



JUDITH DOUGLAS TOWN PLANNING LIMITED

Wellsprings, Clitheroe Road, Sabden, Clitheroe BB7 9HN.



Retrospective application for the proposed retention of a timber canopy over an existing outdoor seating area.

Planning, Design and Access Statement

JDTPL0295

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STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF A PLANNING APPLICATION IN RETROSPECT FOR THE RETENTION OF A TIMBER CANOPY OVER AN EXISTING OUTDOOR SEATING AREA WELLSPRINGS, CLITHEROE ROAD, SABDEN CLITHEROE BB7 9HN.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This planning statement has been prepared by Judith Douglas Town Planning Ltd in support of full planning application in retrospect for a timber canopy over and existing outdoor seating area at the Wellsprings Spanish and Mexican Restaurant.

1.2 This statement provides a description of the site and the proposed development, its compliance with the development plan and an assessment of other material considerations. It should be read in conjunction with the accompanying information:

6218 - E00 Location Plan

6218 - E01D Existing Site Plan

6218 - E03 Existing Plans and Elevations

6218 - P04B Proposed Covered seating area

6218 - P06 Proposed Site Plan

Business Statement.

Landscape visual Impact Assessment

2.0 THE APPLICATION SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

2.1 The site is located on the slopes of Pendle Hill within the open countryside and the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty as defined in the Ribble Valley Housing and Economic Development, Development Plan Document. The site is approximately 2.6 miles southeast of Clitheroe and 1.5 miles from the A59. It is 2.8 miles from the A6068 north of Padiham. The Wellsprings is a long-established restaurant, and it stands within a group of building including the Pendle Ski Club and dry ski slope.

2.2 The current owners have run the restaurant for the last 22 years. The restaurant has a seating capacity of 200 and car parking for 53 cars on the main car park with a further 14 spaces to the east and north of the building. Historically the building has been an inn and a hotel.

2.3 There are many public footpaths in the area including popular walks up to the summit of Pendle Hill. The Lancashire County Council mapping service 'mariomaps' shows large areas of the land around the Wellspring is designated as 'access land'. The Wellsprings is situated on land described as landscape type Moorland Hills with the land lower down the hillside to

the north being described as landscape type Moorland Fringe. The land on the eastern side of Clitheroe Road is designated as a biological heritage site 'Pendle Hill' but the site itself is outside the biological heritage site. The landscape around the site are agricultural fields used for grazing sheep which are bounded by stone walls. There are few trees and shrubs. The most notable man-made landscape features are the dry ski slope, the Wellsprings, the Ski Clubhouse and their car parks.

- 2.4 The Wellsprings is currently a single storey building where it faces the road but becomes two storeys at the rear. A large part of the building has flat roofs. The roof area over which the canopy is proposed has been used for many years as an outdoor seating area. The Ski Clubhouse is at a further lower level below. The original building was two storeys in height as it faces the road, but the first floor was removed some time in the 20th century.
- 2.5 None of the building on the site are listed buildings and the site is not within a conservation area the site is in flood zone 1 least likely to flood.
- 2.6 Access to the car park and parking areas is off Clitheroe Road at the southern end of the car park is an emergency helicopter landing area.

3.0 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 In response to the outbreak of the covid pandemic many businesses like restaurant and pubs set up covered outdoor seating areas to allow people to use the premises in a well-ventilated space. The Wellsprings already had an outdoor seating area with very good views across the landscape but also very exposed to the weather. In this location the use of a temporary marquee or gazebo is impractical due to the wind speeds. The applicant opted for a timber framed canopy with a traditional pitched roof which is covered in a clear upvc sheet roof. The east facing gable is finished in timber and the west facing gable is open. This is a more substantial structure capable of withstanding the weather. The staircase and railings were already in place
- 3.2 The addition of the canopy has allowed the business to continue during the pandemic. It provides a sheltered outdoor dining area. There is direct access to the outdoor seating area from the dining room. This has provided a 'back up plan' for people wishing to book events in the dining room concerned that covid restrictions may change. Going forward it has proved to be popular with visitors wanting to dine outside whilst enjoying the magnificent views over the landscape.



Image 1 Proposed timber canopy with exposed beams provides shelter and retains views across the landscape.



Image 2 Festoon lighting and low-key domestic scale lamps.



