

LISKEARD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN TOWN WORKING GROUP

REPORT ON WETHERSPOONS DESIGN CONSULTATION

INTRODUCTION

This report sets out the results from the consultation undertaken by the Liskeard Neighbourhood Plan Town Working Group around the design of the proposed Wetherspoons pub in Barras Street, Liskeard.

It is designed to give local people a voice in the planning process.

THE EMERGING POLICY

The Liskeard Neighbourhood Plan is currently being developed and does not yet have legal status. Considerable work has been undertaken however and there is emerging policy around design in the town centre.

In 2014 there was a major Neighbourhood Plan scoping consultation which received around 600 responses. One theme identified for the town centre was:

The rich heritage of the town should be preserved and new buildings should blend with the old in scale and materials, using local stone and slate.

This was supported by the Town Centre Working Group which met between December 2014 and April 2015 and which proposed objectives for the Liskeard Neighbourhood Plan including the following:

Preserve the rich heritage of the architecture and ensure new buildings meet similarly high design standards and use local materials.

The group largely endorsed the recommendations and guidance from the *Liskeard Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan December 2012*, including:

Further development within the conservation area should be limited in extent and, where necessary, fully integrated into the historic topography and settlement form. New buildings should be sited with reference to their surroundings, either to cause minimum impact on the surrounding landscape or to reflect existing historic street patterns.

*There are some sites which require redevelopment and some poorly designed modern buildings which in the future could be replaced with structures more in keeping with the sensitive historic environment. Any new buildings should avoid pastiche and 'token' local distinctiveness. Their design should be informed by the unique character of the conservation area and should be of appropriate materials, **scale, design and detailing**.*

CONSULTATION PROCESS

A simple survey (appendix 1) was made available for completion either online or in person between 23 May and 9 June, in conjunction with copies of the plans. We took the plans and surveys out onto Barras Street on 23 May and after that they were on display in Stuart House.

We publicised the survey via the local press and social media, including a facebook post which reached over 4,000 people.

CONSULTATION RESULTS

184 surveys were completed – 107 on paper and 77 online. The large number of responses and the detailed and thoughtful nature of many of the comments show how important this town centre site is to local people.

The full results are given at appendix 2. This section summarises the key themes and gives some examples of typical comments.

Views on Wetherspoons

The survey specifically concentrated on design issues but many people also chose to make wider comments.

53 people welcomed the Wetherspoons development in principle. This was the largest category of comments.

This is what Liskeard needs, more than anything. This site has been an eyesore for too long, we should welcome it with open arms.

This will be great for our town centre. From families wanting a reasonable meal out together to meeting up with friends

Nine people made comments opposing the development in principle.

Totally out of place. Will thoroughly spoil Stuart House especially very peaceful garden. Liskeard doesn't need another pub/eatery AND where's the parking?

Size of proposed building

Question 1 asked what people thought about the size of the proposed building from the plan showing the street view. 70 people (40%) said they thought it was too big and 102 (60%) said it was the right sort of size.

46 of the comments related to the building being too large. A key issue from these comments was that people thought the proposed building was too high.

The roof height is far too overbearing. As it contains only air conditioning and ancillary equipment, rather than any living space, the headroom could/should be reduced. A Mansard roof, or double hipped roofs would reduce the overall building height and provide space for the equipment without presenting an overbearing building in this location. The view down Bay Tree Hill towards St Martin's church demonstrates how prominent is this part of Barras Street on the town's topography.

It would be sad if the proposed building dominates our very ancient historic building next door. Does anyone think about history anymore?

Question 4 asked about the size of the proposed building in relation to the ground plan which showed how close it would go to the neighbouring buildings. 59 people (35%) said they thought it was too large, 2 (1%) that it was too small and 107 (64%) that it was the right sort of size.

The comments on size also include a number about the size of the ground plan. Many of these stated that there should be more space between the proposed building and Stuart House and that it should be set further back from the road.

Keep more room Stuart House side over whelms Stuart House. Difficult location, glad someone's doing something with it.

Wetherspoons are well known for the excellent job they make of restoring old buildings. This is a very important site to Liskeard being such a prominent position. I think this is an excellent opportunity for Wetherspoons to show case what they can do with a new build. Certainly don't need a poorly designed pseudo 'old' building. I think the proposed building is too large & over powering. I love the bifold doors, but certainly wouldn't wish to sit that close to such a busy main road, I feel it needs to be set back further with some green space out the front, Shouldn't loom over Stuart House.

Design of proposed building

Question 2 asked if the proposed design fitted well with the design of surrounding buildings. 108 people (65%) said yes and 59 (35%) said no. Nine people commented to say they thought the design fitted well.

