From: Elgan Jones
Sent: 07 July 2026 12:24
Subject: Boat Inn, Erbistock, Wrexham, LL13 0DL

Your reference: P/2026/0312

Our reference: 219773

Boat Inn, Erbistock, Wrexham, LL13 0DL

Dear Sharon,

Thank you for consulting the SPAB over the proposals to install photovoltaic panels (pv's) at the grade II listed Inn. Whilst we have not had an opportunity to visit the site, we have reviewed the documentation submitted online and would like to provide the following observations.

The SPAB supports the sensitive introduction of renewable energy technologies to historic buildings where heritage significance is conserved and the least harmful solution has been demonstrated. While we recognise the importance of improving the environmental performance and long-term viability of historic buildings, we have some concerns and observations regarding the proposals.

The Heritage Impact Assessment identifies the sustainability and financial benefits of installing 40 solar panels but provides little quantitative evidence to substantiate these claims. Although the Boat Inn is described as having high energy consumption and electricity costs, no energy audit, consumption data, predicted energy generation figures, carbon savings, battery storage strategy, or assessment of future demand has been provided. As a result, it is difficult to assess whether the scale of the installation is justified or whether the claimed public benefits are proportionate to the level of harm.

The assessment demonstrates a good understanding of the significance of the Grade II listed building, its riverside setting and the Erbistock Conservation Area. However, the conclusion that the proposal would cause negligible or no harm appears insufficiently evidenced. The installation of a large solar array on the rear bank represents a noticeable intervention within the setting of a designated heritage asset and should be assessed accordingly. There also appears to be some discrepancy between the position of the pv's on the plan and as annotated within the HIA. In the HIA, its appears that the pv's are located closer to the base of the bank (adjacent to the gabion stone wall) and may be less visible from the wider site. The visual impact assessment relies largely on descriptive analysis and assertions that the panels will have limited visibility. There are limited verified photomontages, seasonal views etc. Given the importance of the building's landscape setting and views from across the River Dee, further evidence would be beneficial.

We welcome the decision to avoid the principal south-facing elevations and notes that the roof-mounted panels would be located on later additions. The proposals also appear broadly reversible. However, there is no clear strategy for maintenance, replacement, or removal at the end of the system's life, and these matters should be addressed.

Finally, although the report states that structural loading has been assessed and found acceptable, the applicant should carefully consider the detail regarding fixing methods, cable routes, associated equipment, maintenance access, and potential impacts on roof performance, moisture movement, drainage, and ventilation.

In conclusion, SPAB supports renewable energy generation in principle, however, the current application has not fully demonstrated that the scale of the proposal is justified and that the visual impact of the pv's installed on the bank has been fully presented or assessed.

We trust our comments are helpful to you.

Kind regards,

Elgan

Elgan Jones

Casework Officer

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings

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