

Introduction and Description

I have been instructed by the Bathurst Estate to prepare this Heritage Statement to support their application for some additional windows to the barn at The Tunnel House Inn. This statement will briefly describe the location of the site, the proposed works and their impact upon the setting.

The Tunnel House Inn is located midway between Coates and Tarlton, 6km to the west of Cirencester, between the A419 and A433 principal traffic routes. It is close to the Swindon to Stroud and Gloucester railway line and at the southeast entrance to Sapperton canal tunnel, part of the Thames and Severn Canal. The Inn is accessed via a driveway that runs north westwards from the access point onto the Coates to Tarlton Road, along the northeast side of the canal cutting before it turns westwards after the start of the tunnel. On the southwest side of the canal cutting, the spoil that was removed to construct the canal has been banked up and now forms a large bund on which trees and vegetation have grown and become established. The Tunnel House dates from the 1780s, when it was built to provide accommodation, food and drink for the navvies building the Sapperton Tunnel. In 1952 it was mostly destroyed by fire but was reconstructed and was subject to later additions. The Inn is built of natural Cotswold stone and has a 2-storey, pitched roof, central section with chimneys on its gable ends and a flat-roofed, 2-storey bay with a parapet wall projecting forward of that. The windows in this bay are of UPVC construction, as is the window to its north, which will be replaced with painted timber windows as part of the enhancement process to restore the Inn which have been approved under a previous permission.

The Barn is located to the southeast of the Inn, on the opposite side of the car parking area. It is a single storey ancillary building, linear in form but with a gable projecting towards the Inn. It is built of natural Cotswold stone with a blue/black slate roof and painted timber joinery. Beyond The Barn is the trees bank where the previously permitted accommodation pods will be sited within clearings. To the southwest of the Tunnel House and the wooded embankment is a field that contains a Scheduled Ancient Monument, a Romano British site known as Hailey Wood Camp, with a public footpath also running between Coates and Tarlton that passes through it.

The Tunnel House is within and at the northern end of the Thames and Severn Canal (Coates Section) Conservation Area, which runs south eastwards and includes the canal and its embankments. There is a statutory duty to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Area, a matter echoed by Policy EN11 of the Local Plan. The application site is also within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) where there is a statutory duty to conserve the landscape. This duty is also set out within Policy EN5 of CDLP. Policy EN1 of CDLP states that new development should conserve the historic environment by ensuring the protection and enhancement of heritage assets and their settings, and that the design of proposals should complement the character of the area. Policy EN2 says that proposal should respect the character and distinctive appear once of the locality and should accord with the Cotswold Design Code. In this latter regard, paragraph D.9 of the code states that any proposed development should respond to its landscape or townscape setting; D.17 states that new buildings should generally not dominate their surroundings but should complement the existing structures or landscape and sit comfortably within their setting. Policy EN7 concerns trees, hedgerows and woodlands and says that where such natural assets are likely to be affected, development will not be permitted that fails to conserve and enhance trees of high landscape, amenity, ecological or historical value; veteran trees; land/woodland of high landscape amenity, ecological or historic value. Policy EN8 concerns biodiversity and geo-diversity and says that development will be permitted that conserves these matters, providing net gains where possible. It adds that proposals that would result in significant habitat fragmentation and loss of ecological connectivity will not be permitted.

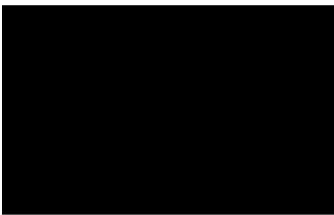
Detailed ecological investigations have taken place prior to the submission of the previously permitted development and the ecological reports form part of this application. A separate Biodiversity Statement for these works has also been prepared by the Consultant Ecologist and submitted as part of the application. Policy EN10 of the Local Plan concerns designated heritage assets and says that in considering proposals that affect designated heritage assets or its setting, great weight will be given to the assets conservation. It adds that development proposals that sustain and enhance the character, appearance and significance of designated heritage assets (and their settings), and are then put to viable uses, consistent with their conservation, will be permitted. Policy EN11 concerns Conservation Areas and echoes and amplifies the statutory duty referred to previously.

Proposed Alterations

The Bathurst Estate wish to make some minor alterations to the front addition which includes installation of new windows and doors. The facing masonry work will all be repaired and made good to match in matching materials. The other fabric will be repaired to put back into good condition using traditional materials and techniques to match existing.

The new windows will be painted timber double hung vertically sliding sash made by specialist joiners in a matching traditional style and proportions to the Tunnel House. They will be made from painted timber incorporating specialist heritage slimline double glazing of 4mm inner panes, 4mm gas filled gap and 4mm outer panes.

All of the proposed works have been designed to complement and enhance the existing traditional fabric and all materials being used will match existing and existing colours.



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