

PLANNING, DESIGN & ACCESS and HERITAGE STATEMENT

The Britannia Inn, London Road, Oxford, OX3 7AA

December 2023



Figure 1: The Britannia Inn

Regulated RICS



INTRODUCTION

This Statement accompanies applications that seek planning permission and listed building for structural repairs and the refurbishment of The Britannia public house in Headington.

The Britannia is a Grade II listed by building and is, therefore, a designated heritage asset. This Statement identifies, and assesses, potential impacts on the asset.

A schedule of application documents is attached at Appendix 1. A Photo Schedule is attached as Appendix 2.

THE SITE

The Britannia Inn lies on the corner of London Road and Lime Walk, at the southern end of the Headington local centre. The principal elevation faces west and is set back from the Lime Walk frontage behind a paved customer terrace. The side elevation fronts directly onto the London Road pavement. The building is two-storey in height, with a pitched tiled roof. There is a large stone barn attached and single-storey pitched roof range to the rear.

The rear part of the site is a car park, accessed from Lime Walk. There is a small customer garden occupying the northeastern part of the site (also fronting and with access from London Road). Immediate surrounding land uses on London Road are commercial (Shell petrol filling station, Kwik Fit garage and Curry Adda). Residential properties border to the south.

THE PROPOSAL

Consent is sought for structural repairs to the stone barn and the refurbishment of the ground floor trade areas and customer garden. The application is accompanied by a full suite of drawings and reports which, for completeness, include the full scope of the proposed repair and refurbishment works. Not all matters, however, impact the heritage significance of the building and, therefore, require permission. The works that do require consent are summarised below.

Structural Strengthening and Repair of Stone Barn

The application includes three structural reports undertaken in April, August and October 2023, together with drawing 223043/DO1, which details the strengthening works that are required. The reports include photographs of the defects and areas that need to be repaired.

The stone barn has been much altered, and adapted, over the years, with an original floor having been taken out. All four walls are deflecting outwards and previous efforts to stabilise the building, including the construction of stone and timber buttresses and the insertion of wall ties, have not solved the issue. Further intervention is required in order to secure the building, including:-

- Installation of new joists.
- Areas of bulging stone are to be taken down, rebuilt and tied back using helifix bars.
- Helifix bars are to be installed to the corners of the building.
- Timber buttress to be replaced with stone buttress.
- Replacement of spalled bricks.
- Resin anchors to be installed to three posts.
- Removal of areas of internal brickwork that have been eroded due to masonry bee attack and replace.
- Remove cement rendering and replace with lime.
- Replace two lintels on the southern elevation.

Refurbishment Works

Once the structural works are completed, the Company proposes to refurbish the existing customer trade areas and garden and redecorate internally and externally. The refurbishment works that may require consent, include:-

1. Installation of a section of new timber flooring (this area currently comprises carpet over concrete floor).
2. Erection of a new screen.
3. Upgrade of back bar fitting.
4. Refurbishment of two fire places (both fitted with modern gas appliances).
5. Extend step-up into the bar area.
6. Install T&G panelling to the rear entrance.
7. Install T&G panelling to the dining wall.
8. Refurbish customer toilets.
9. External decorations in new colours.
10. Rationalise existing external lighting.
11. Erect new festoon lighting to the garden.

DESIGN & ACCESS

Layout, Scale & Appearance: No extensions, or changes to the layout of the site or the building are proposed. The elevations will be repaired and decorated in new colours.

Access: No changes are proposed to the existing means of pedestrian or vehicular access into the site or the buildings.

LANDSCAPE

The proposals do not impact any existing landscape features.

DAYLIGHT & SUNLIGHT

With no new structures, extensions or changes to the dimensions of any existing buildings being proposed, the proposals will not change the levels of sunlight or daylight experienced by adjacent/neighbouring properties.

HERITAGE FRAMEWORK

Paragraph 194 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021 states that “... *when 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*”.

Paragraph 201 provides that, “*where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss*”.

