

Toll Gate, Shawford

Applicant: Mark Johnson

Heritage and Design Statements

December 2023



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Context

Toll Gate Cottage, as the name suggests is one of a good number of Turnpike Houses or Tollgates positioned along two turnpike roads, connecting Bath and Warminster, originally owned by the Blackdog Turnpike Trust.

The property is Grade II as was listed in 1984.

The property now sits immediately adjacent to the very busy A36 trunk road which follows the route of the old Turnpike road.

A pre-application for the proposed alterations and extension was submitted in August 2023 ref: 2023/1104/L2PA

Relevant Planning History

Planning Records held at Somerset-East go back to a first application in 1978 for the erection of the new stable and store/tack Room. Documentation is no longer held, but we believe this to have given permission for the bradstone and block built store and stable block at the south end of the drive. This application pre-dated the listing of the property.

Ref: 060963/001

A second application followed almost a decade later, in 1987 for a further timber stable block housing 3 horses for private use - This was also approved, and built. (Ref 060963/002)

Both these buildings are positioned some distance from the dwelling, sited on land that did not form part of the Tollgate property.

In 1991 Application Ref: 060963/003 requested improvements to the vehicular access of the property. These were approved and implemented. Although no documentation is now held on file, the drive boundary walls are all built in stone but clearly of recent construction. It is fair to assume that providing wide safer access and better visibility was vital at this position on the busy trunk road.

In 1997 the then owner sought a Certificate of Lawfulness for an existing use of the annex positioned adjacent to the cottage. Permission was granted for this to continue in use as residential accommodation. (Ref: 060963/004)

It is not known when the annex was erected, but was certainly built prior to the Listing of the Property in 1984. Photos taken October 1983, included within the Somerset Historic Record clearly show the annex. Early 1970's would be consistent with the materials used, construction, lack of insulation and felted roof.

Finally, in 2006, previous owners applied for a two storey extension on the East Elevation which was refused. (Ref 060963/005 & 060963/006). However, permission was granted for a considerably smaller single storey extension in the same location, which was approved in June 2006 and has been built. (Ref 060963/007 & 060963/008.)



View of Tollgate Cottage looking North along A36



View of Tollgate Cottage looking South along A36



Tollgate Cottage North-west Elevation



Tollgate Cottage South-east Elevation



Tollgate Cottage South-west Rear Elevation



Tollgate Cottage Looking North-west toward existing Annex

There is no getting away from the fact that this property now sits right up against the busy trunk road A36 running between Salisbury & Warminster and Bath to the North.

Seen from this point of view the building is dirty, affected by the proximity of traffic and pollution, protected only by a line of reflective road bollards.

The original entrance to the Tollgate is understandably sealed shut. Nevertheless, the unusual built form of the building and its proximity to the road and river, make it immediately legible as an old Turnpike House.

Viewed from within the property, the original stone walls and features of the house remain very much intact. Solid stone walls, and stone tiled pitched roofs.

The original toll house facing onto the road has a unique curved facade and is finished in cut ashlar. The toll house entrance and office sits at road level, clearly distinguishable from the living quarters to the rear which sit a half storey lower.

The most recent single storey extension sits on the east facade, at lower ground level, sitting well below and largely hidden by the old stone retaining wall.

To the rear the historic architecture of the house, again remains largely intact. Original windows have been lost and replaced and the upper floor level of the gable cement rendered.

A stream runs through the site immediately along the rear elevation, and on to the River Avon. Therefore the house is reached via two small pedestrian footbridges. One to the south, into a small yard and the recent extension, and one giving access from the sitting room patio doors, under the dilapidated timber framed verandah. Being the back of the property there is no front door, which does make it a bit confusing for visitors arriving the first time!