The design is sympathetic with the surrounding buildings.

I don't believe it is necessary to 'disguise' a new building just to make it fit in with the surroundings; 17thC Stuart house was built in the style of it's time, a 21stC building should also reflect the era in which it is built. It would be refreshing to see Liskeard town centre to embrace a little modernity, providing a much needed amenity. Cinema next?!!

33 people commented that the design did not work well with other buildings around it.

Would expect better from Wetherspoons. Have used many of your pubs through out the country and have been mostly impressed. Please don't get sloppy and give Liskeard a raw deal. So much heritage. Including the grade 1 listed building next door! I wish to continue to be a fan in my home town, please!

Although I fully back this investment in the town is this really the most welcoming design that the architects could come up with? This town is known for it's great architecture and there seems to be little or no appreciation of that when looking at the street plan.

It is a welcome development of the site that has been derelict for far too long. BUT it appears to make no attempt to blend with the existing architecture of the street at all.

Question 3 asked 'Do you think the proposed building design will enhance the appearance of the town centre?' 118 people (72%) said yes and 47 people (28%) said no. There were a number of comments about the need for a design quality that matches that of many existing buildings.

Wetherspoons do good things with historic locations, can't they find one in Liskeard eg. Old Auction House in Well Lane the Fountain Hotel or The Railway? If they have to build new let it be of stunning design, something they and us can be proud of instead of something which could be found in any city suburb in the UK. Liskeard is full of wonderful design. Don't make mistakes like those in the past! This is a chance for Wetherspoons to show what can be done, so as it does enhance the town. I for one would welcome the brand done well.

18 people said that they thought there should be greater use of locally-appropriate materials.

1) Stuart House is slate hung. 2) Wetherspoons top exterior walls should be slate hung - proposed vertical hard cladding replaced with slate, rendering replaced with slate or local stone. Wetherspoons will be an asset to Liskeard but getting the building right is design critical.

It would have been nice to see more reclaimed materials used eg slate-hung front) so that it blended better with surrounding Georgian and Victorian buildings in Liskeard. More 'texture' would enhance it and soften the slightly bland facade.

3 people also commented to say that it would be good if the name of the building could be in Cornish.

Logistics

21 comments related to logistical issues, including:

- Difficulties with lorries unloading at the front.
- Potential noise and disorderly conduct.
- Potential for things to fall off the glass balcony.
- Siting of kitchen extractor vents.
- Bins too close to Stuart House.
- Lack of car parking.
- Possibility of cycle parking.
- The possibility of community use.

Not enough room has been provided for the very important magnolia tree at the rear of Stuart House. The route through to the rear of Stuart House should be able to be used as walking access through to a potential development of the Post Office car park. It appears on this plan to be too narrow, with fire escape stairs and a storage area for rubbish bins. The frontage should be set back from the front line in order to not overpower Stuart House. The balcony is quite bizarre and likely to be a source and focus of noise and nuisance. The very tiny disabled toilet on the ground floor with main toilets accessed only by stairs does not give the impression that this is meant to be a family venue. There are no planned family facilities and the outside space is not family-friendly.

Rachel Brooks
Liskeard Neighbourhood Plan Town Working Group
10 June 2015

WETHERSPOONS BUILDING DESIGN SURVEY

Wetherspoons have applied for planning permission on the old Taylor's Garage Site on Barras Street. We welcome the fact that there are plans to use this important site in Liskeard. We want to make sure that we end up with a good design which works with the surrounding buildings.

Please let us know what you think about Wetherspoons' proposed design by filling in this short survey. We'll make sure your views get heard in the planning process.

Before you fill it in please look at the plans on display.

1) One of the drawings shows the street view and the size of the proposed building compared to Stuart House and Kivells on either side. Do you think the proposed building is:

- Too big
- Too small
- The right sort of size

2) This drawing also shows how the building will look from the street. Do you think it fits well with the design of surrounding buildings?

- Yes
- No

3) Do you think the proposed building design will enhance the appearance of the town centre?

- Yes
- No

4) Another drawing shows the ground plan for the proposed building and how close it will go to the neighbouring buildings. Do you think it is:

- Too big
- Too small
- The right sort of size

5) Please use this box to comment further on your answers or make any other points about the proposed design.

What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

We are in the middle of developing a Neighbourhood Plan for Liskeard. It gives people like ourselves a real say in how our community develops – the way that land is used for housing, business, shops and leisure. It can also protect green spaces and influence the design of buildings and estates.

[Neighbourhood Plan logo]