

28 March 2024

Monmouthshire County Council
Development Management – Planning
County Hall
The Rhadyr
Usk
NP15 1GA



Dear Sir / Madam,

**THE WILD HARE, MAIN ROAD, TINTERN, CHEPSTOW, NP16 6SF
PLANNING APPLICATION FOR LANDSCAPING WORKS AND ERECTION OF TENT STRUCTURE IN
THE GARDEN AND CAR PARK OF EXISTING PUBLIC HOUSE TRADING AS THE WILD HARE.
PLANNING PORTAL REFERENCE: PP-12917583**

Savills is instructed by Tintern PropCo Limited (“the Applicant”) to submit an application to Monmouthshire County Council (“MCC”) seeking full planning permission at the Wild Hare, Main Road, Tintern, NP16 6SF (“the Site”) for landscaping works in the garden and erection of a tent structure.

Accordingly, please find the following information enclosed in support of the application:

- Site Location Plan (Drawing Reference: 014/A/0001/3/P4);
- Suite of landscaping plans and drawings prepared by JJB Gardens:
 - General Arrangement Plan (Drawing Reference: TWH-JJB-LD-GF-DR-L-0101 Rev P1);
 - Exterior Services (Drawing Reference: TWH-JJB-LD-GF-DR-L-0103 Rev P2);
 - Hardscape (Drawing Reference: TWH-JJB-LD-GF-DR-L-0105 Rev P2);
 - Tree Works (Drawing Reference: TWH-JJB-LD-GF-DR-L-0106 Rev P2);
 - Upper Car Park and Steps (Drawing Reference: TWH-JJB-LD-GF-DR-L-0109 Rev P2);
 - Upper Car Park and Service Area (Drawing Reference: TWH-JJB-LD-GF-DR-L-0110 Rev P2);
 - Tree Planting (Drawing Reference: TWH-JJB-LD-GF-DR-L-0111 Rev P2);
 - Soft Planting (Drawing Reference: TWH-JJB-LD-GF-DR-L-0112 Rev P2);
 - Café Garden (Drawing Reference: TWH-JJB-LD-GF-DR-L-0113 Rev P2);
 - Street Elevation East (Drawing Reference: TWH-JJB-LD-GF-EL-L-0202 Rev P2);
 - Street Elevation Forge Road Car Park Existing (Drawing Reference: TWH-JJB-LD-GF-EL-L-0205 Rev P2)
 - Street Elevation Forge Road Car Park Proposed (Drawing Reference: TWH-JJB-LD-GF-EL-L-0204 Rev P1);
 - Café Garden Section A (Drawing Reference: TWH-JJB-LD-GF-SE-L-0201 Rev P2);
 - Dining Terrace to Stream Edge Section B (Drawing Reference: TWH-JJB-LD-GF-SE-L-0203 Rev P2);
 - Timber Framed Tent Details (Drawing Reference: TWH-JJB-LD-GF-SK-L-0301 Rev P2).
- Detailed drawings prepared by Office Corr Higgins:
 - Bike Store Elevations (Drawing Reference: 014/A/1341/3/P1); and
 - Mushroom House (Drawing Reference: 014/1/1340/3/P1).

Offices and associates throughout the Americas, Europe, Asia Pacific, Africa and the Middle East..

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Design and Access Statement, prepared by Office Corr Higgins and JJB Landscaping (Document Reference: TWH-OCH-XX-XX-RP-A-5000 Rev P1);

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Bat Survey Report, prepared by Tyler Grange including information on Biodiversity Net Benefit (Document Reference: 15104_R03_VKC_);

Green Infrastructure Statement, prepared by JJB Gardens (Document Reference: TWH-JJB-XX-XX-RP-X-6000 Rev P2);

Arboricultural Impact Assessment, prepared by Tyler Grange (Document Reference: 15104_R02_BV);

Drainage Strategy Note, prepared by AWA Engineers (Document Reference: 13177.2/TWH/BW); and

Written Scheme of Investigation, prepared by EDP Heritage (Document Reference: edp8644_r002).

The Site

The application Site comprises the garden and car park of the Wild Hare (formerly the Royal George, before 2018), an established Grade II Listed Public House and Hotel. The collection of buildings that form The Wild Hare are massed along the southern boundary of the site adjacent to Forge Road. Besides the primary pub, hotel and restaurant building, there are two detached chalet structures (not a part of this application) providing additional hotel accommodation.

