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DESIGN ACCESS & HERITAGE STATEMENT TO ACCOMPANY PROPOSAL FOR
NEW OUTBUILDING AT "THE HAYBARN", PACKWOOD LANE, LAPWORTH, SOLIHULL B94
6AU

WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCIL REF. W/20/0271.



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Cover: General view of The Haybarn and outbuildings from gap in hedge alongside the canal, 11th July 2021. The building proposed for replacement is centre left, below the row of rooflights. See also **Photo 5**.

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INTRODUCTION

1. The writer was commissioned by Mr. A. Stone-Fewings via LiteBox Architecture to compile a Heritage Statement in conjunction with proposals to build a replacement outbuilding at The Haybarn, replacing an existing timber-framed structure. A detailed site visit was made on Sunday, 11th July, 2021.
2. A heritage statement is required because the site lies close to designated and nondesignated heritage assets, comprising:
 - The Stratford on Avon Canal, which is part of the Warwick District Canal Conservation Area, designated recently (in 2019).
 - Lock Cottage, a Grade II listed building alongside Lock no. 7 and Bridge 32.
 - Lock nos. 7-14, which are a Grade II listed building, including the northern basin walls and Bridges 32 and 33.
 - A moat on the northern side of Lapworth Farm Cottages, outside the conservation area, is included on the Historic Environment Record and may therefore be deemed a non-designated heritage asset.
3. This report concludes that the impact upon heritage assets, both designated and non-designated, will be negligible and not harmful.

THE SCOPE OF THIS STATEMENT

4. The need for Statements of Heritage Significance arises from paragraph 189 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) which says:

“ In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.”

5. Paragraph 190 says that the local authority should judge any impacts upon a heritage asset, amplified by Paragraph 10 of the National Historic Environment guidance (revised 23/7/2019) which says:

“In most cases the assessment of the significance of the heritage asset by the local planning authority is likely to need expert advice in addition to the information provided by the applicant, historic environment record, similar sources of information and inspection of the asset itself. Advice may be sought from appropriately qualified staff and experienced in-house experts or professional consultants, complemented as appropriate by consultation with National Amenity Societies and other statutory consultees and other national and local organisations with relevant expertise.”

6. I note that the District Council’s guidance on heritage statements says that one of the basic requirements is to include a heritage impact assessment to comply with paragraph 189. This is not in fact true. Published guidance from Historic England¹ clarifies that it is the local authority’s responsibility to assess the impact of proposals upon a heritage asset. Impact assessments produced by applicants are therefore good practice, but optional.

7. Nevertheless, the guidance recommends that applicants should adopt good practice and ensure that they are sufficiently informed about the significance of heritage sites to understand the potential impacts of proposals. Proposals can then be appropriately shaped prior to submission, and the local authority can be better provided with information on significance. Good practice has been taken into account in preparing this statement.

¹ Historic England 2019 Statement of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets Historic England Advice Note 12. Swindon. Historic England.

THE HERITAGE ASSETS

8. **The Stratford-upon-Avon Canal** was built between 1793 and 1816 at a cost of £297,000, and runs for 25.6 miles (41.0 km). The section in Warwick District was designated a conservation area in 2019. Following acquisition by a railway company in 1856, traffic on the canal gradually declined, and by the mid-20th century it was barely navigable. The efforts of the Inland Waterways Association and National Trust secured the canal from closure, and it was taken over by British Waterways in 1988.

9. The conservation area appraisal describes this length of the canal as “rural and intimate ... with narrow locks and split bridges” and briefly notes Lapworth Farm as “a simple collection of red brick [buildings] with slate and tile roofs.”

10. **The Grade II listed cottage at Lock no. 7** has clear and obvious group value with the locks, and faces east down the lock flight. Its plain and functional appearance, and small scale, are typical of the type. Its other elevations are secondary.

11. **Locks 7 -14 inclusive**, as a group, possess great individuality and a strong sense of place. The locks are clearly popular with walkers and their heritage significance of all kinds (aesthetic, communal, evidential, historic) is easy to appreciate. The pounds alongside each lock considerably increase the dominance of the water surfaces and heighten the picturesque qualities and drama of the group.

12. **A moat on the northern side of Lapworth Farm Cottages**, outside the conservation area, is included on the Historic Environment Record and may therefore be deemed a nondesignated heritage asset. The existing house and converted outbuildings at Lapworth Farm, which appear on superficial inspection to date from the 18th to early 20th centuries, may represent the later phases of continual occupation of the site from the mediaeval period.