Paragraph 202 states that, “*where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing optimum viable use*”.

A site visit has been undertaken and the following sources have been consulted when preparing this assessment:-

- The planning history of the site as it is available on the Council's website.
- The Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record, as it is available on the Heritage Gateway.
- The site's entry in the Secretary of State's Schedule of Listed Buildings.
- Historic Ordnance Survey maps.

This Statement is proportionate to significance of the heritage asset(s) and the potential impacts.

IDENTIFICATION & SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HERITAGE ASSETS

The Britannia Inn

The List Description for the property reads as follows: -

1. LIME WALK 1485 No 1 (The Britannia Public House) SP 5407 18/758 II 2. C18. Stone, band at 1st floor level. 2 storeys, 2 windows, sashes with glazing bars, external shutters. Blank window over the door. Central door with C19 timber porch. Moulded eaves cornice, 1 gabled dormer, hipped stone slate roof, brick stacks.

The Britannia Inn was built around the time that the new London Road was cut through the fields of Headington in the 1770s. The Inn is shown on Davis's 1797 map of Headington (based on a survey of 1793/4) as the White House, but it was renamed the Britannia by 1805.

The Headington Enclosure Award of 1805 makes reference to the property: "*one other public Carriage Road and Driftway ... branching out of the said new Turnpike Road near to a certain public House called the Britannia*". Under the 1805 Award, the Inn, together with its field for stabling coach horses, was awarded to William Mott. Its land then measured 8 acres 3 rods and 14 perches, and included the area now occupied by the top end of Lime Walk to the south and the Mount Pleasant Hotel to the east.

It is shown as the Britannia Inn on Bryant's 1824 map. In 1836 it was put up for sale with the auction particulars including the following description:

Valuable freehold road-side public house, in full trade, with a Close of Rich Pasture Land adjoining, known as the sign of the "BRITANNIA" most eligibly situated on the London Turnpike Road at Headington

The house is stone-built, and contains, on the ground floor, a taproom, good parlour, bar, kitchen, &c., and a newly erected club room, 77ft by 14ft.; on the first floor, a large dining room, three good bedrooms, and a store room, and two large attics over the same; good cellaring in the basement, &c.; detached is stabling for 13 horses, with lofts over, stone built and blue slated; a spacious enclosed garden, and other conveniences; and adjoining the same is a valuable Close of Rich Pasture land, containing 4A. 2R. With hovel and piggeries thereon, &c.

It would appear that the Britannia was bought by the brewer Henry Hall & Co.

The development of the railway changed the fortunes of the Britannia. In 1902, the Close (field) was let to Headington (later Oxford) United (see 1899 Ordnance Survey Extract at Figure 2). It was sold in 1914 for the development of the north end of Lime Walk.



Figure 2: 1899 Ordnance Survey

Figures 3 and 4 are images of the property dating from 1915 and 1941, respectively. A buttress can be seen in both images, confirming that the stone barn has been moving for many years. The barn appears as a separate building in the 1915 image, but appears to have been linked to the main building by 1941.



Figure 3: The Britannia Inn Circa 1915



Figure 4: The Britannia Inn Circa 1941

IMPACT ON HERITAGE ASSET

Whilst the principal heritage interest in the property relates to the two-storey public house at the front of the site, and its development as a coaching inn on New London Road, the stone barn, and other associated outbuildings, also contribute to significance as they are related to the purpose for which the property was built and the use made of it for its first 150 years.

The stone barn was originally a freestanding building which had, by the late C19th/early C20th been linked to the public house. It was originally used to house horses with lofts above, which were subsequently removed. This has caused instability issues as the lofts, effectively, tied the walls together. The external walls have long been moving outwards and interventions have had to be made – as is evidenced by the 1915 image (see Figure 3).

Despite further interventions, the walls are continuing to move. The structure has further been weakened as stones and bricks have weathered, rafters and lintels have rotted and bricks have been attacked by masonry bees. A reasonably significant intervention is now needed in order to secure the long-term stability of the structure.

