

HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Proposed Change of Use to A3 Bar and Restaurant with Beer Garden

Former Barclays Bank, 9 The Parade, Neath, Port Talbot, SA11 1RB
Grade II Listed Building (Cadw Reference: 11819)

1. Introduction

This Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) has been prepared to support a full planning application and listed building consent for the change of use of the ground floor of the former Barclays Bank building at 9 The Parade, Neath, to an A3 bar and restaurant, including the installation of a commercial kitchen extraction system and formation of a rear beer garden. The property is a Grade II listed building situated within the Neath Town Centre Conservation Area.

The purpose of this HIA is to assess the impact of the proposed works on the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building and its contribution to the wider heritage setting.

2. Description of the Heritage Asset

Listing Description (summary):

9 The Parade is a three-storey early 20th-century stone building with classical detailing, formerly housing Barclays Bank. The building features an ashlar limestone façade with symmetrical window arrangements, decorative pilasters, and stone window surrounds. The interior, historically used for banking operations, may contain features of interest such as plaster detailing or timber panelling (subject to inspection).

Significance:

The building is significant for its architectural quality, materials, and its contribution to the historic townscape of Neath. It forms part of a group of commercial and civic buildings that reflect the town's Edwardian prosperity and civic identity.

3. Summary of Proposed Works

- Change of use of the **ground floor** from A2 (bank) to A3 (bar and restaurant).
- Installation of a **commercial kitchen** with associated extraction fan (mounted discreetly to the rear).
- Creation of a beer garden in the rear yard, with planters and seating.
- Installation of bat and bird boxes under the rear eaves to enhance ecology.

No external changes are proposed to the front elevation or principal façade.

4. Assessment of Impact

a) Impact on Exterior

- Front Elevation: No alterations proposed. The primary architectural character of the listed building will be preserved entirely.
- Rear Elevation: Minor interventions, including the installation of an extraction fan and discreet bat/bird boxes, are to be sited away from public view and designed to be reversible and low-impact.
- Beer Garden: The rear yard is of limited architectural significance. The introduction of planters and seating represents a light-touch enhancement that improves site usability without harm to heritage fabric.

b) Impact on Interior

- Internal works are limited to fit-out and service installation for bar, kitchen, and WC areas. No known listed interior features will be removed or obscured. If any historic fabric is uncovered (e.g., cornicing, joinery), it will be preserved and incorporated sensitively where possible.

c) Cumulative Heritage and Townscape Impact

- The proposal brings a long-vacant listed building back into active use, supporting its preservation and maintenance.
- The use as a bar and restaurant is in keeping with the town centre's mixed-use character and the conservation area's vitality.
- Ecology enhancements and soft landscaping to the rear add environmental and visual value without detracting from heritage significance.

5. Mitigation Measures

- The extraction unit will be low-profile, acoustically controlled, and mounted discreetly on the rear elevation.
- All alterations are fully reversible.
- Any signage proposed in future will be the subject of a separate application to ensure appropriate detailing.

6. Conclusion

The proposed works have been carefully designed to respect the special architectural and historic interest of this Grade II listed building. There will be no loss of historic fabric or visual harm to the principal elevation. The scheme proposes only minor and sympathetic alterations that are fully justified in heritage terms.

By reactivating this important town centre asset, the proposal will secure its long-term conservation, enhance the wider streetscape, and contribute positively to the historic environment.

The development is therefore compliant with Planning Policy Wales, Cadw's Conservation Principles, and LDP Policy BE2 – Listed Buildings.