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Design & Access Statement including Heritage Statement

1 Canal Yard, Thrupp
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

This application is a resubmission of the scheme granted consent in February 2019 (Refs: 18/01786/F and 18/01787/LB). Preparation of detailed drawings to enact this consent were in progress with a view to work starting on site in the summer of 2020 when the Covid-19 Pandemic struck, and consequently the project was put on hold. The applicants are now able to resume the project, but since the original consent has expired, they are resubmitting the Planning and Listed Building Consent Application to reactivate it.

All the drawings and documents included with this application are identical to those submitted the first-time round, with one minor exception. The applicant's legal advisor has recommended that the party wall due to be taken up to the underside of the thatch in the attic (in order to establish a separate attic space over the bedroom of No.2 Canal Yard, and thereby extinguish the flying freehold) should run in a straight line, rather than an L shape across the attic, establishing a flying freehold over the stairs of No. 1 Canal Yard instead. This is because it removes the ambiguity of who is responsible for repairing the roof structure and maintaining the thatch by establishing a clear boundary of responsibility. Had the application not expired, this change would have constituted a non-material amendment.

1.2 Canal Yard Cottages

This supporting document accompanies a planning and listed building application relating to proposed works at No.1 Canal Yard, part of a Grade II listed terrace of three cottages.

In January 2015 a thatch fire caused substantial damage to No.s 2 and 3 Canal Yard Cottages, Thrupp. The damage caused by the fire, along with the subsequent repair and renovation works, exposed much of the original fabric of the building. This, together with recent archaeological research into the development of the Canal Yard at Thrupp and its buildings by the Canal and River Trust, led to a new understanding of the development of Canal Yard Cottages. Consequently, it is now known that No.1 Canal Yard is the remains of a former water mill and that No.s 2 and 3 were one house (the miller's house) and that these buildings were converted into three workers' cottages sometime in the mid-19th century after the mill became redundant.

At the time of the fire, the applicants were the owners and occupiers of No.2 Canal Yard Cottages, but were later able to purchase No.3 as well, allowing them to repair and renovate both properties in a similar style (cf. Consent No.s 15/00826/LB, 15/01288/LB and 15/01763/LB). In July 2016 consent (No. 16/01131/LB) was granted for the re-introduction of connecting doors between No.s 2 & 3 to convert it back to a single dwelling. In addition, a porch over the rear door of No.3 was granted consent in May 2017 (cf. Consent No.s 17/00501/F and 17/00502/LB).

The owners and occupiers were able to purchase No.1 Canal Yard in May 2017 and are now seeking to renovate the property in keeping with the other two adjoining cottages in the row.



Fig. 1: Front elevation of No.1 Canal Yard (with adjoining No.2 Canal Yard)

2.0 PROPOSED ALTERATIONS

The proposed alterations to No.1 Canal Yard consist of a replacement rear extension and a loft conversion with internal reconfiguration and associated works.

2.1 Rear Extension

2.1.1 Outline of Proposals

The proposal is to replace the existing modern extension to the rear of No.1 Canal Yard with a smaller extension to suit the building line of the adjacent rear extensions to No.2 and 3 Canal Yard. The proposed replacement extension is intended to be more in keeping with the historic context.

2.1.2 Justification Statement

It appears that the current rear extension to No. 1 Canal Yard was added between 1988 and 1995. The rear extension is not included on the listing description of 1988, although it is indicated on a planning application submitted in 1995. According to its planning history, render coating and a terne-coated steel roof were added to the original brick rear extension following an approved planning application submitted in 2009. It appears that a chimney had also been added between 1995 and 2009.



Fig. 2: Modern rear extension to No.1 Canal Yard



Fig. 3: Outshut to adjoining cottages

The brick and clay tile outshuts to No.2 and 3 Canal Yard are a 19th century addition to the coursed limestone construction of the three cottages (previously a water mill and miller's house according to a recent archaeological report). The outshuts provided the additional utility areas needed by the canal workers when the mill was originally converted, and today continue to do so by housing the kitchens. The removal of the unsympathetic modern addition to No.1 Canal Yard provides the opportunity for a more sensitive extension on a reduced footprint in keeping with the existing building line of the rear elevation. However, the current larger kitchen space is used as a kitchen-diner and it is, therefore, necessary to reconfigure the internal layout to provide additional living space to replace that lost by the smaller footprint.

Designating the first floor en-suite bathroom as the family bathroom and removing the downstairs bathroom enables the vacated floorspace to become part of the sitting room. A new WC is located in part of the existing lobby, which compensates for the loss of the second WC through the removal of the existing ground floor bathroom.

Externally, the existing boundary wall between the gardens of Nos. 1 and 2 Canal Yard will be extended to meet the reduced footprint of the replacement rear extension with the gateway realigned to suit.

2.1.3 Assessment of Heritage Impact

The proposed replacement rear extension enhances the appearance and historic character of the cottage by creating a more unified and sympathetic rear elevation. The reduction in footprint allows the building line to be maintained along the rear boundary of the row of cottages. The material palette is intended to match the existing earlier outshuts to No.2 and 3 Canal Yard with clay roof tiles and brick external walls. The new external kitchen door and triple casement window are designed to be in keeping with the existing doors and windows on the rear elevation of the adjoining cottages in proportions and materials, and the proposed rooflight will be a conservation rooflight.