The proposed interventions, which are described in the structural reports and, in particular, drawing 223043/DC01 are the minimum necessary to stabilise the building. Whilst they result in some less than substantial harm being caused, the overall benefit that will arise from the securing that structural integrity of the stone barn, and its long term retention, and thus the contribution that it makes to the heritage significance of the site, clearly outweighs the harm.

Refurbishment Works

The interior of the public house (Photos 11 to 26) is much altered with few original features surviving. The new timber floor, which will be laid upon an existing concrete surface (see Figure 5), is in keeping with the property. The same is true for the new screen (which will enclose a gap in an internal wall) and changes to the back bar fitting and bar counter. Two modern fireplaces will be refurbished, in a manner sympathetic to the character of the building, with part of the modern panelling being removed from a dining room wall in the converted barn (Figure 6) and timber cladding added to the entrance from the car park.



Figure 6: Interior of Stone Barn

These works are in keeping with the character of the building and will have no impact upon heritage significance.

Externally, and in addition to the repairs to the elevation, the building will be decorated in colours that are in keeping with its age and significance. External lights will be rationalised and the garden refurbished. These works will, again, have a neutral impact upon heritage significance.



Figure 5: Concrete Floor Under Carpet

SUMMARY

Mitchells & Butlers needs to undertake structural, and other, repairs to the stone barn that forms part of The Britannia Inn. Various structural reports are provided that detail the defects in the building and the repairs that are required. They are the minimum necessary to

secure the long-term structural integrity of the building and, whilst they will cause a small degree of '*less than substantial harm*', the harm has been mitigated and is justified as the works will secure the long-term future of the building.

Once the repair works are completed, the Company also proposes to undertake a light-touch refurbishment which principally involves external and internal redecoration. There are few surviving original features within the building and the refurbishment works will have a neutral impact upon heritage significance.

Application Documents

- Completed Application Form and Certificate.
- CIL Form.
- Planning, Design & Access and Heritage Statement
- Structural Report April 2023
- Structural Report August 2023
- Structural Visit October 2023
- RD CS10 Corner Crack Repair
- RD RF10 Repair of Masonry
- RD RF11 Reconnecting a Cracked Corner
- External Lighting Detail
- Drawing 2536_201_Existing Site_100A1
- Drawing 2536_202_Proposed Site_100A1
- Drawing 2536_203_Existing Ground Floor_50A1
- Drawing 2536_204_Proposed Ground Floor_50A1
- Drawing 2536_205_Existing Site Elevations_100A1
- Drawing 2536_206_Proposed Site Elevations_100A1
- Drawing 2536_206A_Proposed Site Elevations_100A1
- Drawing 2536_207_Location Plan_1250A3
- Drawing 2536_406_Festoon Lighting Detail_10A3
- Drawing 2536-311_DETAILS_Upper Backfitting Elevations + Sections_20A1
- Drawing 2536-314_DETAILS_Existing Fireplace Elevation_10A1 (1)
- Drawing 2536-314_DETAILS_Existing Fireplace Elevation_10A1
- Drawing 223043 D01 Proposed Strengthening Works

Photograph Schedule



PHOTOGRAPH 1



PHOTOGRAPH 2



PHOTOGRAPH 3



PHOTOGRAPH 4



PHOTOGRAPH 5



PHOTOGRAPH 6



PHOTOGRAPH 7



PHOTOGRAPH 8



PHOTOGRAPH 9



PHOTOGRAPH 10



PHOTOGRAPH 11



PHOTOGRAPH 12



PHOTOGRAPH 13



PHOTOGRAPH 14



PHOTOGRAPH 15



PHOTOGRAPH 16



PHOTOGRAPH 17



PHOTOGRAPH 18



PHOTOGRAPH 19



PHOTOGRAPH 20



PHOTOGRAPH 21



PHOTOGRAPH 22



PHOTOGRAPH 23



PHOTOGRAPH 24



PHOTOGRAPH 25



PHOTOGRAPH 26