Two car parks bound the East and West edges of the site, whilst a large lawn occupies the centre ground, bordered to the North by a range of mature trees that separate the property from the Anghidi river. The main building is Grade II listed and the property is located within the Tintern Conservation Area (within Character Area 3). The site falls within the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and an archaeologically sensitive area. The site lies within a C2 flood zone in the existing NRW Development Maps. In the emerging NRW Flood Map for Planning, the site falls in Flood Zone 2.

Within the grounds, there are formal ornamental beds and clipped hedging which is mostly concentrated around the buildings with more mature trees in the north western corner and alongside the northern boundary. The majority of the site around the buildings and the main car park is relatively level while the ground is significantly higher to the west and within the southwest car park, allowing for access from the Forge Road which rises fairly steeply up from the junction with the A466.

The application site is shown on Site Location Plan (Drawing Reference: 014/A/0001/3/P1) and comprises an area of 4818m².

Planning History and Background

As previously outlined, the site was formerly known as the 'Royal George'. The current set of buildings has developed incrementally since the late 16th Century. The opening of the Wye Valley turnpike in 1829 greatly increased the number of visitors to Tintern and the house which stands beside the new road was converted to a hotel in 1835 and has been a key presence in the Tintern tourist industry ever since.

Its appearance in the late C19 is recorded in photographs but its present appearance dates only from C1930 when the building was greatly changed and enlarged. The main buildings have altered little since then apart from minor refenestration, but there are extensive additions to the rear and in the gardens which date from the late C20.

At present, the site is in active use as a modern pub complete with bedrooms for overnight stay and a restaurant and coffee house. The site's planning history is , summarised below:

DM/2020/01495 – ‘A new 4 bedroom dwelling on land adjacent to the Royal George Hotel’ (Approved July 2022);
 DM/2019/00113 – ‘Proposed New Dwelling to Land at Forge Road’ (Withdrawn February 2020);
 DM/2022/00123 – ‘Application for two hoardings. Existing permanent signs are in place, we want to board using wood, paint wood green and apply plastic letters and logo’. (Approved May 2022);
 DC/2017/01028 – ‘Replace two panels with new best western branding on existing post mounted signs. Replace existing double sided projecting sign with new branding’ (Approved October 2017).

There is a live planning application and listed building consent (references: DM/2023/01408 and DM/2023/01409) currently being determined by MCC. These applications seek the interior refurbishment of the building and have recently been supplemented with additional information to reflect the natural evolution of the proposals and a process of due diligence which had identified additional works which must be undertaken to support the re-development of the building.

Description of the Proposals

Through the previous submission at the site, Savills informed MCC that landscaping works relating to the garden areas and car park would have been addressed by a single, standalone submission. This approach seeks to simplify matters and facilitate determination by capturing all the external works in one submission. Savills is therefore pleased to submit this application which completes the suite of submissions necessary to refurbish the structure internally and externally and bring the Wild Hare back into operation.

The Proposals

The overarching aim of the landscape proposals captured in this submission is to provide a high-quality, safe and multi-functional accessible external space for guests and visitors. The proposals are accompanied by a Design & Access Statement (Document Reference: TWH-OCH-XX-XX-RP-A-5000 Rev P1) and a suite of landscape drawings (prepared by JJB Gardens) which should be read in conjunction with this letter. As set out in the Design & Access Statement, the proposals include:

- Refurbishment to existing car parking surfaces;
- Construction and installation of a timber frame tent structure;
- Construction and installation of a timber Mushroom House with integrated bat roost roof space within the western half of the gardens for production of in-house fungi to supply the restaurant;
- Installation of fire pit and outdoor seating areas;
- Refurbishment of external paved surfaces, including re-arrangement and minor increase in areas of terraces that relate to Hotel rooms;
- Redefinition of internal garden spaces to better relate to functions linked with dining guests or hotel visitors;
- Adjustments to existing landscape features & topography to accommodate inclusion of LPG tank & secure bin store to rear of The Wild Hare. Both these elements will be screened with new native hedge;
- Upper carpark to be separated from the streetscape with new traditional style estate railing automatic gates and new beech hedge;
- Adjustment and replacement of arrangement and surfaces to existing pedestrian access from top car park to Hotel accommodation buildings to improve safety and accessibility;
- Inclusion of external secure bike parking hoops for visitors and lockable bike store for overnight guests;
- Updates to external lighting to sensitively address the safety of guest movement requirements at night whilst respecting the village setting and the close proximity to many Bat supporting habitats;

