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Date: 10/01/2025

Planning Service
Wrexham County Borough Council
16 Lord Street
WREXHAM
LL12 8TY

Dear Sir/Madam

PROPOSED INSTALLATION OF EXTERNAL FREESTANDING TIMBER BAR STRUCTURE (RETROSPECTIVE) AT PANT YR OCHAIN, OLD WREXHAM ROAD, GRESFORD, WREXHAM, LL12 8TY.

Please find enclosed a planning application for the proposed installation of an external freestanding timber bar structure within the grounds of a public house/restaurant at the Pant yr Ochain, Old Wrexham Road, Gresford, Wrexham, LL12 8TY.

This application is accompanied by a Heritage Statement, a Design and Access Statement, together with the necessary Design Statement, Access Statement and application drawings and details.

Site and surroundings

The application site comprises existing public house/restaurant premises which trade as the Pant yr Ochain, on the Old Wrexham Road in Gresford. The application building is a grade II listed building. The application site is located outside of the designated Gresford Conservation Area.

The application site is situated beyond the edge of Gresford. The application site has a generous curtilage area, which includes established mature landscaping and car parking areas.

The public house/restaurant adjoins a working farm of the same name. Other neighbouring properties are set at some distance from the public house/restaurant.

Proposals

The applicant is seeking permission for the proposed installation of an external freestanding timber bar structure within the grounds of a public house/restaurant. The application is made retrospectively. The external bar structure was installed on site in September 2024, but this facility has not yet been used by the applicant. The application proposals are detailed in the accompanying application drawings.

The external freestanding timber bar structure is to be used as part of the public house/restaurant's operation and is intended to take pressure off the main bar serveries, within the public house/restaurant premises themselves, when the public house/restaurant is especially busy, particularly within the summer months, when the garden area is popular with customers.

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Assessment

The implications of the application proposal upon the setting of the host listed building itself are considered to be acceptable. The application proposal is modest in size, appropriately designed and has traditional materials for such garden structures. The external bar structure is also sympathetically sited to the rear of the main public house/restaurant building, within a well-established and mature landscape setting. Overall, it is considered that the existing character and appearance of the site and the setting of the listed building itself are respected by the external bar structure. Given that the external bar structure is also freestanding, there are no consequential implications for the historic fabric of the host listed building. The external bar structure also does not have any substantial foundations. Consequently, there has been no significant implications for any on-site trees and their root systems.

The potential heritage impacts of the proposal are addressed in more detail within the accompanying Heritage Statement. The heritage implications of the application proposal are considered to be appropriate. It is therefore considered that there are no reasonable grounds, in terms of heritage impacts, to withhold the granting of planning permission in this case. For these reasons, it is considered that any proportionate and reasonable assessment of the application proposal, against this adopted planning policy context, would conclude that there was no material conflict caused, given the modest nature and extent of the application proposals.

The proposals are considered to be supported by the requirements of Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12 – February 2024). The primary objective of Planning Policy Wales (PPW) is to ensure that the planning system contributes towards the delivery of sustainable development and improves the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales (paragraph 1.2). PPW is clear that the planning system should be efficient, effective and simple in operation. It is not the function of the planning system to interfere with or inhibit competition between users of and investors in land (paragraph 1.19).

PPW adds that development management is the positive and proactive approach to shaping, considering, determining and delivering development proposals through the process of deciding planning applications. It is led by the planning authority, working collaboratively with those proposing developments and other stakeholders including the local community. It must be undertaken in the spirit of partnership and inclusiveness (using the five ways of working) and supports the delivery of key priorities and outcomes (contributing to improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being) (paragraph 1.30).

PPW also requires that the planning system creates sustainable places which are attractive, sociable, accessible, active, secure, welcoming, healthy and friendly. Development proposals should create the conditions to bring people together, making them want to live, work and play in areas with a sense of place and well-being, creating prosperity for all (paragraph 2.3).

The key planning principles of PPW are listed in its Figure 4 (page 17). These include growing the economy in a sustainable manner. PPW elaborates that the planning system should enable development which contributes to long term economic well-being, making the best use of existing infrastructure and planning for new supporting infrastructure and services. Also included within Figure 4 is the key planning principle to maximise environmental protection, stating that historic assets must be protected, promoted, conserved and enhanced.

Section 4 of the PPW addresses active and social places. Active and Social Places are those which promote social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being by providing well-connected cohesive communities. PPW seeks the diversifying of retail and commercial centres, so they can adapt to future retail trends, so that they can continue to meet the needs of their local communities. PPW seeks to enable sustainable access to employment, shopping, education, health, community and leisure facilities, amongst others, maximising opportunities for community development and social welfare; along with the goal to capitalise on existing retail and commercial centres as hubs of social and economic activity and the focal point for a diverse range of other services supporting the needs of local communities and their wider catchments (all Section 4 introduction, pages 42-45).

