

Wigmore Group Parish Council

11 September 2021

Ref Planning Application 212844 Castle Inn Proposed change of use from what is currently part of the Castle Inn public house, to form 4 holiday units as part of the operation of the Inn.

Wigmore Group Parish Council (WGPC) **objects** to this planning application for a number of reasons including several aspects of the Wigmore Group Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) with which it does not comply.

The whole of the Castle Inn lies within the Wigmore Conservation Area. The proposed development is not consistent with some aspects of NDP Policy WG9:

a. WG9 c. "Reflect the proportion of wall to opening found in the elevations of traditional buildings and employ robust detailing, avoiding the use of applied features or detailing;"

The proposal includes creation of much larger and additional openings on both the ground and first floors.

b. WG9 d. "Reinforce local identity by the use of traditional materials ... used in the Conservation Area".

The proposed steel balconies and powdered steel balcony railings are not local traditional materials. WGPC requests that, in order to comply with NDP Policy WG9 d, materials for the proposed enlarged door and window openings are clarified prior to the application be considered.

In the Design and Access Statement the applicant recognises that "The Castle Inn sits within the Wigmore Conservation Area. Although the building is not listed, the applicant team acknowledges its historic importance and that any interventions should make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area (CA) and avoid any harm to the setting of the CA or any heritage assets."

The building is in the landscape setting of nearby listed buildings, and the proposed 1.5 m wide balconies will significantly affect that historic landscape setting. At first floor level the balconies will overlook neighbouring properties, leading to significant loss of privacy, and will diminish the heritage aspects or their settings cf. NDP Policy WG10 c. Juliet-style balconies would be an alternative to minimise such loss of privacy to surrounding properties.

The proposed re-opening of a first-floor window on the west elevation, currently wholly hidden behind dead ivy is also of concern. The Parish Council requests that, as a minimum, this window is glazed with frosted glass, to avoid further invasion of privacy of the neighbouring listed building.

Ecological Survey

The Parish Council notes that not ecological survey has been submitted with the application.

Residents have reported that several pairs of Common Swifts nest annually under the eaves of the rear (north) elevation of this building, and bats are regularly observed using the building. The Parish Council requests that an ecological survey, by a suitably qualified professional ecologist should be undertaken and supplied, with proposals for any appropriate mitigation measures if protected species are identified, before further consideration of this application.

Sewage disposal

The addition of 4 holiday units will increase sewage flows through the existing foul sewage drain from the Castle Inn.

The Parish Council has considerable concerns that the existing drainage arrangements are not fit for purpose. The system is already overloaded, and causing problems to the Inn and neighbouring properties, foul smells having been reported to Environmental Health. It is understood that a number of chalets discharge sewage (using a pumping system) into the same outlet. The Parish Council requests that the existing sewage system for the Inn AND for these chalets be scrupulously assessed before the application is considered.

Public Rights of Way (PROW)

The Parish Council reiterates comments made by the PROW and requests that plans are re-submitted showing the public right of way.

Mrs Maggie Brown, Clerk.