

HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT ACCESS STATEMENT

Proposed internal and external alterations and refurbishment works to a Grade II Listed Building

THE LONG PULL (PH)
5 Chester Street
Wrexham
LL13 8BD

November 2021



1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This assessment has been carried out in order to determine the impact of proposed alteration and refurbishment works on a Grade II Listed Building situated within a Conservation Area. The appraisal is concerned with the process of conserving the special architectural and historic interest of the building and preserving or enhancing the distinctive character and appearance of the Conservation Area

1.2 This appraisal has been conducted in accordance with the general guidelines set out in British Standard 7913:2013 'Guide to the Conservation of Historic Buildings' and in particular responds to policies outlined in the Planning Policy Wales 2021 (PPW). With respect to Listed Buildings, paragraph 6.5.11 states:

For any development proposal affecting a listed building or its setting, the primary material consideration is the statutory requirement to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building, or its setting, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

With respect to Conservation Areas, Paragraph 6.2.1 sets out the objectives of the Welsh Government, which are to:

- *Conserve and enhance the historic environment, which is a finite and non-renewable resource and a vital and integral part of the historical and cultural identity of Wales.*
- *Preserve or enhance the character or appearance of conservation areas, while at the same time helping them to remain vibrant and prosperous*

1.3 Significance has been assessed in accordance with guidance as set out in CADW document entitled 'Conservation Principles for the sustainable management of the historic environment in Wales'. Guidance has also been sought from the CADW document entitled 'Managing Change to Listed Buildings in Wales' (2017).

1.4 Planning policy for Wrexham comprises the 'Unitary Development Plan 1996 - 2011' which was adopted in 2005 and remains extant until its replacement Local Development Plan is adopted (currently under review). With respect to Listed Buildings, Policy EC9 Listed Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest out that:

Alterations or additions to, and development or redevelopment within the curtilage of, buildings or structures listed as of special architectural or historic interest must respect the setting and character of the listed buildings or structures.

1.5 With regards to Conservation Areas, Policy EC7 Conservation Areas sets out that:

Within, and in close proximity to, conservation areas, the priority will be to preserve and/ or enhance those buildings, structures, streets, trees, open spaces, archaeological remains, views, and other elements which contribute to the unique character of the area. New buildings

and alterations or additions to existing buildings in conservation areas, whether listed as of special architectural or historic interest or not, must reflect the design and character of the area as a whole and the form, scale, detailing and materials of existing buildings.

1.6 Key objectives for developments within the town centre are set out in the 'Wrexham Town Centre Masterplan', those objectives being to:

- 1. Improve the identity of the town centre The town centre needs a unique selling point with a rounded mix of attractions to become a strong and attractive destination with a positive identity. Important elements in achieving this are heritage, local distinctiveness, local culture and arts, good design/built environment and place making.*
- 2. Improve the visitor experience Increase the vitality and viability of the town centre through improved visitor attractions such as arts and culture, events, leisure, facilities for families and through an attractive, safe, vibrant, high quality, clean and well maintained environment.*
- 3. Improve town centre accessibility, both into the town and circulation within the town. The town centre needs to be accessible to all visitors and residents by a range of transport options that support sustainable development. The town centre should be accessible by walking and cycling by residents living adjacent to the centre. Once within the town people should be able to move around safely and pleasantly by using the most sustainable modes of transport, with walking, cycling and public transport taking priority. Navigation around the town should be legible through good design of buildings and of the public realm and through signage.*
- 4. Improve the evening economy An active town centre beyond the daytime shopping hours will improve the town's vitality and viability, help stimulate investment, increase footfall and improve perceptions of safety. Improving the diversity of evening and night-time uses such as leisure, restaurants and small local convenience stores can make the town more attractive to a wider audience including families, couples, elderly, professionals etc.*
- 5. Provide opportunities for town centre living Provide a range of attractive housing choices within the town centre through the re-use of vacant or underused land and the conversion of vacant office space above retail units.*
- 6. Accommodate the needs of a growing population Provide a range of facilities within the town centre needed to sustain a diverse community within an environment in which it is desirable to live and play e.g. health, schools, nurseries, sustainable transport options, multi-functional recreational spaces and leisure facilities.*
- 7. Provide opportunities to improve green infrastructure Green infrastructure such as parks, gardens, trees and landscaping are important for people's health and wellbeing,*