Adjustment and replacement of arrangement and surfaces to existing enclosed external seating area at front of the Wild Hare to improve visual amenity to the streetscape and provide a more appropriate setting to this landmark historic building;

Planting a line of pleached trees to increase visual separation between gardens and the front car parking area and the village;

Replacement of several large non-native conifer trees with a range of locally appropriate native tree species;

Replacement of non-native hedges and heavily trimmed shrub species with more biodiverse and wildlife friendly planting scheme including increased amounts of native plant species;

Access and Movement

Accessibility has been duly considered in the preparation of the landscaping scheme. The proposed levels around the site will allow access for all and, where there are steps, alternative routes will be provided along paths at an appropriate grade. The surface treatments will be consistent with the uses in question to aid movement around the site in the interest of legibility. Pedestrians within the site will be able to easily access all public areas via the proposed paths with suitable surface treatments according to location. Adequate provision for refuse storage and collection has also been provided. Should emergency services need to access the site, access can be sought via the A466 and Forge Road turning into the respective car parks.

The Proposed Tent

The proposals include the provision of an outdoor tent space. The location and form of the tent structure has been developed with specialist designer / manufacturer input on construction requirements and a range of locations have been considered to ascertain the most appropriate one within the gardens. The current arrangement offers the greatest level of visual separation from the village, creates defined zones on the site and links well with internal functions such as the kitchen.

The tent has been designed specifically for Tintern and takes inspiration from the gothic arches of the transept of Tintern Abbey. The marquee is handcrafted by skilled carpenters in Cornwall and made from the following:

UK grown Douglas Fir covered with a fire retardant;

Embossed PVC cover in a tan or cream colour connected with an aluminium keder track and black trimmed keder.

The tent will provide a unique space where visitors will be sheltered from rain and sun but still have the opportunity to spend time outdoors. The structure of the tent will tread lightly in terms of footprint. From the main road, the top section creates a visually arresting sight above the pleached beech trees which will screen the activity within the structure from the car park and the public room.

The Mushroom House

A key element informing the vision for the refurbishment of the premises is the idea of utilising site produce within the kitchen. The limited space is recognised however there are opportunities to utilise the proposed and existing planting to provide herbs, wild garlic, woodland raspberries and fungi. An area protected from public access also houses bees for honey production.

As part of this application, a small timber building is proposed to grow and harvest mushrooms. This building will look similar to the Fuelling Station café (located in Tintern) and its exterior will consist of a small shed clad in untreated feather edge oak with a traditional dual pitched roof in dark green / grey corrugated metal sheeting. The mushroom house, which will sit on a ground screw shed base for minimum impact, will blend in with the tree scape.

Materials – Hard Landscaping Elements & Garden Furniture

The design of the proposals is in keeping with the character of the Conservation Area and makes use of local materials. With regards to the hard landscape materials, an elegant and sustainable palette has been developed and selected to provide safe access and promote legibility around the site. Materials have also been selected for their suitability in a high use and rainfall environment. When possible, existing stone slabs will be lifted and re-laid to make the most of existing site materials. The car parks will be resurfaced ensuring existing kerbs and sub-bases are used for maximum sustainable use of materials on site.

With regards to external work features, a few key character items will be used to reinforce the heritage character. These include:

- Traditional estate railings and gates;

- The metal fire pit in a rusted steel finish. This will be a moveable element (as will the benches and tables which can be configured to suit different events);

- Carved oak posts and square section metal bars to create a division and plant support;

- An antique shallow stone trough which will be used as a dog wash area at the end of the car park;
- and

- Carved oak tap posts for the dog wash.

Lighting

The proposals seek to coordinate the lighting palette so it is uniform and consistent across the site. A more pared down and coordinated palette of lighting fixtures is therefore proposed. This has been carefully selected to be in-keeping with the heritage and character of the area and will consist of a warm lighting LED bulb with consideration for local nocturnal wildlife. Further details on the lighting fixtures can be found in the DAS.

Arboricultural Matters

Biodiversity enhancement is a key element informing the proposals. With regards to trees, there are a number of opportunities for enhancement within this scheme resulting from the removal of existing, non-native coniferous trees. An Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) (Document Reference: 15104_RO2_BV) prepared by Tyler Grange (and the associated Tree Constraints and Tree Protection and Removal Plans) accompanies this submission.