The proposed internal alterations have a minimal impact on the existing historic fabric due to the proposed layout, which has been carefully considered so as to retain all the fabric associated with the primary build (i.e. the mill) and as much fabric associated with the conversion as possible. The date of the stud partitions to the existing ground floor bathroom are unknown, although they are likely to post-date the original conversion since it is probable that these were inserted when the current bedroom/ games room of No.2 were separated from the rest of No.1 Canal Yard.

2.2 Loft Conversion

2.2.1 Outline of Proposals

The proposal is to convert the existing loft space in No.1 Canal Yard to provide an additional bedroom with a dormer window to the rear elevation.

2.2.2 Justification Statement

The roof structure to No.1 Canal Yard is in need of repair. Several of the original pole rafters have snapped close to the ridge where they are thinnest and, therefore, lack any durable heartwood to resist beetle decay. Temporary bracing to resist the total collapse of the ridge had been installed by the previous owner. This has been assessed by a structural engineer experienced in historic buildings as being fit for purpose in the short to medium term, but it is neither considered to be a long-term solution nor sympathetic to the character of the building.

In order to justify the expense of carrying out a permanent repair solution to the roof structure, and the replacement of the inappropriate ground floor kitchen extension, the applicant is seeking to convert the attic to provide an additional bedroom with associated 'eyebrow' window on the rear elevation. The inclusion of a new stair to access the loft requires the removal and reconfiguration of the internal partitions at first floor level.



Fig. 4: Existing roof space over No.1 Canal Yard (Bedroom 3)

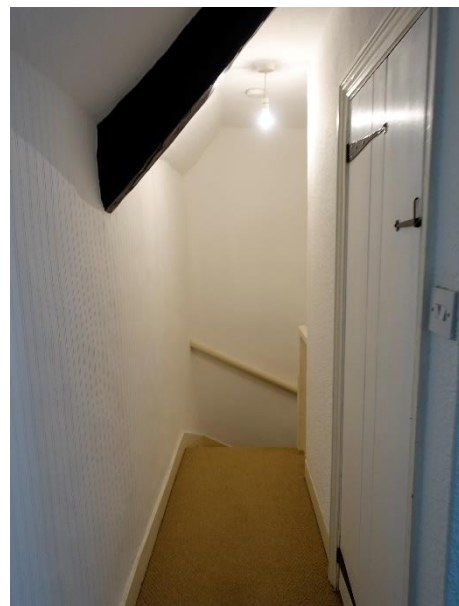


Fig.5: Existing store to be replaced by new stair

2.2.3 Assessment of Heritage Impact

The insertion of the new staircase to access the attic conversion necessitates the reconfiguration of some of the first-floor partitions. The date of these partitions is unknown since the plastered skelings continue at low level in the loft space, which suggests that the original flat ceiling line was higher. It would seem likely that the thatch was first plastered in the 19th century, meaning that the original higher ceiling level was most probably concurrent with the original conversion. The current ceiling joists take support from the brick party wall between the bedrooms of No.s 1 and 2 Canal Yard and the stud wall between the two first floor bedrooms of No.1. As such, it appears that the partitions are contemporary with the transfer of the bedroom/study from the original mill building to No.2 Canal Yard. Since it would seem unlikely that the canal company would go to such effort at the time of the initial conversion, it would seem logical to assume that the partitions are neither evidence of the original conversion nor are they part of the primary build (i.e. the mill). As such, it is considered that the heritage impact of inserting the staircase and reconfiguring the partitions is negligible.

Externally, the creation of a dormer window to the rear elevation necessitates limited removal of historic fabric (specifically some pole rafters and thatch locally). However, it is proposed that the localised loss of historic fabric is outweighed by the benefit provided by the sensitive repair of the roof structure and the replacement of the modern kitchen extension at ground floor level. Furthermore, the visual impact of the dormer is minimised by its more discreet location on the rear elevation, rather than the front (principal) elevation.



Fig.6: Existing dormer window to front elevation of No.3 Canal Yard
– new dormer window to rear elevation of No. 1 to match

2.3 Access

There are no changes to the existing access arrangements as part of these proposals.

2.4 Flood Risk Assessment

No.1 Canal Yard is located in Flood Zone 3. The property was last flooded in 2007 when the River Cherwell burst its banks but has not been flooded again since new flood defences were installed further upstream. This Planning and Listed Building Consent Application relates to the proposed construction of a replacement rear extension, a new dormer in the thatched roof and other internal alterations to No.1 Canal Yard. Since the total roof area of the building is reduced by these proposals, it is considered that they decrease the risk of flooding to this property and the adjacent properties.

3.0 CONCLUSION

It is considered that these proposals enhance the appearance and setting of the Grade II listed No.1 Canal Yard and the adjoining cottages, and that any harm is outweighed by the public benefits of securing the sympathetic repair of the roof structure and the replacement of the modern kitchen extension.