

The Spud Wagon
The Dukes Head Car Park, 56 Denmark Steet, Wokingham, RG40 2BQ

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Wokingham Borough Council
Planning Department
Civic Offices
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Dear Sir/Madam,

Heritage Statement for Change of Use of Car Park Spaces for Mobile Catering Wagon at The Dukes Head Car Park

1. Introduction

This Heritage Statement has been prepared in support of a proposal to change the use of two car parking spaces within The Dukes Head Car Park for the siting of a mobile catering wagon. The car park is located in close proximity to The Dukes Head, a building of historical significance in Wokingham, and sits within a conservation area that is subject to the regulations and considerations that protect its character. This statement outlines the relevant aspects of heritage significance, the proposed works, and the impact on the special character of the area, the setting of the listed building, and the surrounding conservation area.

2. Schedule of Works

The proposed works involve the placement of a mobile catering wagon on two designated parking spaces within The Dukes Head Car Park. The following schedule outlines the minimal alterations or additions to be made:

- **Use of two parking spaces** within The Dukes Head Car Park for mobile catering purposes, with no permanent fixtures or alterations to the surface or structure of the car park.
- **Provision of appropriate infrastructure**, such as power connections (if necessary), water supply, and waste disposal arrangements that comply with health and safety regulations.
- **Flexible setup**: The mobile catering unit is to be placed on the site and can be moved or removed. No permanent structures or fixtures will be erected.

3. Analysis of Significance

The Dukes Head and its surrounding area possess significant historical, architectural, and cultural value, particularly within the context of Wokingham's conservation area.

- **The Dukes Head:** This building is a Grade II listed property, dating from the 18th century, and is an important part of the historic fabric of Wokingham. It reflects the architectural and social history of the town, having likely been used as a coaching inn and a center of public and commercial activity for several centuries.
- **Conservation Area:** The Dukes Head Car Park is located within the Wokingham Conservation Area, which was designated to protect the character and appearance of this part of the town. This area contains many historical buildings and is significant in the development of the town, with cobbled streets and a variety of architectural styles that represent the evolution of Wokingham through time.
- **Archaeological and Historic Value:** The area surrounding The Dukes Head has the potential to contain archaeological deposits that are linked to the medieval and early modern periods. Although the immediate car park area is unlikely to contain substantial archaeological remains, the adjacent historical buildings and street layout are critical to understanding the development of Wokingham.

4. Justification for the Proposed Works

The proposal to place a mobile catering wagon in two designated parking spaces within The Dukes Head Car Park is considered appropriate and necessary for the following reasons:

- **Enhancing Community Engagement:** The mobile catering service will provide a beneficial and vibrant amenity for both local residents and visitors to Wokingham. It will contribute to the vitality of the area and promote the local economy by supporting small businesses.
- **The Dukes Head Financial Impact:** The Dukes Head kitchen is permanently closed and does not offer its patrons any food offering. Our commercial deal will not only benefit the patrons but also will financially benefit The Dukes Head. This added revenue will assist in maintaining the aesthetics of the property and the surrounding area.
- **Minimal Impact:** The proposed works involve minimal alteration to the car park and will have no lasting impact on the listed building or conservation area. The mobile catering wagon will be placed temporarily and will not require any permanent fixtures, thus preserving the existing character of the site.
- **Preservation of Heritage Value:** Given that the wagon will be a temporary structure, the overall character and setting of The Dukes Head and its surroundings will remain intact. The car park area is not a key feature of the listed building's immediate setting, and the use of two spaces for the catering wagon will not interfere with the principal views or architectural integrity of the building.
- **Compatibility with the Historic Setting:** The Dukes Head Car Park is located within a mixed-use area where public and commercial activity is present. The proposal is consistent with the existing character of the area, which accommodates a range of modern functions alongside historic buildings.

5. Impact Assessment

The impact of the proposed works on the special character of The Dukes Head, the conservation area, and the setting of adjacent listed buildings is minimal. The following key factors have been considered:

- **Visual Impact:** The mobile catering wagon is designed to be unobtrusive and portable. It will be removed at the end of each day, ensuring that the car park does not permanently alter the visual environment. The character of the historic buildings, including The Dukes Head, will not be compromised by the presence of the catering unit.
- **Heritage and Character Preservation:** The integrity and character of the listed building and its surrounding area will be safeguarded, as no physical alterations or permanent structures will be introduced. The proposal will not harm significant views or architectural features of The Dukes Head or the broader conservation area.
- **Public Access and Amenities:** The nature of the mobile catering unit ensures that public access to the area remains unimpeded, while offering a positive addition to the local community and tourism.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the proposed change of use of two car parking spaces for a mobile catering wagon at The Dukes Head Car Park has been carefully considered with respect to the heritage values of the site. The proposal will have no significant impact on the listed building, its setting, or the character of the conservation area. The mobile catering unit is a temporary and flexible structure that will enhance the vibrancy and economy of the area while preserving the essential character and historical significance of The Dukes Head and its surrounding environment.

This Heritage Statement demonstrates that the proposed works are in line with the objectives of heritage preservation, providing a balance between modern needs and the protection of historic assets