The AIA summarises the individual trees (11 in total made up of 4 no. Category B and 7no. Category C) and hedgerows (2no. low value non-native hedgerows, 2no. low value hedgerow clusters and 2no. small mixed shrub groups which are all category C) which require removal. The AIA states that the 10no. removals are expected to result in a negligible, temporary reduction in canopy cover across the site owing to the quantum and variety of new tree, shrub, hedgerow and other planting features demonstrated. The AIA notes that all of the site's highest quality and value (Category A) trees can be retained with limited anticipated impacts into their RPAs owing to the carefully considered designs and innocuous nature of the works.

Biodiversity Enhancement

Preserving and, when possible, enhancing site biodiversity represents an important theme underpinning the proposals. It should be noted that the majority of the habitats on site are of negligible ecological importance and require no specific mitigation measures. Any loss of vegetation will be compensated through the proposed habitat creation (i.e. tree and shrub planting). The trees planted will be native and will include fruit trees which are beneficial for fauna including birds, bats and pollinators. A range of additional features will also be added to support local wildlife.

In line with the requirements of PPW12, a Green Infrastructure Statement has been prepared by JJB Gardens and is submitted in support of the proposals. The statement outlines that the proposals seek to reconnect the site with adjacent habitats or features. This will include

- Management and removal of invasive plant species through the use of specialist contractors;
- Overall increase in native tree species and number of trees on site;
- Overall increase in native hedge species and linear meters of hedge on site;
- Overall increase in native and biodiverse ground flora planting;
- Diversification of grassland habitats through adjustment to mowing regimes and sowing of wildflora rich meadow areas;
- Diversification of wildlife supporting shrub & herbaceous planting around the buildings;
- Specification of new hard surfaces as fully permeable aggregate surfaces so that rainwater is still able to penetrate subsoil zones;
- Installation of long life bird & bat nest & roost boxes;
- Installation of specific bat roost feature within Mushroom House roof space;
- Creation of deadwood hibernacular features; and
- Enhancement and improved stabilisation of the river bank through native shrub planting.

Heritage

As part of the Design and Access Statement, a Heritage Impact Statement (HIS) has been prepared in support to proposals. The HIS notes that the proposals in this submission are designed to complement the existing planning and listed building consent applications currently being determined by MCC. With regards to the proposals in question, the HIS makes the following important conclusions:

Tent Structure

The proposed tent will replace the existing '*stretch tent*' structure located immediately next to The Wild Hare which has a considerable detrimental impact on the heritage asset and immediate context. Siting of the new structure has been carefully considered to minimise impact on the setting of the listed building. It is located at the furthest possible distance on the site from The Wild Hare, towards the northern site boundary with the Anghidi River. This area was previously a part of the mill pond, evident on historic maps dating to the mid-18th century but filled in sometimes a c.1950. It is unclear whether the pond was related to the medieval operation of the mill, or later post medieval operation and there is '*low to moderate*' potential for the site to contain archaeological remains of medieval date. Any such features are unlikely to be greater than low, local significance.

The new tent has a traditionally crafted timber frame that echoes details of The Abbey close by and its steeply pitched roof form will sit naturally amongst the surrounding built context. The foundations will be screw piles which are reversible and will have minimal impact in the ground. Several locations for the tent structure have been tested with the final location striking the most appropriate balance between ecological considerations along the river bank; amenity for neighbours; respect for the heritage asset and its environs and archaeological concerns.

The beneficial impact of the proposals is the removal of a structure that currently has significant detrimental impact on the setting of the listed building and the conservation area. These facilities will be re-provided in a more appropriate form and location, ensuring that customer amenities are maintained and the quality of customer experience is enhanced. The harmful impact is that a new structure will be provided in a previously open area of garden. This harm is mitigated by the design and siting of the proposals, which are sympathetic in their overall scale, form and detail to the surrounding built context, complementing the setting of the heritage asset. **The benefit is therefore considered to outweigh the harm caused.**

New LPG Tanks and Enclosure

The new LPG tanks are necessary to provide the property with sufficient fuel to operate properly and efficiently. The existing single tank, located along the boundary to Forge Road at the rear of the site, is of insufficient size for the heating, cooking, and hot water systems to operate and is now redundant. Three new tanks are to replace the existing single tank. As well as providing sufficient volumes of fuel, additional capacity on site will reduce the number of deliveries, easing disruption along Forge Road for immediate neighbours.

The new tanks are to be located deeper into the site, away from the boundary and behind the existing overflow car park. This is the most discreet location on the site which still allows the necessary direct access for the delivery vehicle. They will be screened by a new native beech hedge along the property boundary and to the rear of the car park. A high estate railing will form the protective enclosure to the tanks.