Heritage Statement

Listing reference

Heritage Category:
Listed Building Grade: II
List Entry Number: 1058905
Date first listed: 16-Nov-1984
List Entry Name:
TOLLGATE COTTAGE ON A36
Statutory Address:
TOLLGATE COTTAGE ON A36

Details
ST75SE TELLISFORD CP SHAWFORD

4/476 Tollgate Cottage on A36 - II

Part of
Eighteenth and nineteenth-century turnpike road, North Somerset boundary to the Wiltshire boundary. (26712)

Turnpike house and tollgate, now a Cottage. Mid C18. Generally rubble Doubling stone with ashlar front and stone slate hipped roof central stone chimney stack. 2 storeys, rear wing at a lower level, "L" with roadside elevation and hipped roof. 9- and 12-pane top hung casements, rear wing with later 4-pane casements, one 2-light plain stone mullion window. 6-panel door in square head frame, plain ashlar reveals and flat, slate hood.

Listing NGR: ST7928953509

Recorded by NRIM. The roof is on three levels, and the house has been continuously occupied since its construction sometime between 1752 and 1817. Sketch plan. {4}



The Shawford Tollgate was built by the Blackdog Turnpike Trust which ran two turnpike roads out of Bath to Warminster & Frome, between 1772 to 1870s; One following the route of the current A36 & the second running from Bath through Midford and Hinton Charterhouse.

Tollgates were placed where the turnpike route could be restricted and easily controlled, so that travellers could not evade paying. Positioning adjacent to the bridge and river crossed was therefore a perfect location.

The property is now recorded as one of only 3 surviving tollgate houses built by the trust out of a total of 10 known sites. (One of these may not be original as the toll house in Beckington is considerably grander than other typical tollgate properties.)

Tithe mapping dating back to 1840 shows the Shawford Tollgate built footprint largely as it stands today, With the exception of a Victorian flat roof extension and the east facade single storey modern extension. It is nonetheless fairly substantial size compared to many typical tollgates, though perhaps more of a typical size for this area.

The distinctive split level construction of the Turnpike house is clearly visible in both 1983 images opposite. The higher level, cut ashlar curved facade being the public face of the tollgate, with the lower 'living quarters' sitting the rear. Though distinctive in appearance and outlook, it is clear that these two elements of the building are contemporary with each other as the original internal stair uses each level at its half landing - providing direct access to all floor levels. It is very possible that the further south side two storey element was built a little later, but was certainly in place by 1840.



Photographs taken in 1983 before the Vehicular site access was built. In inclusion of the adjacent annex building is visible in both images

The house has been constrained from further extensive additions by its position sandwiched between the road and the stream. However, a small two-storey extension was added sometime within the Victorian era Still built in stone, but a much slimmer wall construction, and with an unusual flat stone tiled roof, it would be a fair assumption that this was added to provide washroom and bathroom facilities. (The flat roof is currently leaking badly and in need of significant repair work.)

Internally, much of the original building fabric and spaces remain intact - perhaps most notably the stairs, the two front road facing rooms, and sitting room at lower level. The original pitched roof structure and timbers are also almost entirely intact.

At first floor the plan has been altered considerably, with modern partitions added to enclose bedrooms and the bathroom relocated to the south-east corner, now divide, what would have originally been a single room.

In terms of original joinery, almost every window and original door has been replaced. The only original door being the Tollhouse 6 panel front door, and the only window - the small four panel casement adjacent to the front door.

The stone roof tiles and walls are original. Excessive corrosion of the stone blocks is exhibited in the unprotected stone porch at the tollhouse front door and repairs are necessary.

There is no original Guttering, which is either missing or has otherwise been replaced with plastic gutters and down pipes.



Proposals

A number of key proposals were presented at pre-application submitted on 31st August 2023. The conservation visited and property and a formal response was returned on 2nd October 2023. The scope of the proposals remains largely as submitted for pre-application. The officers response was generally constructive and supportive. Comments and specific requirements for the formal Planning and Listed Building Consent applications have been addressed.

