



April 2017

Friends of the Packhorse | Update Newsletter

*Major refurbishment
works about to start*

Progress Update | Building works to start

After a protracted procurement exercise, we have now down-selected to a single builder to undertake the major works required to return the Packhorse to operational life. This has taken longer than we would have liked but we have always worked to the principle that it is more important to get the best price/quote agreed than to rush into the works. The building sub-team (Nick A, Nick E and Terry P) have worked tirelessly over a very detailed specification document to get us to this exciting place, despite the complications posed by Listed Building consents. Following final detailed scope/price negotiation with our selected builder, we hope to commission these works in the next few weeks.



Packhorse front | Toilet block and front earth to be removed for new car park

Ahead of this main contractor contract, we have commissioned a specialist contractor (Gibbons) to undertake earthworks at the front of the building, which consists of removing the external toilet block and a section of the bank in order to open up the façade and create six new car parking spaces. This work will take c. three weeks and should start imminently.

*Front earthworks due
to start imminently*

Scope of building works

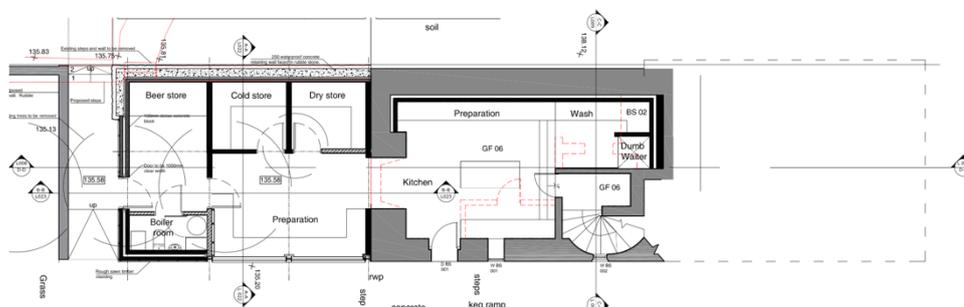
A critical aspect of the planning conditions that were placed on us was the movement of the kitchen from the first floor to the basement. In order to accommodate the move an extension is required, along with a dumb-waiter to carry food to the ground and first floors. Whilst this facilitates the welcome benefit of creating a usable public space on the first floor, it clearly has cost implications. Bringing a dilapidated heritage property back to life requires an attention to detail, especially around the fixtures, fittings, walls, doors and windows. This too has resulted in higher refurbishment costs than our original pre-planning permission estimates. Our focus in recent months has, therefore, been to keep these costs down whilst still opening a pub we can all be proud of.

This careful cost management necessitates phasing the building works. In the first (major) phase, the main contractor will build the extension, fully refurbish the basement and ground floors, fit all the mechanical/electrical services, structurally fix the first floor (floor/ceiling) and build the first-floor internal toilets.

This will allow us to get the pub open.

Thereafter, in subsequent phases, we will explore using specialist contractors and volunteer support to complete the remaining aspects; for example: garden landscaping, first floor public rooms, second floor flat, and repairs to upper floor doors/windows.

If you have a relevant trade/skill that can support in any of this – please volunteer (see below)!



Proposed extension to Packhorse basement | New kitchen

Original fireplace restored

One of the joys of this project is that so many people from within the community have played their part already in assisting us to get to where we are today. When we open it will truly be as the result of many men, women and children generously giving of their skills and time. One such fine example of this in recent weeks is the contribution by Nigel Bryant (master mason and conservator) and his wife Becky.

If you remember, an original C17th stone fireplace was discovered behind the plasterwork in the saloon bar during the building strip out (another great example of volunteer support). It had been badly damaged to make way for modern fireplace flues (Victorian and c. WWII). There are probably only a handful of people in the country who could have dealt with such a conservation challenge and we were lucky to have one of them in our midst.



Saloon bar fireplace | Stages on the restoration journey

Nigel and Becky recently spent c. 10 days repairing the fireplace to its original glory – soon to be a major feature of the new saloon bar on opening. Many thanks again to them both!

The Packhorse Bat

Did you know we have a resident bat? Just another one of the “features” we have had to deal with. A bat loft has had to be factored into the designs. This is due to be installed before the end of April. **All suggestions for naming our resident creature appreciated.**

Project Financials and Fundraising

Q. Remind me, how much has the project cost to date?

A. Thus far, the only significant expenditure item has been the repurchase of the building. This required c. £525k of the raised monies (building price plus related transaction costs).

Q. What spend items remain to get us to open day?

A. The major item is the necessary building/garden refurbishment works. Additionally, we need to budget for the front earthworks as well as the operational fit out of the new kitchen and pub (furniture, fittings, fires etc.), signage and initial working capital. We also anticipate further professional advisory fees.

Q. What is the latest financial/fundraising estimate to get us to open day?

A. Post the building purchase, we originally estimated an additional £375k to get us to open day. With the (planning permission) enhanced refurbishment requirements/costs (even phasing the works), we now estimate needing £500k. We believe we should now cap the additional pre-opening expense at this level, delaying some aspects until the pub is successfully trading and using volunteer labour for side projects etc. This may mean we don't have everything in place on day one (such as finished first floor rooms), but it is essential that we now manage to a fixed budget.

Q. So how much is left to raise?

A. We currently have c. £260k in the bank. So, we have a final **£240k** to raise.

Q. When do you hope to open the Packhorse for business?

A. This is – of course – dependent on these final funds being raised. A late summer 2017 opening is now unrealistic but – with adequate funding and builder cooperation – there is every chance we could have the pub open by Christmas (and what a party that will be). BUT, to achieve this we will really need all funds in place by **01 September** (so that we can begin final operational preparations).

Q. How can I help make this happen?

A. The Packhorse shareholder opportunity remains open. You can join c. 350 shareholders and be part of this unique community ownership project for just a £500 investment. See www.packhorsebath.co.uk for the application form (or fill in a form at one of our “pop up” days. If you have over £10k to invest there are significant government tax incentives also (again – please speak to the team to hear more).

Q. Will the pub be open at all during the summer?

A. Possibly. Our priority is to get the building works commissioned and underway. If there is any gap between contracts or if we can safely open it up whilst interior works are under way then we will seek to do this in the summer months (May-August) for, say, Friday evening and Saturday and/or Sunday. Please keep an eye out on our social media channels for more.

Volunteers Sought | Can you help us open?

An incredible aspect of this project is how many people have “touched it” to keep it moving along: surveyors, builders, QS, architectural support, construction project management, pub experts, garden/landscape experts, accountants, lawyers, business advisors, designers, artists, IT experts, electricians, journalists, master masons, labourers etc. It is this diverse contribution from across our community that will make the end result so utterly unique – and so utterly “ours”. These skills (particularly building trade, landscape/garden and interior design / fit out) are going to be even more critical in the final stages. If you have such skills and can commit time with some certainty (please don't volunteer otherwise) then please let us have your contact details!

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