The beneficial impact of the proposals is that the Wild Hare can continue to function as a hotel, pub and restaurant. These are uses that have been continuous since 1835, contributing to the communal value of the heritage asset and its standing in the cultural life of Tintern. The harmful impact is that larger tanks are required and that the massing of these has the potential to affect the setting of the conservation area. This harm has been mitigated through relocation to a more discreet corner of the site, screening through careful placement of native hedging, and use of traditional estate railings to create the tank enclosure. **The benefit is considered to outweigh the harm.**

Energy & Sustainability

The proposals include the installation of an LPG tank. This change of energy source – from oil to LPG – has resulted in a number of testing layouts being considered before the final location was selected with specialist consultation from the chosen supplier. The final location of the tank allows for the greatest level of screening whilst maintaining suitable access and safety arrangements. As outlined in the DAS, the tank will be enclosed with appropriate fencing. In addition to this, the area will be further enclosed by a native shrub species hedge and a selection of native trees.

With regards to energy use in general terms, the environmental impacts of materials on site have been considered. Where possible, low energy lighting will be used, existing materials such as stone pavers will be re-used and maintenance practices will be reviewed to see where positive enhancement can be achieved.

Drainage

A Drainage Strategy Note has been prepared by AWA in support of the proposals. The note confirms that the surface water of the proposed works will be drained to the ground via a combination of permeable paving and soakaways, such that the surface water run-off characteristics of the site remain unchanged.

Summary of the Proposals

In summary, the proposals present the opportunity to deliver a biodiversity-rich landscape setting that respects and supports the character of the building and its surrounding environment. Drawing on the live applications currently being determined by MCC – which seek the internal refurbishment of the building – this planning application seeks to deliver an attractive proposal for the exterior of the pub to improve the experience of staff and visitors. In this way, the proposals sought under this submission represent a natural progression to deliver the full refurbishment – both internal and external – of The Wild Hare.

Planning Policy

National Policy – Planning Policy Wales

Planning Policy Wales 12 was adopted in February 2024 and its primary objective is to ensure that the planning system delivers sustainable development and improves the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, as required by the Planning (Wales) Act 2015 and other key legislation.

Chapter 6 (Distinctive and Natural Places) of PPW covers the environmental and cultural components of placemaking and considers that, by protecting and enhancing biodiversity and our natural environment more generally, it will be possible to future proof economic assets in response to the challenges presented by the climate emergency. In particular, this chapter considers how *‘the characteristics and environmental qualities of places varies across Wales, creating distinctive or unique features associated with their particular natural or cultural heritage and these should be protected and enhanced. Priorities for rural and urban areas will reflect how these characteristics and qualities contribute to the attractiveness, liveability, resilience, functioning, economic prosperity and ultimately the health, amenity and wellbeing of people and places’*.

In particular, paragraph 6.2.7 considers Green Infrastructure Assessments and notes that they must address the nature emergency by *‘identifying and demonstrating how a net benefit for biodiversity will be secured and the attributes of ecosystem resilience enhanced’*. Paragraph 6.4.3 goes on to state that *‘the planning system has a key role to play in helping to reverse the decline in biodiversity and increase the resilience of ecosystems’*. This paragraph goes on to recognise that on recognising that development needs to take place and that some biodiversity may be impacted, *‘the planning system should ensure that overall there is a net benefit for biodiversity and eco system resilience resulting in enhanced well-being’*.

Local Policy – MCC LDP

The MCC LDP was adopted in February 2014 and sets out the Council's vision and objectives for the development and use of land in Monmouthshire. The LDP policies relevant to this proposal are reproduced below:

Strategic Policy S8 (Enterprise and Economy) states that:

'Development proposals that seek to deliver the Council's vision for sustainable economic growth will be permitted, particularly where they enable:

- a) The continued development of existing key economic sectors, including tourism;*
- b) The diversification of the business base within Monmouthshire, particularly the provision of green and low carbon technologies and knowledge intensive / high technology enterprises;*
- c) The development of countywide faster and more accessible ICT and broadband infrastructure.*

All proposals will be subject to detailed planning considerations, which include the protection of the nature and built heritage, which itself is an important resource bringing benefits for the economy, tourism and well-being.'

Policy S11 (Visitor Economy) states that:

'Development proposals that provide and / or enhance sustainable forms of tourism will be permitted subject to detailed planning considerations.