Image 3 The view from the terrace makes it a most attractive place to dine outside.

- 3.3 The canopy is constructed using a frame with traditional trusses which are exposed beneath the roofing materials. The timber frame is covered with a clear/opaque corrugated sheet. This allows natural light into the dining area below and preserves light level in to dining room and bar area within the building. Artificial lighting is low-key festoon lighting and domestic scale lamps. See image 1 and 2. Access onto the seating area is from the bar area, dining room and via steps from the garden at the lower level. The flooring is covered in the pre-existing artificial grass the walls beneath the canopy have been painted a deep blue-green. .

3.4 The canopy measures 10.2m by 5.8m. The canopy is above an existing single storey flat roofed portion of the building. The height from the ground to the eaves is 5.3m and to the ridge is 7.4m. The existing building beneath the canopy is one storey and the to the north and east it abuts existing two storey section of the building all of which have flat roofs. To the west of the building at the lower level is the flat roof of the ski-club. See image 4.



Image 4 The proposed canopy viewed from the car park to the south.



Image 5 View from the car park prior to the canopy being installed.

4. PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 The relevant planning history of the site is as follows:

Reference	Address	Description	Decision
3/1997/0193	Wellsprings Hotel, Clitheroe Road Sabden	Minor amendments to existing building	Approved 06/05/1997
3/1992/0520	Wellsprings Inn Clitheroe Road Sabden	Erection of bottling plant building	Approved 16/10/1992
3/2015/0507	Pendle Ski Club Clitheroe Road Sabden	Extension to clubhouse and enlargement to existing car park	Approved 28/07/2015
3/2021/0257	Wellsprings Hotel, Clitheroe Road Sabden	Proposed extension to create a one bedroom holiday apartment and construction of two single storey one bedroom holiday let units with parking	Refused 17/05/2021

5. DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICY

5.1 The Development Plan for the purposes of this application comprises the Ribble Valley Core Strategy (adopted 2014) and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019).

Core Strategy (2014)

5.2 The following policies are of relevance to the proposal:

Ribble Valley Core Strategy:

Key Statement DS1-Development Strategy
Key Statement DS2-Sustainable Development
Key Statement EN2 – Landscape
Key Statement EC3 – Visitor Economy

Policy DMG1 – General Considerations
Policy DMG2 - Strategic Considerations
Policy DMG3 – Transport and Mobility
Policy DME1 - Protecting trees and woodlands
Policy DME2 – Landscape and Townscape Protection
Policy DMB1 – Supporting Business Growth and Local Economy
Policy DMB3 – Recreation and Tourism Development

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021

6 EVALUATION

Principle of the Development

6.1 Core Strategy Key Statement EC3 relates specifically to the visitor economy stating that proposals that contribute to and strengthen the visitor economy of Ribble Valley will be encouraged. The proposed development would contribute to the tourism economy and accords with the general intentions of Key Statement EC3.

6.2 Core Strategy policy DMG2 requires development outside of defined settlement areas to meet at least one of six considerations one of which is the following:

“4. Development is for small scale tourism or recreational developments appropriate to a rural area.” The provision of the canopy is small-scale tourism/recreational development and therefore complies in principle with Policy DMG2.

6.3 Core Strategy Policy DMB1 also seeks to support business growth and the local economy, and Policy DMB3 relates specifically to recreation and tourism uses. Policy DMB3 supports tourism and visitor attractions subject to stated criteria being met:

*“1. The proposal must not conflict with other policies of this plan;
2. The proposal must be physically well related to an existing main settlement or village or to an existing group of buildings, except where the proposed facilities are required in conjunction with a particular countryside attraction and there are no suitable existing buildings or developed sites available;
3. The development should not undermine the character, quality or visual amenities of the plan area by virtue of its scale, siting, materials or design;
4. The proposals should be well related to the existing highway network. It should not generate additional traffic movements of a scale and type likely to cause undue problems or disturbance. Where possible the proposals should be well related to the public transport network;
5. The site should be large enough to accommodate the necessary car parking, service areas and appropriate landscaped areas; and
6. The proposal must take into account any nature conservation impacts using suitable survey information and where possible seek to incorporate any important existing associations within the development. Failing this then adequate mitigation will be sought.”*