1. Main House - Ground Floor

The Existing 2006 ground floor extension offers little architectural merit. While it provided much needed dining space with the kitchen area, it did not create a visible or clearly define front door for the occupants or visitors. The original Toll house front door is simply not accessible and safe to use as a front door, with no pavement access.

The proposal for a small extension to this previous extension was acceptable in principle. The proposed extension will provide a legible and accessible front door entrance, without affecting the hierarchy and vernacular architecture of the original Toll House.

It will, though a very small addition, allow for a simple reordering of the space with a separate defined entrance area and new ground floor WC - which will then also house the washing machine and dryer (currently plumbed in and by necessity, sitting within the inefficiently shaped, lobbied entrance to the house.)

This small extension will extend a further 2.5 metres into the existing courtyard and be substantially concealed from view by an existing retained stone and brick store, and the stone retaining walls along the north and east boundary and drive way.

The roof we will be rebuilt with a gentle simple pitched roof that will sit comfortably below the existing first floor windows, and will be finished in slate, rather than the heavier modern plain tiles of the existing extension. We looked at hipping the roof, but for such a small and narrow building, the resulting heavier construction and ridge tiles offered no advantage. Furthermore the simple gable end tied much better visually with the stone gable of the adjacent two storey facade and mono pitched roof of the external store.

Articulation of the new extension will however, be provided by building and finishing the new extension in handmade red brickwork to match and tie in with the Victorian brick on the adjacent external store. This will be a significant visual improvement to the existing bradstone and exposed blockwork. A simple flat roof lead finished canopy will provide visual clarity that this is now the main front door and entrance.

Works will also include notable heritage gains which will include

- Much needed repairs to the retaining walls, removing self seeded bushes and small trees whose roots are growing through the masonry and causing damage.
- Replacement of the existing plastic guttering and downpipes with new PPC metal rainwater goods.
- Use of conservation style roof lights, more in keeping with the heritage setting.
- The existing modern 'aga' lean-to bolted on the kitchen will be removed and be replaced with a new vernacular window, requiring no structural alteration or loss of historic fabric.
- Associated external works and new railings - covered in later section of report.

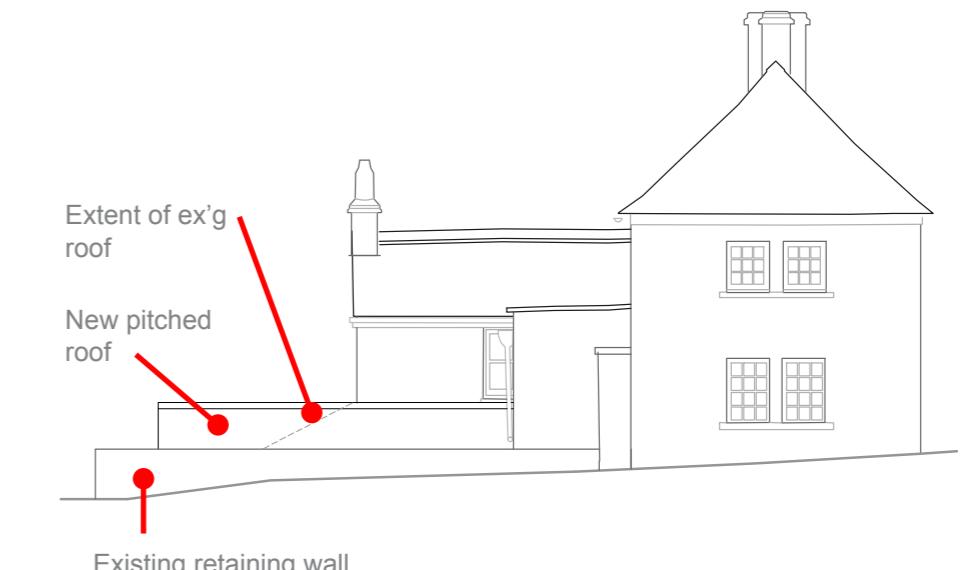
No other alterations at lower ground floor Level