mitigating the impacts of climate change, encouraging walking and cycling and thereby increasing footfall, reducing the causes of global warming and providing attractive places to live and visit. Ways to enhance existing infrastructure and provide new will be supported, as will improved connections and linkages into residential town centre urban populations.

- 1.7 The author Daniel Waugh has over 30 years' experience working with historic buildings. He studied a Master of Science Degree in Architectural Conservation at the University of Central Lancashire and still has an active role in promoting the course. He is a member of the Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists and a member of the Institute for Historic Building Conservation in addition to being a member of The Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain.
- 1.8 A visual inspection of the site and surrounding areas was carried out in October 2021. Background research was conducted with reference to the Wrexham interactive planning service, historic mapping databases, archived material, and through discussions held with the applicant. The assessment of the proposals will be conducted with reference to a range of texts, particularly the CADW good practise guides and Wrexham Planning Guidance Note 4.
- 1.9 The following drawings have been assessed in preparation of this report:

RCA Interiors

1526	P01	Site Location Plan
	P02	Existing Ground and First Floor Plans
	P03	Existing Basement and Second Floor Plans
	P04	Proposed Ground and First Floor Plans

2.0 LOCATION AND SITE INFORMATION

- 2.1 The Long Pull (the building) is a mid C19th Public House formerly and originally known as The Old Vaults. The building has a footprint of 184m² (1,980ft²) and occupies a plot of 230m² (2475ft²) at the junction of Chester Street and Henblas Street at National Grid Reference SJ 33617 50288.
- 2.2 The building is an operating Public House at ground floor level with ancillary cellars and accommodation to the first and second floors. The upper floors are presently not in use.
- 2.3 The building is a designated heritage asset (Grade II Listed Building) and lies within the Chester Street and Yorke Street Character Zone of the Wrexham Town Centre Conservation Area.
- 2.4 Listing Description
- | | |
|---------------|------|
| List entry No | 1822 |
|---------------|------|

Grade II

Date Listed 31st January 1994

History

Public House, probably purpose-built as a redevelopment of the site (not shown on the Tithe Map of 1846), c1850-60.

Exterior

Render over brick with dressings stressed through contrasting colour, and hipped slate roof with axial stacks. 3 storeyed, 3-window range to Chester Street, and 2-window return to Henblas Street, together with a single window range extension in the same style, though separately roofed (and possibly representing the refronting of a formerly separate building). Chester Street elevation has central doorway with a further entrance to the left. Both have 4-panelled doors with overlights set in moulded architraves with scrolled brackets to entablature hoods. Wide windows (the glazing renewed) in moulded architraves flank the central entrance. Upper storeys have stressed quoins to angles, and continuous sill bands with moulded brackets. Windows are all set in moulded architraves, and are 4-pane sashes to first floor, and casements with margin lights in upper storey. Paired modillion brackets to eaves cornice. Henblas Street elevation is similarly detailed, and has entrance towards corner with Chester Street, and a separate entrance to rear bar towards the right.

Reason for designation

Listed as a typical example of mid C19 public house architecture which retains much of its original character.