In the Forest of Bowland AONB additional criteria apply as follows: -

*“1. The proposal should display a high standard of design appropriate to the area.
2. The site should not introduce built development into an area largely devoid of structures (other than those directly related to agriculture or forestry uses).”*

6.4 The proposed canopy is an extension to the existing building covering an existing outdoor seating area. It is well related to the existing buildings on the site and does not increase the floor area of the building. The existing use contributes positively to the rural economy providing employment. It provides a destination for visitors to the area and is particularly attractive due to its remoted location and outstanding views. The proposed canopy makes

good use of the outdoor space extending its use in times of inclement weather. The retention of the canopy will directly support an existing rural business which contributes positively to the Borough's tourism offer. Policy DMB1 supports the expansion of local businesses. The canopy has been designed to complement the existing building so that it assimilates into the landscape. The proposal accords with policy DMB1.

Visual Appearance

- 6.8 The site is within the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. National policy in the NPPF and the policies in the Core Strategy afford great weight to the conservation and scenic beauty of the area. The NPPF 2021 paragraph 176 states: *"The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas."*
- 6.9 The Forest of Bowland Character Areas describes the land around the site as belonging to "Landscape Character B: Unenclosed Moorland Hills" The key characteristics of the area are described as:
- "1. Dramatic cloughs or valleys are incised into the hillsides and often contain fast flowing streams*
 - 2. Open and exposed character, with a strong sense of remoteness and tranquillity*
 - 3. Woodland on the clough or valley sides*
 - 4. Stone walls and fences are occasional features, but do not dominate landscape pattern."*
- 6.10 The existing buildings at the Wellsprings comprise a single storey restaurant buildings with a large two storey flat roofed extension on the down slope side as well as a single storey flat roofed addition on the south side. There are an number of single storey outbuildings around the site. The Pendle Ski Club occupies a flat roofed single storey building at a level below the two storey restaurant. The ski club has a number of structures and cabins around the ski slope.
- 6.11 The main building is finished in render which is painted a light cream. The light colour of the render is a high contrast to natural colour of the surrounding landscape. Prioir to the installation of the canopy the walls now beneath the canopy were painted cream see image 5. The stone walls at the southern end of the car park are also similalrly painted light crean which also is a high contrast to the surrounding landsacpe. The fence along western boundary of the car park which is stained timber is much less prominent.

- 6.12 The buildings at the Wellsprings and Pendle Ski Club are not a coherent group rather they are a hotpotch of building created through alterations to the building in the mid to later part of the twentieth century. The setting of the buildings includes the extensive area of car parking and the artificial ski-slope.
- 6.13 The proposed canopy has enclosed an area of walls which were painted light cream. The area beneath the canopy is now painted a darker colour and visually diminishes and recedes due to the colours of the walls and the shading of the canopy. Whilst the canopy is an additional structure it is modest in scale in comparison with the rest of the development on and around the site. The ridge of the canopy is lower than the main roof.
- 6.14 The visual impact assessment shows that the canopy is mainly visible from the road and a short section of the public footpath to the west of the site. Only glimpsed views are possible from the public footpaths over the higher ground to the east as the land is hilly and the view of the buildings are mostly obscured by the intervening landscape. In long range views the canopy is not readily discernable from the rest of the group of buildings and structures around the site. The scale, mass, height and detailing of the development will not undermine the visual qualities of the area and complies with the requirements of Key Statement EN2, policies DMB3 and DME2.

Highways and public rights of way

- 6.15 The application for the canopy is to cover an existing outdoor dining space. The number of dining spaces will not increase. Additional parking spaces are not required. The proposal complies with the requirements of DMG1 and DMG3.

Tourism Development

- 6.16 The Ribble Valley Tourism Destination Management Plan September 2018, recorded the latest figures (2016) for tourism in the Ribble Valley which show £225,914 million tourism spend, 5 million day-visitor days and night and a growth of 6.3%.
- 6.17 The recent Tourism Progress Report presented to the Economic Development Committee on the 25th March 2021 states the most recent figures show that tourism in Ribble Valley contributes £260 million into the local economy. In recent years, and certainly up until the current crisis, it has been an expanding sector, in which both the economic impact and visitor numbers were rising by over 7% per annum with employment figures growing by more than 6%p.a.. Tourism is undeniably a significant part of the Ribble Valley's economy. The report states that there is currently a *“unique opportunity for British domestic tourism to make its mark, with an estimated 18 months in which to achieve this whilst competition remains weak.*

