

Design and Access Statement (DAS)

Property: The Sessions House, Sheep Market, Spalding, PE11 1BB

Applicant: Andrew Blach (Castle Events Limited)

Proposal: Change of use of the ground-floor rear cell block from residential (C3) to Cafe and Bar (Use Class E(b)).

1. Introduction and Vision

This statement supports a planning application for the Change of Use of the historic rear cell block at The Sessions House. The objective is to transition underutilized residential rooms into a vibrant, community-facing cafe and bar.

The Sessions House venue will provide a unique "heritage experience" for Spalding. The vision includes establishing

- **The Cell Bar:** An evening cocktail bar - serving craft beers, cocktails and light bites.

This leverages existing commercial infrastructure within the building and establishes a new ground floor service area and patron seating.

2. Design and Layout

Following a commitment to heritage preservation, the "design" of the proposal is intentionally minimal and non-invasive:

- **Internal Layout:** The 1843 masonry plan form (five cells, 2 toilet units and a central corridor) is retained in its entirety. No walls are being moved or removed.
- **Furnishings:** The change of use is facilitated exclusively by freestanding, non-fixed furniture. This includes tables, seating, and a free-standing bar unit, ensuring the physical environment remains flexible and the heritage asset is protected.
- **Finishes:** To honor the building's history, the floors will remain in their existing concrete/stone state, avoiding the need for modern adhesives or floor coverings.

3. Access and Circulation

Ensuring the site is inclusive and safe for all visitors is a priority:

- **Patron Access:** Visitors will enter via the principal Sheep Market entrance, proceeding through the secure internal courtyard to the rear cell block. This creates a clear, managed, and pedestrian-friendly route.
- **Inclusive Design:** The ground floor of the rear wing is level with the courtyard, providing step-free access for wheelchair users and patrons with limited mobility.
- **Emergency Egress:** Existing fire exits and residential safety routes are maintained. The thick masonry walls provide inherent fire compartmentalization.

4. Impact on Local Amenity

The proposal is designed to be a "good neighbor" within the Sheep Market context:

- **Noise Mitigation:** The 1843 masonry walls are exceptionally thick, providing natural acoustic insulation. The courtyard would continue to be used as an outdoor seated drinking and dining area - this is in line with current practices.
- **Waste Management:** All commercial waste is stored in designated containers within the private land of the building and collected by a licensed contractor, ensuring no bins are placed on the public highway.
- **Opening Hours:** The proposed hours (up to 00:00 Saturday) are consistent with the existing premises license and compatible with a town-center location.

5. Economic and Community Benefit

The project represents a significant investment in Spalding's town center:

- **Employment:** The transition will create the equivalent of **5.00 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) jobs**.
- **Sustaining Heritage:** Revenue generated will support the long-term maintenance of this Grade II listed asset.
- **Community Vitality:** By opening the cells to the public, the project enhances the cultural offering of the Sheep Market, supporting the local evening economy

6. Conclusion

The proposal represents a sustainable "optimum viable use" for a heritage asset. By adopting a furniture-only, non-invasive approach, the project preserves the 1843 fabric while creating jobs and a unique social hub for the people of Spalding.

Date: January 2026