Development proposals that would have an unacceptable adverse impact on features and areas of tourism interest and their settings, or that would result in the unjustified loss of tourism facilities will not be permitted.'

Policy S12 (Efficient Resource Use and Flood Risk) states that:

'All new development must:

- Demonstrate sustainable and efficient resource use – this will include energy efficiency / increasing the supply of renewable energy, sustainable construction materials / techniques, water conservation / efficiency and waste reduction;*
- Avoid the siting of inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding'.*

Policy S17 (Place Making and Design) states that:

'Development shall contribute to creating high quality, attractive and sustainable places. All development proposals must include and promote high quality, sustainable inclusive design which respects local distinctiveness, respects the character of the site and its surrounding in order to protect and enhance the natural, historic and built environments and to create attractive, safe and accessible places'.

Policy SD2 (Sustainable Construction and Energy Efficiency) states that:

‘Proposals for low carbon design solutions in new buildings will be permitted in accordance with the energy hierarchy of reducing energy demand through passive design, promoting energy efficiency through use of appropriate building fabric and inclusion of renewable or low carbon energy generation technologies.

All new development proposals will be required to incorporate efficient resource use during construction, operation and maintenance.

Where planning permission is required, proposals for the installation of renewable and low carbon technology on existing buildings will be permitted subject to detailed planning considerations’.

Policy SD3 (Flood Risk) states that:

‘Proposals for highly vulnerable development or emergency services will not be permitted in areas which may be liable to flooding, unless the residential development is for the conversion of upper floors within defined settlement boundaries or the proposal is to extend an established tourism, leisure or educational establishment. Less vulnerable built development will be permitted within defined settlements or on sites allocated for uses such as employment. Development proposals within a flood plain will be required to demonstrate that:

- a) the development is or can be protected by approved engineering works and / or other flood protection measures;*
- b) such remedial measures would not cause flooding or significantly increase the risk of flooding elsewhere;*
- c) the development, including any remedial measures, can be sympathetically assimilated into the environment in terms of its siting, scale, design and landscaping;*
- d) the development does not interfere with the ability of the Environment Agency or other bodies to carry out flood control works or maintenance; and*
- e) the nature conservation interest of the water source corridor is protected and, where practicable, enhanced.*

Development resulting in additional surface water run-off and leading to an increased risk of flooding will only be permitted where adequate protection and mitigation measures are included as part of the proposal.’

Policy SD4 (Sustainable Drainage) states that:

‘Development proposals will be expected to incorporate water management measures, including Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) to reduce surface water run-off and minimise its contribution to flood risk elsewhere’.

Policy LC4 (Wye Valley AONB) states that:

'Within the Wye Valley AONB, any development must be subservient to the primary purpose to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area. In considering development proposals, regard will be given to:

- a) The long-term effect of the proposal, and the degree to which its nature and intensity is compatible with the character, purpose and overall management of the AONB;*
- b) The degree to which design, quality and use of appropriate materials harmonise with the surrounding landscape and built heritage;*
- c) The extent of the landscaping proposed;*
- d) The need to protect features in the landscape identified as important through LANDMAP;*
- e) The extent to which a proposed new building or use will generate additional traffic and the requirement for improvement of existing roads and lanes, including the surfacing of green lanes; and*
- f) The impact of the proposed development upon nature conservation interests.*

Development proposals that are outside the AONB but would detract unacceptably from its setting will not be permitted.'

Policy LC5 (Protection and Enhancement of Landscape Character) states that:

'Development proposals that would impact upon landscape character, as defined by LANDMAP Landscape Character Assessment, must demonstrate through a landscape assessment how landscape character has influenced their design, scale, nature and site selection.

Development will be permitted provided it would not have an unacceptable adverse effect on the special character or quality of Monmouthshire's landscape in terms of its visual, historic, geological, ecological or cultural aspects by:

- a) Causing significant visual intrusion;*
- b) Causing significant adverse change in the character of the built or natural landscape;*
- c) Being insensitively and unsympathetically sited within the landscape;*
- d) Introducing or intensifying a use which is incompatible with its location;*
- e) Failing to harmonise with, or enhance the landform and landscape; and /or*
- f) Losing or failing to incorporate important traditional features, patterns, structures and layout of settlements and landscapes of both the built and natural environment.*

Particular emphasis will be given to those landscapes identified through the LANDMAP Landscape Character Assessment as being of high and outstanding quality because of a certain landscape quality or combination of qualities.'

