

Design and Access Statement

1. Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared in support of a planning application for the provision of an external seating area at The Bear Free House, Littlehampton.

The proposal represents a modest enhancement to the existing public house, supporting its continued investment and role as a well-managed local hospitality venue.

2. Site and Surroundings

The site comprises an established public house located within Littlehampton, within a mixed-use area of commercial and residential properties.

The proposed seating area will be located on an adjacent section of public footpath directly adjoining the premises.

3. Design and Appearance

The proposal has been designed in accordance with the principles of good design as set out within the Arun Local Plan.

The seating area will comprise high-quality, durable outdoor tables and chairs arranged in a neat and orderly layout. The design reflects the character of the recently refurbished premises and maintains a cohesive appearance.

4. Scale and Layout

The proposed seating area is modest in scale and proportionate to the host premises and its established use.

The layout has been designed to:

- Maintain clear and safe circulation routes
- Avoid obstruction of entrances and exits
- Provide a comfortable and uncluttered environment

The proposal does not introduce any significant built form and remains ancillary in nature.

5. Impact on Amenity

The proposal has been carefully considered in respect of neighbouring residential amenity, in line with Arun Local Plan policies.

To ensure there is no unacceptable impact:

- The external seating area will operate strictly as an ancillary use to the public house
- The use of the seating area will cease at 21:00 hours (9:00pm) daily
- There will be no amplified music or external speakers within the seating area
- The area will be actively managed by staff during operational hours
- Seating numbers will remain modest and proportionate to the space available

Given the above controls, the proposal is not considered to give rise to unacceptable levels of noise or disturbance and will preserve neighbouring amenity.

6. Highways and Access

The proposal includes the use of a defined area of the adjacent public footpath for external seating.

The arrangement has been carefully designed to ensure that:

- A clear and unobstructed pedestrian route of no less than 1.8 metres will be maintained at all times, in accordance with inclusive access guidance
- The seating area will be clearly defined and contained, ensuring it does not extend beyond the agreed area
- There is no adverse impact on pedestrian safety, visibility, or movement
- Access for emergency services and servicing will be maintained at all times

The use of the public footpath for seating will be subject to a Pavement Licence under the Business and Planning Act 2020, ensuring compliance with all relevant highways and licensing requirements.

The site remains accessible to all users, with level access maintained.

7. Management of the Seating Area

The external seating area will be operated as part of the day-to-day management of the premises.

- Furniture will be arranged and maintained in a safe and orderly manner
- Staff will monitor the use of the space to ensure responsible behaviour
- The seating area (including the section on the public footpath) will be checked daily to ensure compliance with agreed boundaries and to maintain the required clear pedestrian route
- The area will be cleared or made unavailable for use after 21:00 hours (9:00pm)

This management approach ensures the seating area remains well-controlled and does not adversely impact the surrounding area.

8. Conclusion

The proposed external seating area is a modest, well-considered addition to The Bear Free House.

The development:

- Respects the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area
- Safeguards neighbouring amenity through clear operational controls
- Maintains safe and inclusive access, including along the public footpath

The proposal accords with the relevant policies of the Arun Local Plan and represents a positive enhancement to an established and valued local venue.