3.0 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

- 3.1 The building is acknowledged as dating from the mid C19th and as such holds moderate historic interest by virtue of its age. It is also representative of a significant period both in terms of local and national history which gives it illustrative interest and being a public house, it will hold some communal value.
- 3.2 The building retains its original and historic use and remains little altered externally and therefore holds moderate archaeological (evidential) interest. Internally the building has received significant intervention as is typical with public houses. There remains nothing evident of value at ground floor level in terms of finishes and fixtures although historic plan form is broadly legible.
- 3.3 Upper floors have been altered with some new partitioning and structural change, but the first and second floors offer more in the way of evidence to allow for interpretation of the building's original layout.
- 3.4 The building is a mid C19th building, late Georgian in style and on the polite scale. The exterior of the building has received a paint finish to much of the original stonework but it's architectural

character remains and it is an impressive building. The building is also a local landmark and due to its architectural value and prominence, it is a significant contributor to the distinctive character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

4.0 PROPOSAL OVERVIEW

4.1 The proposals essentially comprise a complete refurbishment scheme to the ground floor with some structural alterations. The purpose of the proposals is clearly to bring what appears to be a tired and dated public house up to modern hospitality standards in order to provide for a secure and viable commercial future. The proposals can be summarised as follows:

1. Structural alterations and plan changes – The proposals seek to provide a larger public area and improved access to the external area to the rear by way of rearranging the existing toilets and demolishing a lateral structural wall which appears to have previously had a chimney breast and fireplace.
Additionally, the original Yard which has been previously partially enclosed, is to be fully enclosed in order to provide additional space for the new toilet facilities.
Minor plan changes are proposed at first floor level with the removal of some modern partitioning.
2. New joinery fixtures and fittings – The proposals include for a new larger bar-servery and backfitting which is to be broadly in the same location as the existing unit. Other proposals include the installation of new fixed seating and drinks shelves and new sanitaryware to the toilet areas.
3. Redecoration and cosmetic refurbishment – No details have been provided for assessment but the proposals are limited to redecoration of existing wall and ceiling finishes, new decorative and non-decorative flooring and new tiling to the toilet areas together with replacement light fittings.
4. Upper floor accommodation – The upper floors are currently vacant and will be redecorated and generally refurbished in order to bring them back up to habitable standards, presumably for an onsite manager.
5. Repairs – There is significant evidence of roof leaks, gaps in flashings and abutments and consequential damage to walls and ceilings. No further details have been provided but the repair of these elements forms part of the proposals.
6. External works – The proposals comprise redecoration of the facades to the Chester Street and Henblas Street elevations including new paint finishes to the existing walls, stonework, windows and doors.

5.0 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 An assessment of the proposals summarised above has been carried out with consideration given to the following:

Impact - Consideration of the effects of the proposal on authenticity and integrity of the heritage values attributed to the building.

Reversibility - Consideration is given to the ease of reversibility so as not to prejudice alternative future solutions.

Mitigation - Consideration of the necessity mitigate the impact of loss of any element of historic significance resulting from the proposals such as recording and archiving.

Compensation - Consideration of any consequential conservation-based benefits resulting from the proposal.

- 5.2 The principle of the proposals is considered to be acceptable and broadly beneficial in terms of carrying out necessary improvements to a commercial building in order to improve viability. The proposals are intended to secure the medium-term future of the building.

- 5.3 The plan changes include for the demolition of an existing structural wall to the western room adjacent to the rear courtyard. This will result in the loss of some historic building fabric and compromise historic plan form and will therefore be causative of harm. The harm associated with this proposal is considered to be less than substantial i.e., minor and is considered necessary by the applicant in order to achieve the overall objective as set out in 5.2

The existing wall appears to have previously been partially demolished as the upper floor indicate the presence of a chimney breast and therefore it is likely that not much historic fabric remains.

On balance it seems reasonable to take the principle of the proposal on face value in terms of justifying its necessity, and seek to mitigate. To this end, the proposals appear to retain masonry nibs to the wall ends, which will retain evidence of the wall for future interpretation. That with the remaining structure at first floor level is considered to be satisfactory and will allow the historic plan and room arrangement to be understood in the future.