Policy G11 (Green Infrastructure) states that:

'Development proposals will be expected to maintain, protect and enhance Monmouthshire's diverse green infrastructure network by:

- a) Ensuring that individual green assets are retained wherever possible and integrated into new development. Where loss of green infrastructure is unavoidable in order to secure*

sustainable development appropriate mitigation and / or compensation of the lost assets will be required; and

- b) Incorporating new and / or enhanced green infrastructure of an appropriate type, standard and size. Where on-site provision of green infrastructure is not possible, contributions will be sought to make appropriate provision for green infrastructure off-site’.*

Policy NE1 (Nature Conservation and Development) states that:

‘Development proposals that would have a significant adverse effect on a locally designated site of biodiversity and / or geological importance, or a site that satisfies the relevant designation criteria, or in the continued viability of priority habitats and species, as identified in the UK or Local Biodiversity Action Plans or Section 42 lists of species, and habitats of importance for conservation of biological diversity in Wales, will only be permitted where:

- A) The need for the development clearly outweighs the nature conservation or geological importance of the site; and*
- B) It can be demonstrated that the development cannot reasonably be located elsewhere.*

Where development is permitted, it will be expected that any unavoidable harm is minimised by effective avoidance measures and mitigation. Where this is not feasible, appropriate provision for compensatory habitats and features of equal or greater quality and quantity must be provided.

Where nature conservation interests are likely to be disturbed or harmed by development proposals, applications must be accompanied by an ecological survey and assessment of the likely impact of the proposal on the species / habitats and, where necessary, shall make appropriate provision for their safeguarding.

Development proposals shall accord with nature conservation interests and will be expected to:

- i) Retain, and where appropriate enhance, existing semi-natural habitats, linear habitat features, other features of nature conservation interest and geological features and safeguard them during construction work;*
- ii) Incorporate appropriate native vegetation in any landscaping or planting scheme, except where special requirements in terms of purpose or location may dictate otherwise;*
- iii) Ensure the protection and enhancement of wildlife and landscape resources by appropriate building design, site layouts, landscaping techniques and choice of plant species;*
- iv) Where appropriate, make provision for on-going maintenance of retained or created nature conservation interests.’*

Policy DES1 (General Design Considerations) states that:

‘All development should be of a high quality sustainable design and respect the local character and distinctiveness of Monmouthshire’s built, historic and natural environment. Development proposals will be required to:

- a) *Ensure a safe, secure, pleasant and convenient environment that is accessible to all members of the community, supports the principles of community safety and encourages walking and cycling;*
- b) *contribute towards sense of place whilst ensuring that the amount of development and its intensity is compatible with existing uses;*
- c) *respect the existing form, scale, siting, massing, materials and layout of its setting and any neighbouring quality buildings;*
- d) *Maintain reasonable levels of privacy and amenity of occupiers of neighbouring properties, where applicable;*
- e) *respect built and natural views and panoramas where they include historical features and / or attractive or distinctive built environment or landscape;*
- f) *use building techniques, decoration, styles and lighting to enhance the appearance of the proposal having regard to texture, colour, pattern, durability and craftsmanship in the use of materials;*
- g) *incorporate and, where possible enhance existing features that are of historical, visual or nature conservation value and use the vernacular tradition where appropriate;*
- h) *include landscape proposals for new buildings and land uses in order that they integrate into their surroundings, taking into account the appearance of the existing landscape and its intrinsic character, as defined through the LANDMAP process. Landscaping should take into account, and where appropriate retain, existing trees and hedgerows;*
- i) *Make the most efficient use of land compatible with the above criteria, including that the minimum net density of residential development should be 30 dwellings per hectare, subject to criterion l) below;*
- j) *Achieve a climate responsive and resource efficient design. Consideration should be given to location, orientation, density, layout, built form and landscaping and to energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy, including materials and technology;*
- k) *Foster inclusive design;*
- l) *Ensure that existing residential areas characterised by high standards of privacy and spaciousness are protected from overdevelopment and insensitive or inappropriate infilling’.*

Policy HE1 (Development in a Conservation Area) states that:

‘Within Conservation Areas, development proposals should, where appropriate, have regard to the Conservation Area Appraisal for that area and will be permitted if they:

- a) *Preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area and its landscape setting;*
- b) *Have no serious adverse effect on significant views into and out of the Conservation Area;*
- c) *Have no serious adverse effect on significant vistas within the area and the general character and appearance of the street scene and roofscape;*
- d) *Use materials appropriate to their setting and context and which protect or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area; and*
- e) *Pay special attention to the setting of the building and its open areas.*

Where development is acceptable in principle, it should complement or reflect the architectural qualities of adjoining and other nearby buildings (unless these are harmful to the character and appearance of the area) in terms of its profile, silhouette, detailing and materials. However,

good modern design may be acceptable, particularly where new compositions and points of interest are created’.