13. However, I consider that the moat does not have a bearing on the acceptability or otherwise of the current application, and therefore it is not considered further in this statement.

THE APPLICATION SITE AND THE PROPOSAL

14. Lapworth Farm is now divided into three residential properties. The farm cottages bounding the north side of the farmyard were perhaps one house originally, and are now one house again. An early 20th century range on the east side of the yard was converted to residential use under application ref. W/00/0686 (approved 17/8/2000) and is now the home of the present applicants, called the Haybarn.

15. The earlier buildings on the west side of the yard are converted to another residence called the Old Barn, converted at much the same time as the Haybarn.

16. Further west is a modern agricultural building, altered and converted to offices under planning application refs. W/17/1774 and 2205. It is more striking and dominant in

relation to the canal than the earlier buildings, because of its size, design and materials and because it is more exposed and stands aside from the historic grouping.

17. The Haybarn has a large paddock extending to the south-east, bounded to the south by Locks 8 and 9; the land south of the house itself is included in the conservation area boundary. The boundary therefore includes the building which it is now intended to replace. From the evidence of early Ordnance Survey sheets, this building may encroach slightly on land that was once part of the lane, but is now part of the applicant's property. The lane at this point is now reduced to a narrow track.

18. Scrub, notably blackthorn, softens the impact of the existing building from the lane and makes it appear very discreet. Seen from the lock cottage nearby, which is the most significant vantage point, it is barely visible, even though the trees and hedges were without leaves at the time of my visit.

19. There is no intention to remove any of the scrub, and on the contrary it could be supplemented and managed to make a more effective screen.

20. The current building comprises a garage and stores. It is of an awkward shape and massing, rather at odds with the "simplicity" of the existing buildings as noted in the conservation area appraisal. The tapered footprint, and lean-to addition on the east side, are particularly inconsistent with plain vernacular forms.

21. The proposed replacement building measures 4.8 x 10 metres, with a ridge height of 4.49 metres. It mostly replaces the volume and footprint of the existing building. Precise details of the external materials are negotiable, but the intention is to clad the main elevations with larch boarding, and to cover the roof with tiles. Timber cladding is a useful material to suggest subordination of buildings even when they are in fact of permanent construction, and also strikes an appropriate note in this green and leafy, rural setting.

IMPACT OF THE PROPOSAL

22. Exploration of the setting of the proposal in relation to the canal revealed three potential vantage points:

- a). From above Lock 7.
- b). From the canal cottage by Lock 7, looking north along the footpath.
- c). From gaps in the hedgerow bounding the north side of the lock flight (Locks 7-14)

These will now be described in turn:

a). From above Lock 7.



Photo 1. View looking north-east towards application site from between locks 6 and 7.

23. In **Photo 1**, the applicant's property "The Haybarn" is visible centre left, but the existing timber outbuildings to its right are hidden by intervening planting, and the proposed new building would be similarly screened. I therefore consider that there would be no harm arising from the proposal as seen from here.

b). From the canal cottage by lock 7, looking north along the footpath.



Photo 2. View from the “split bridge” at lock no. 7, looking north to the proposal site, which is not visible from this viewpoint.



Photo 3. View to site from outside the conservation area, i.e. from track to north of split bridge at Lock no. 7. The proposal site is on the right-hand side of the track, where the existing buildings are barely visible, even in winter. The proposed building is not substantially larger.

24. **Photographs 2 and 3**, above, are sufficient without further elaboration to show how little impact the proposal would have from lock no 7 and the associated lock cottage.

c). From gaps in the hedgerow bounding the north side of the lock flight (locks 7-14)



Photo 4. View to application site from gap in hedgerow near lock 9. NB This view can only be obtained by going to some effort to reach through the hedgerow.



Photo 5. The same view as Photo 4, zoomed.

25. **Photographs 4 and 5** show that the silhouette of the proposed new building would be totally eclipsed by existing structures and planting that flank and back the site. The pentroofed timber building to the left of the group is to remain as it is.

CONCLUSION

26. I have taken due account of the heritage assets in the vicinity of the site and have carefully considered how the proposal would affect their settings. I conclude that the proposed building would in fact be barely visible from any relevant locations and that it would in any case be of a better form and materials than the building it would replace.

27. As such, I suggest that no harm to heritage assets would arise from the proposal, and that no further mitigation is required by design amendments. Control over precise external materials can be exercised, if thought necessary, by use of planning conditions.

P. E. Heath, August 2021.