- 5.4 The enclosing of the middle yard finalises previous alterations where it was partially enclosed. Again, this impacts on historic plan form and essentially brings an original external area inside and is therefore causative of minor harm. This proposal is clearly necessary in order to provide adequate space for the toilets and is perhaps the least invasive method of achieving the objective of the proposal, with the only other option being an extension to the rear.

The area remains apparent at upper floor level and the proposals are considered to be vital in contributing to the overall objective of the proposal which are positive.

- 5.5 The internal refurbishment works are broadly benign in terms of their impact on heritage value but will clearly represent a significant overall improvement and therefore should be welcomed.

While there appears to be nothing remaining of interest in terms of finishes and fixtures, the contractor should be instructed to be diligent at strip out stage and notify the architect should any features of potential interest be uncovered. Given the age and relative significance of the building, a watching brief is not considered necessary.

- 5.6 Works to the upper levels are of benefit as they bring these areas back in to functional use and the repairs are to be carried out on a like-for-like basis.

- 5.7 Externally the proposals comprise redecoration of existing decorated surfaces. Regrettably the stonework has been previously painted and therefore the proposals have no impact. The supporting visualisation on drawing P04 indicates a contemporary scheme which is in line with modern trends. The proposals are considered to be acceptable as they cause no harm and do not prejudice alternative future solutions and will be beneficial to the Conservation Area (enhancement)

6.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The Long Pull is a historic mid C19th public house and is a statutorily Listed Building situated within a Conservation Area.
- 6.2 The building has moderate historic, archaeological and architectural interest and is a positive contributor to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 6.3 The public house appears generally dated and in need of a refurbishment in order to be an attractive proposition to potential visitors.
- 6.4 The proposals comprise minor structural alterations and plan changes as part of a wider complete refurbishment scheme which includes the reinstatement of the upper levels for accommodation purposed (house management).
- 6.5 This document has been prepared in order to assess the impact of the proposals on the heritage values attributed to the building and its contribution to the Conservation Area.
- 6.6 This document contends that on balance the proposals are beneficial in terms of providing a designated heritage asset and positive contributor with a viable and sustainable future.
- 6.7 The proposals are considered to be causative of minor harm but such harm is decisively outweighed by the overall benefits when considering:
- the building's comparative significance,
 - the impact on that significance, and the benefits to the place itself and/or the wider community or society as a whole.
- 6.8 The proposals are consistent with the objectives set out in section 6.1 of Planning Policy Wales insofar as:
- The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
 - the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
 - the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
- 6.9 The proposals are consistent with the objectives as set out in local planning policy EC7 and EC9 insofar as they demonstrable respect the setting and character of the listed building and

they at least preserve and arguably enhance the distinctive character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

6.10 The proposals respond to the key objectives set out in the Wrexham Town Centre Masterplan, specifically:

1. They help to improve the identity of the town centre.
2. They contribute to Improving the visitor experience and increase the vitality and viability of the town centre.
3. They help to Improve the evening economy.

6.11 In conclusion, the author considers that the proposals present no significant risk in terms of unnecessarily compromising the significance of the heritage assets and that the objectives set out by Cadw and the Planning Policy Wales have been met insofar as:

- a. there is sufficient information comprehensively to understand the impacts of the proposal on the significance of the place;
- b. the proposal would not materially harm the values of the place, which, where appropriate, would be reinforced or further revealed;
- c. the proposals aspire to a quality of design and execution which may be valued now and in the future;
- d. the long-term consequences of the proposals can, from experience, be demonstrated to be benign, or the proposals are designed not to prejudice alternative solutions in the future.

6.12 It is therefore recommended that the application is permitted subject to conditions set out in accordance with Paragraph 3 of the Welsh Government Circular for The Use of Planning Conditions for Development Management ensuring that they are:

1. necessary;
2. relevant to planning and;
3. to the development to be permitted;
4. enforceable;
5. precise and;
6. reasonable in all other respects.