2006 Extension - 'Front' door of property

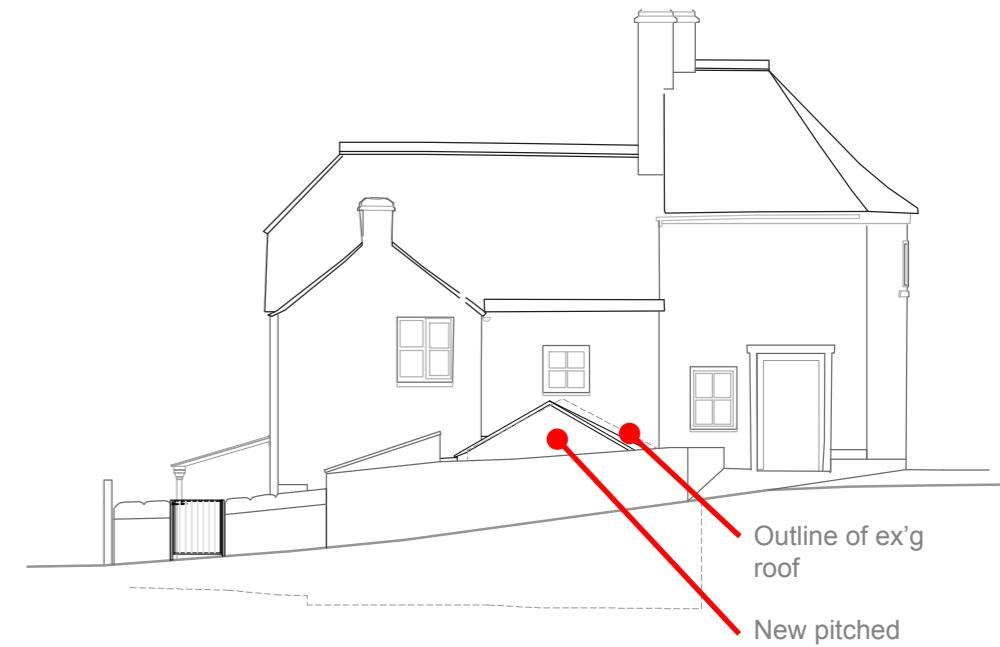


2006 Extension sits behind the old retaining walls, largely unseen from the road



Proposed North-East - Roadside levels Not to Scale

Datum 45.00m



Proposed South-East - From Driveway Not to Scale

Datum 45.00m

Proposals

2. Main House - Front Toll House Rooms, - Upper ground & Upper First floor Levels

Both these rooms retain the access, form and many of the original features and quality of the spaces.

However, there are two significant issues which mean that both rooms are currently uninhabitable. The ashlar walls are only 200mm solid stone in thickness. Both rooms suffer from excessive damp ingress, which is now causing considerable damage, particularly within the first floor bedroom. Constantly Wet masonry offers no thermal performance.

And secondly, of course the noise pollution from the A36 is simply too much.

Our proposals seek to retain the quality and forms of the rooms but address these issues by simply creating a ventilated cavity and adding in an acoustically separated metal framed lightweight, acoustic & thermally insulated lining to the ashlar walls that will exactly follow the curvature of the masonry.

The featured existing dado panelling will then be reinstated as agreed with the conservation officer.

Within the upper ground Toll house , the one retaining sash window and original front door will, of course, be retained, repaired as needed, and redecorated.

The front door is rarely used and will generally be fixed shut, but occasional access must be possible for removals and moving larger items in and out.

All other windows on the curved facade are modern top hung or fixed sashes and will be replaced.

The design of the replacement windows is taken directly from the one remaining 4 panelled casement window which is of almost identical proportions to those in the first floor bedroom.

Detailed joinery drawings are included in the submission. All windows on the primary public facades will be single glazed with secondary glazing internally.