Justification of the Proposals

Use

In summary, the proposals seek full planning permission for landscaping works as well as the erection of a tent structure in the garden. Despite taking place in the garden and car parks of the hotel – and thus not requiring Listed Building Consent – all works will be undertaken with due care for the setting of the Listed Building and Conservation Area designation. Given the modest nature of the proposals – and their role in concluding the suite of applications necessary to support the development of the site – it is evident that these works are essential to maintain momentum and re-open the premises as soon as possible.

The proposals – which have been informed by careful due diligence and instruction of comprehensive specialist reports – will improve the visitor and staff experience at the site by creating an external setting which complements the works sought via the live applications currently being determined by MCC. The proposals will provide a more welcoming entry and experience of the setting of the pub as well as proposing more logical changes to the structure’s surrounding in the interest of health and safety and legibility. These logical changes – which are supported by landscape enhancements and features of interest – will facilitate the retention and vitality of the premises contributing to the tourism and economic aspirations of the LDP.

Design

As set out in the proposals section of this letter, a palette of elegant and in-keeping materials will be adopted for the works. The high-quality development of the proposals would have no detrimental impact upon the listed fabric of the building or its setting within the Conservation Area. Instead, the proposals actively respond to the heritage designation of the building and provide an opportunity to enhance its environs in a way which is more appropriate and in-keeping with the historic setting of Tintern. The practical nature of some of the elements proposed – such as the LPG tank – is noted and screening and planting will be utilised to minimise and soften the impact of this structure. In this way, the external works will deliver a more sympathetic and visually attractive setting to the building.

Landscape & Biodiversity

As previously set out, Biodiversity enhancement represents a key theme underpinning the proposals. Biodiversity on site will be significantly enhanced through the management and removal of invasive plant species, an increase in native tree, hedge and flora planting and the diversification of grassland habitats and wildlife supporting shrubs. In addition to this, the proposals will deliver a suite of measures including, but not limited to, the installation of long-life bird nesting and bat roosting boxes, specific bat roost features in the mushroom house, creation of hibernacula features to create opportunities for invertebrates and enhancement and improved stabilisation of the risk bank through native shrub planting. The Green Infrastructure statement recognises that these measures will support a wide range of species to use the site both in terms of foraging but also for whole life cycle completion.

Positively, the Green Infrastructure statement concludes that *‘the works proposed at this site and detailed above and in other accompanying planning documents demonstrate a commitment to undertaking the works*

within the guidance of the legislation current at this time and a genuine desire to better the site for biodiversity'. In addition to this, the statement goes on to note that 'the proposals represent a strengthening of the site's overall resilience to climate change through a measurable increase and diversification of species and habitat types'.

Arboricultural Matters

As previously set out, the proposals present the opportunity to enhance the site from an arboricultural perspective. As set out in the AIA, the retention of the majority of the boundary trees and the replacement of those removed allows for the proposed development to be set in a densely tree-populated environment. Positively, the AIA concludes that *'it is expected that the proposed landscaping will deliver enhancements including improved group tree canopy structure, tree diversity (comprising more locally-native species) and tree canopy connectivity.'* In fact, the AIA goes on to state that *'the collective visual amenity that the trees provide to the locality can be preserved and enhanced long-term'.*

Economic Benefits

The proposals sought under this submission represent a natural, final step in a programme of extensive refurbishment works at The Wild Hare. The scheme seeks to improve the visitor and staff experience by creating a welcoming context around the pub restoring legibility and enhancing the environment which characterises this local business. The proposals would facilitate the retention and vitality of these under-utilised premises contributing to the tourism and economic aspirations of the LDP.

Conclusion

This submission seeks landscaping works and erection of a tent structure in the garden and car parks of The Wild Hare.

I trust that the information and documentation is in order and that the application can proceed with determination without delay. I would like to thank you for your ongoing support in relation to this site and if there is anything I can do to assist or accelerate your consideration of this application, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,



Portia Banwell
Associate Director

Enc: As above