the establishment was regularly busy, with its bar and restaurant bustling with patrons.

Despite the hotel's closure, its website remains operational and advertises its prior offerings, including 41 rooms. The site had previously caught attention for its dilapidated condition, having been sold in 2015 for £2.65 million and subsequently re-listed for sale in 2023.

In response to the naming decision, Sevenoaks Town Council has officially reached out to Sevenoaks District Council, the local planning authority, urging a reconsideration of the naming choice in favour of restoring the Royal Oak moniker. The council's statement reflects dissatisfaction with the justification provided by the district concerning the removal of the name. District Council reasoning highlighted that the potential confusion with nearby properties, such as "Royal Oak Mews" and "Royal Oak House, 5 High Street," posed a risk to the safety of residents, including delays for emergency services and deliveries.

The district council referenced its own policy stipulations, which prevent using names that are similar to existing property names in close proximity. This is to avoid complications regarding delivery and emergency response which the council stated it "takes very seriously."

As the situation unfolds, KentLive has reached out to both the district council and developer Mopdev Ltd for further comments regarding the ongoing debate over the historic name of the Royal Oak Hotel.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <http://www.dover-kent.com/2014-project/Royal-Oak-Hotel-Sevenoaks.html> - This resource supports the claim that the Royal Oak Hotel is a historical landmark in Sevenoaks, having been built in the 18th century as a coaching inn and hosting notable figures like Queen Victoria.
* <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1086018> - This URL confirms that the Royal Oak Hotel is a listed building, emphasizing its historical significance as recognized by the National Heritage List for England.
* <https://www.sevenoakssociety.co.uk/upper-high-street-west/250-royal-oak-hotel> - The Royal Oak Hotel's historical role as a former inn and its architectural features are detailed here, supporting its importance in Sevenoaks' heritage.
* <https://postcardhistory.net/2025/01/seven-oaks-and-more/> - This article does not directly address the Royal Oak Hotel's naming issue but provides historical context about Sevenoaks, which is relevant to understanding the broader historical significance of the town.
* <https://www.noahwire.com> - This source mentions the dispute over the naming of the former Royal Oak Hotel, highlighting concerns from local councils and historical preservation groups.