As discussed with the Conservation Officer on site, the original Georgian front door will remain in place, to be a visible part of the architecture on the external facade. Internally a fully glazed fixed secondary glazing panel will be installed, as detailed. This will be designed to fit within the door recess in the same manner as the window secondary glazing. The framing will be minimised as the panel will be fixed shut and design for occasional removal only, with no need for hinges or a secondary frame.

Externally, the two stone blocks within the porch will be repaired with new ashlar stone reinstated to exactly match the original profiles as needed to maintain the integrity and stability of the porch structure.

Broken and missing lengths of guttering will be reinstated with new ppc metal circular profile guttered - which will also help to address the damp ingress

Finally, exploratory works will be carried out by removing the modern fire place surround within the toll house room. It is hoped that the original fireplace opening will be found behind and will then be reinstated.



3. Main House First Floor Accommodation

Our proposal here is to simply rationalise, strip back the modern partitions and inefficient use of space to return the first floor to its 3 main spaces as closely as sensible viable, while making better use of the floor space available.

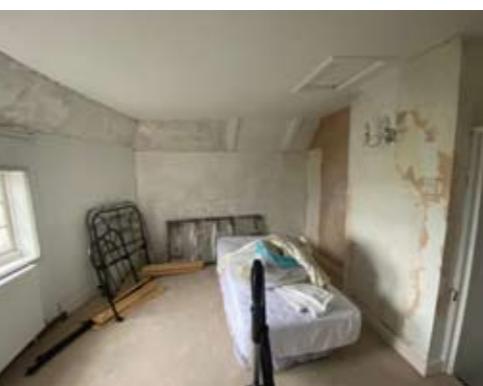
We propose relocating the bathroom to its original Victorian location, following work to repair the roof and deal with significant damp issue within this portion of the building.

We have agreed with the conservation officer that a replacement traditionally detailed lead roof would be an appropriate option and provide a high quality, well detailed solution that will address the current water penetration issue of a stone tiled flat roof.

By relocating the bathroom, the second south-east room can be returned to its original proportions. It has not been possible to establish how this space was originally accessed, however, given the current placement of partitions, and inclusion of the corridor, the simplest proposal is as shown, to create a short route through the main bedroom.

While this proposal will require taking the corner off the existing larger bedroom, this bedroom is already altered by modern partitioning. The alterations require minimal intervention and reinstate two rooms to their original uses and proportions which may be considered a net heritage gain.

All new soil, foul drain and plumbing routes may be installed without affect the historic building fabric.



Left:
Upper ground floor Toll House office
View of the only original external door and window within the property

Right:
Toll House - original Front Entrance
View of the only original external door and window

Left:
Bedroom Above
The extent of damp and water ingress is very apparent.

Right:
Basement below has been strengthened and better water proofed, and lined in block

Left:
The original stairs connect the split levels of the Toll House & accommodation to the rear.
Original ledged and braced door joinery.
New doors to follow this traditional design as per joinery drawings submitted

Right:
Extensive damp below the failing flat roofed Victorian Extension needs urgent attention

Proposals

4. Main House - Verandah

A dilapidated timber framed veranda sits over the french doors of the sitting room. The glass has been removed and is now in need of replacement.

We are therefore proposing to entirely replace with structure with a new painted metal verandah following traditional detailing, with glass roof over. This will extend tot he full width of the roofing to full width of the facade. This will work better visually; and, by simply moving the external steps leading down to the verandah back to avoid a clash in head heights, and can also be added without widening the 'bridge' over the stream and thereby maintaining access to the stream and culvert.

5. Annex

Evidence suggests that an outbuilding in the position of the current annex since before 1904. The original outbuilding has been replaced with the current bradstone and concrete block faced, flat roofed annex in place today., most probably dating back to the 1970's. It is more than likely that any previous outbuilding did not have a flat roof.

Permission is sought to enhance the appearance of the existing building, by most notably added a new slate tiled pitched roof over. No change of use is needed. The annex will continue in use as residential accommodation, and the single garage retained.