PPW also addresses the historic environment within section 6.1. The planning system must take into account the Welsh Government's objectives to protect, conserve, promote and enhance the historic environment as a resource for the general well-being of present and future generations. The historic environment is a finite, non-renewable and shared resource and a vital and integral part of the historical

and cultural identity of Wales. It contributes to economic vitality and culture, civic pride, local distinctiveness and the quality of Welsh life. The historic environment can only be maintained as a resource for future generations if the individual historic assets are protected and conserved (paragraph 6.1.5). Specifically, regarding listed buildings, PPW seeks to safeguard the character of historic buildings and manage change so that their special architectural and historic interest is preserved. Specifically, regarding conservation areas, PPW seeks to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of conservation areas, whilst the same time helping them remain vibrant and prosperous (paragraph 6.1.6). The application of planning and listed building controls should recognise the need for flexibility where new uses have to be considered in order to secure a building's survival or provide it with a sound economic future (paragraph 6.1.11). There should be a general presumption in favour of the preservation or enhancement of the character or appearance of conservation areas or their settings (paragraph 6.1.14).

It is also considered that the application proposal does not conflict with any relevant adopted local planning policy for this site. The adopted local plan for the application site is the Wrexham Local Development Plan (LDP), which was adopted on 20/12/2023.

Policy SP12 of the LDP addresses design principles. This policy requires all developments to be of a high quality, sustainable design which makes a positive contribution to the creation of locally distinctive places.

Policy SP15 of the LDP concerns the historic and cultural environment. This policy states that development will only be supported where it conserves, protects, preserves or enhances listed buildings.

Policy NE3 of the LDP covers trees, woodlands and hedgerows. This policy states that development will only be permitted where it does not cause unacceptable harm to trees, woodlands and hedgerows of significant public amenity, natural or cultural heritage value or those that provide important ecosystem services.

Policy DM1 of the LDP addresses development management considerations. This policy requires that development proposals accord with or enhance the character, local distinctiveness and appearance of the site, existing buildings and surrounding landscape/townscape in terms of their siting, layout, scale, height, design, density, use of materials and landscaping. Development proposals must also not have an unacceptable effect on the amenity of the occupiers of nearby properties.

For all of the reasons rehearsed above, the application proposal is considered to respect the visual amenity of the local area, the appearance and setting of the host listed building and the character and appearance of the local street scene.

The external freestanding bar structure is simply to provide some modest additional bar servery capacity at the site during busy periods of customer demand for refreshments. The external bar will be an essential element of the applicant's strategy to attract custom to ensure the continued economic viability of this commercial social and leisure facility provided by this public house/restaurant. The external bar structure is necessary in order to allow the applicant's business to continue to attract custom for their established commercial venture at this site; to facilitate the continuing economic health of this alternative beneficial use of these listed premises for an appropriate, publicly accessible, community social use, which ensures their ongoing maintenance and upkeep. The proposed external bar structure will help to facilitate the appropriate continued use of these premises for a use which will continue to add to and enhance the vitality within the local Gresford area.

The use of the application premises is also an important commercial food and drink led leisure facility within the Gresford area, providing an appropriate commercial social community venue, which serves the local resident population and visitors to the Gresford area.

The amenities of the local area will not be detrimentally affected by the proposed external bar structure. This rear garden area of the application site is already in use for public house/restaurant use, for customer use and the external seating of customers. The external bar facility will simply support the existing function of the public house/restaurant on this site and will not result in any change of use nor intensification in use of the grounds of the public house/restaurant from their existing use and operation.

For all of the reasons rehearsed above, the application proposal is considered to result in an appropriate addition to the site, which respects the visual amenity of the local area, the appearance and setting of the host listed building and the character and appearance of the local street scene.

It is therefore considered that the proposed external bar structure is actively supported by PPW and does not conflict with the general aims and aspirations of adopted local planning policy context.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is considered that the proposed external bar structure would respect the character, appearance and setting of the host listed building and the local street scene. The application proposal will also help ensure the continued economic use of this site and its continued function as an appropriate commercial food and drink led leisure use, which adds to the vitality and viability of the local Gresford area in general, without compromising the visual amenities of the wider area.

In the above circumstances, it is hoped that officers can support the proposal as submitted.

If you need any clarification of the applications' proposals, or require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours faithfully,

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