

HERITAGE STATEMENT

Big Fella Brewing
Lockey Farm, Sindlesham Road, Arborfield Cross, RG2 9JH

Planning application	262403
Applicant	Big Fella Brewing Ltd
Document reference	BFB-HER-01
Revision	Rev B
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Prepared by	Big Fella Brewing Ltd

Prepared to address Wokingham Borough Council's validation requirement for a Heritage Statement in relation to planning application 262403.

1. Introduction

This Heritage Statement has been prepared in support of planning application 262403 at Big Fella Brewing, Lockey Farm, Sindlesham Road, Arborfield Cross, Wokingham, RG2 9JH.

The application seeks full planning permission for the proposed change of use of the existing building from Class E(g)(ii) to a mixed use comprising a commercial brewery (Class B2) and taproom (Sui Generis), together with the use of associated external land as an outdoor seating area and the erection of a pergola with associated external lighting (part retrospective).

Wokingham Borough Council has requested a Heritage Statement as part of the validation of the application. The purpose of this statement is to identify the heritage significance relevant to the site and to assess the potential effect of the proposed development upon that significance.

2. Heritage Significance

Lockey Farm lies within the Arborfield Cross Conservation Area.

Wokingham Borough Council's Conservation Area Study identifies the special interest of the area as deriving principally from the historic settlement around the crossroads and Eversley Road, its traditional buildings and historic inns and cottages, its settlement pattern, and the relationship between the built settlement and its rural and agricultural surroundings.

For the purposes of this application, the historic buildings, settlement pattern and principal historic townscape around Arborfield Cross are considered to be of high significance to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The surrounding rural and agricultural character and areas of open land make an important contribution to its setting.

The application building is a modern commercial building within the established Lockey Farm complex and is not identified in the Conservation Area Study as a building of special architectural or historic interest. The building and immediately adjoining gravel/shingle commercial yard are therefore considered to make little individual contribution to the architectural or historic significance of the Conservation Area.

3. Existing Site

The application relates to an existing commercial building and immediately adjoining external land within Lockey Farm. The building is of a modern commercial character and forms part of the established collection of agricultural and commercial buildings operating from the farm.

The external area associated with the proposal is immediately adjacent to the existing building and forms part of the developed farm/commercial environment. It is predominantly gravel/shingle surfaced rather than undeveloped historic landscape.

The application does not involve the demolition or alteration of any listed building, historic building or other identified heritage asset.

4. Proposed Development

The principal element of the application is a change in the use of the existing building to provide a commercial brewery and taproom. The change of use itself does not require substantial alteration to the external form or architectural character of the building.

The associated outdoor seating area occupies land immediately adjoining the existing commercial building. A timber pergola is proposed within this external area. The structure is modest in scale and height and is ancillary to the use of the existing premises.

Associated external lighting is intended to serve the seating/pergola area and forms a minor and ancillary component of the proposal.

5. Assessment of Heritage Impact

The proposal has been considered against the significance and character of the Arborfield Cross Conservation Area.

The development does not involve:

- demolition of historic fabric;
- alteration to a listed building;
- alteration to any building specifically identified as making a significant contribution to the Conservation Area;
- removal of historic boundary treatments;
- loss of an important historic open space;
- substantial new built development; or
- alteration of the historic street pattern or settlement form.

The principal proposed use is contained within an existing building. The outdoor seating area, pergola and associated lighting are physically and functionally related to that existing building and remain within the established Lockey Farm complex. Their modest scale means that they do not compete visually with the historic buildings and features which principally contribute to the significance of the Arborfield Cross Conservation Area.

The proposal does not alter the historic crossroads or the principal groupings of historic buildings along Eversley Road, nor does it affect the architectural fabric of those buildings. The continued use of an existing commercial building also avoids the need for substantial new built development to accommodate the proposed use.

Accordingly, the development is considered to preserve the character and appearance of the Arborfield Cross Conservation Area.

6. Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets

A number of designated and non-designated heritage assets lie within the wider Arborfield Cross Conservation Area. These form part of the historic settlement and contribute to its architectural and historic significance.

The proposed development is physically separate from those heritage assets and does not involve any alteration to their historic fabric. Having regard to the scale, location and nature of the proposal, the development is not considered to materially affect the ability to appreciate the architectural or historic significance of those assets or their contribution to the wider character of Arborfield Cross.

7. Previous Consideration of Heritage at Lockey Farm

The Local Planning Authority has previously considered heritage impacts arising from development at Lockey Farm. In its consideration of planning application 230020, which related to the retrospective erection of two Class E commercial buildings at Lockey Farm, the Council identified the Arborfield Cross Conservation Area as a site constraint and consulted its Built Heritage Officer. The Built Heritage Officer raised no objection.

That previous decision is not relied upon as determining the acceptability of the current application, which must be considered on its own merits. It nevertheless provides relevant context demonstrating that the relationship between development within the established Lockey Farm complex and the significance of the Conservation Area has previously been considered by the Council's specialist heritage officer.

The current application is principally concerned with the use of an existing building and involves substantially less new built development than the erection of the commercial buildings considered under application 230020.

8. Conclusion

The significance of the Arborfield Cross Conservation Area is recognised and has informed consideration of the proposal.

The development principally involves the reuse of an existing modern commercial building within the established Lockey Farm complex, together with a modest associated outdoor seating area, pergola and external lighting.

No listed building or identified historic structure is altered or removed, no historic fabric is lost and the proposal does not materially alter the historic settlement pattern or the principal architectural features which contribute to the significance of the Conservation Area. The outdoor elements remain ancillary to the existing building and are modest in scale within the established commercial farm environment.

For these reasons, the proposal is considered to preserve the character and appearance of the Arborfield Cross Conservation Area and the significance of nearby heritage assets.

9. Sources Consulted

Wokingham Borough Council, Arborfield Cross Conservation Area Study.

Wokingham Borough Council, Planning Committee report for application 230020 - Lockey Farm, Sindlesham Road, Arborfield, RG2 9JH (8 March 2023).

Wokingham Borough Council, Listed Buildings, Heritage and Conservation Areas guidance.

Prepared for submission with planning application 262403

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