As part of the proposed works the building will be properly insulated and damp issue addressed.

The new roof over is designed in two sections. A larger roof over the deeper portion of the building will overhang the front facade to create a covered porch area, and allow for the creation of a second bedroom within the roof space. The new roof will be supported on new oak posts and lintels.

The height of the pitched roof over the north-east portion of the annex is restricted by an existing Elm tree and power cable passing through the tree canopy, but in lowering the roof line as reducing the massing of the building where in closest proximity to the heritage asset. (Advice is being sought from the electricity company about moving the cable underground which will also be visually beneficial to the heritage setting.)

Following feedback within the pre-application report, we have sought to reduce the massing of the new pitched roofs further, by half hipping the larger main roof (echoing the half hipped roof adjacent gable), and inserting a fully hipped roof over the living area, where in closest proximity to the listed house.



Stream running adjacent to the house



South-west view of cottage showing the existing verandah with bridges over the stream



Proposed design of new painted metal verandah - Whitworth
Following the simple Early Victorian column design by George Whitworth;
Similar to or using this profile by the Traditional Verandah Company.



View of existing Annex and garage adjacent to the house - South-east Elevation



View of existing Annex - end North-east facade. The nearest of the Ash trees has since been removed - With Ash Die back

Proposals

6. External Works

Public Footpath & Pedestrian Access

A public foot path runs parallel to the river through the two paddocks owned by the applicants.

The path diverts via a stile just before the A36 and walkers can then walk out through the main vehicular gates of the property and out to the main road.

This is not a very satisfactory security or pedestrian safety situation, as the owner must leave the gates open at all times.

We propose adding a new stile in the drive stone wall which will allow walkers out on to the drive while the property gates are remain securely shut. The wall is of modern construction, dating back to the planning permission granted in 1991 so the inserting of the stile will not cause any loss of historic fabric.

A new timber post and rail fence between the two stiles will ensure walkers do not access the property and clearly denote the line of the foot path - as it stands today.

On the opposite side of the drive, permission is sought to create a second opening - again within a modern stone wall to create a gated pedestrian access to the house.

This will allow delivery drivers to pull up within the drive, drop parcels via the pedestrian gate, without the main gates being opened, ensuring the vehicular gates can be kept shut for the safety of children and animals on the property.

Details of all new metal work are submitted with the application, and include replacing dilapidated timber balustrading over the bridges with a new simply detailed metal railing that will tie in with the slightly more ornate detailing of the gates.

Finally, the existing 'sleeper' stone wall line which provides edging to the small lawn area in front of the house will be raised to the height of the adjacent drive wall to physically enclose the lawn, creating a small private garden adjacent to the house, while also delineating the path towards the new front door - thereby removing all the current confusions about where to go!



View of existing Property Entrance off A36

Proposed new Style in modern wall



Rear garden area of house and South-west facade

Proposed new Pedestrian gate

Existing edging line of stone to be built up as new rubble wall

Summary

As required under the NPPF Paragraph 202, proposals have been made carefully to minimise harm caused to the designated heritage asset, and where harm is recognised, benefits outweigh the harm.

Alterations within the house have been made without causing of loss of the historic fabric except for the creation of a single door at first floor level to gain access to the 2nd bedroom. But in doing so, the plan of the first floor is simplified, with rooms largely returned to their original proportions and uses.

Further heritage gains to and within the actual house has been listed and important include investment, upkeep, repair and maintenance of the heritage asset, which is a recognised public benefit. Proposals also ensure that the property remains habitable.

Alterations to the annex, (which is not Listed, but is an established separate dwelling within the setting of the heritage asset) seek to significantly improve the buildings appearance and in doing do notably benefit the setting of the Listed dwelling.

Alterations to the pedestrian and public access are not specifically related to the listing but require planning consent. Are carefully proposal to improve safety and access, requiring only alterations to modern wall construction.