That is why it is so important for Ribble Valley, a place where tourism and hospitality are integral to the local economy, to not only restore post-Covid levels of business but moreover, to grow from and fully exploit this unique opportunity.” The report also points to distinct consumer trends which are emerging from the crisis from which Ribble Valley would benefit and this includes *“An increased desire to visit open space and countryside and to experience nature.”*

- 6.12 The Council clearly see that the tourism economy in the Ribble Valley has a unique opportunity to grow whilst overseas holidays are curtailed. Even before the current Covid crisis visitor numbers were expanding. During the last 18 months access to the countryside and open space has had increasing importance and it can be anticipated that visitors will be drawn to Ribble Valley to take advantage of access to the countryside. The proposed development provides a great opportunity of visitors to visit heart of the countryside and enjoy dining outside. The magnificent view across the countryside is likely to be a strong attraction for visitors.
- 6.13 A business statement is submitted with this application setting out the benefits that have accrued to this existing business as a result of the canopy being installed and the continued benefits to the local economy and tourism if the canopy is retained. Conversely, if the canopy is required to be removed, it will harm the vitality of this business and reduce the attractiveness of this venue to visitors to the area. The development is supported by Key Statements EC3 and policies DMB1 and DMB3.

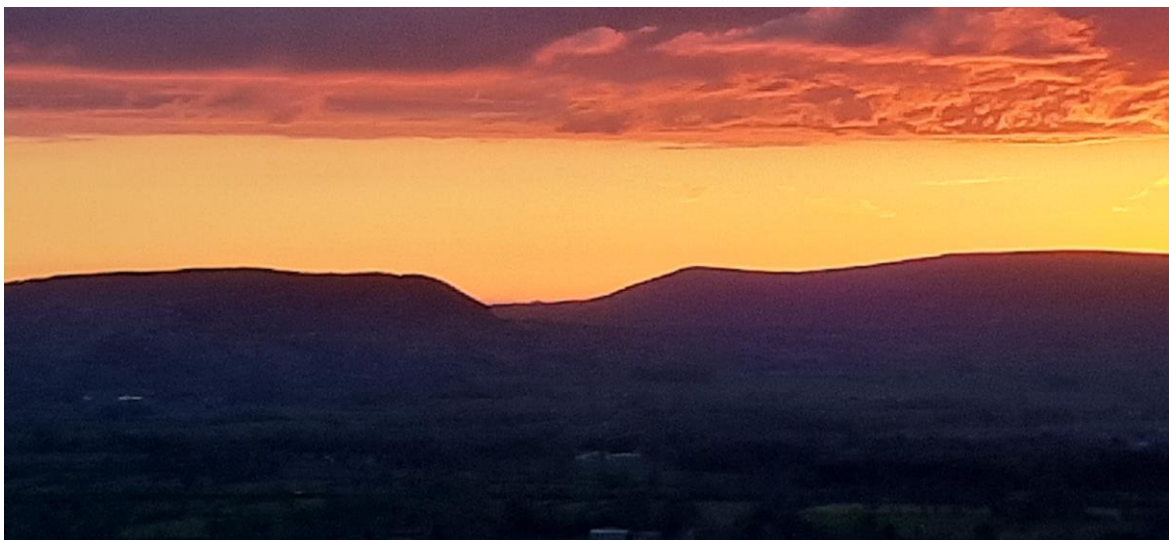


Image 6 Sunset view from beneath the canopy



Image 7 Sunset view from beneath the canopy

7 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The proposed development at the site for the retention of the canopy over the existing outdoor dining area will bring benefits to the local economy and strengthen the vitality and viability of the existing business. This successful family run business already contributes positively to the economy of the Ribble Valley and supports tourism. The retention of the canopy complements the existing restaurant business at the Wellsprings and it has drawn in new customers by providing a pleasant outdoor dining area. The retention of the canopy will secure this increase in business which has made the existing business more robust by creating an additional income stream. The retention of the pergola/canopy will benefit the local economy by drawing in visitors and tourist as well as local clientele. This will add to the breadth of visitor attractions in the Borough. Overall, the proposal accords with the policies of the Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.