

Below, the photographs present the view from the south.
The Swan Inn is partially obscured by a tree, but the roof outline and the front extension are visible. To the right-hand side, in the foreground, is the Grade II listed Post Office and Newsagent.



Fig. 19, Early 20th century photograph.



Fig. 20, As existing (2024).

5.4 Description as existing

West elevation

The west elevation is the principal facade of the building, set back from Basingstoke Road. The ground floor windows feature casements with segmental heads. Around 1800, a single-storey extension was added to the southwest corner of the building. An additional door opening was created on the left-hand side of the building, providing direct access to the bar area.



Fig. 21, West elevation, as existing.

North elevation

The north elevation is characterized by an extended low-sloping gable and irregular fenestration. The top window opening is modern. The main box frame of the building is constructed with a timber frame featuring a queen strut. The frame has been in-filled with white-painted brickwork, while the timber frame itself was originally painted black in Victorian fashion, later repainted white, and again black in the mid-20th century. There is a catslide roofed extension. The northeast low-level corner is curved and rendered with corbelled eaves detail.



Fig. 22, North elevation, as existing.



Fig. 23, Rounded stepped corner.

South elevation

The lower portion of the south elevation is rendered, with upper gable formed of exposed brick and timber wall studs. It features a chimney brick stack and a rendered breast.

The early 19th-century extension is constructed of red brick in Flemish bond. The Garden Wall, contemporary to the extension, also continues in Flemish bond. A modern skylight is situated on the south slope of the hipped roof.



Fig. 24, South elevation, as existing.



Fig. 25, Extension at the rear, as seen from south. Garden wall adjoining the early 19th century extension.

East elevation

The east elevation (rear) is largely concealed by modern one-story extensions, though some historical character of this elevation remain visible. A dormer, dating back to the early phases of the building's development, provides access to the staircase leading to the first floor. It is pitched, tiled, and hipped into the existing roof, with valley gutters that are not lead flashed. The ridge tiles do not match those of the main roof or the southerly extension. Another dormer, with a flat roof, belongs to the modern redevelopment phase. An air conditioning unit is mounted on the roof above the modern kitchen extension.

The kitchen and WCs have been inserted into the hipped roof to accommodate a one-story extension. These, along with the storage room at the rear of the kitchen and the office extending from it, create a very irregular and chaotic arrangement characterized by poor-quality construction and materials. Part of the early 19th-century extension to the southeast is visible above the modern office, with its height matching that of the Garden Wall.

The cartographic study and review of archival references available for the area have not clearly demonstrated the arrangement to the rear of the Swan Inn. There would have been at least one external door opening, although its exact location is uncertain. The outdoor area likely served as facilities or a beer garden. Some mid-19th century cartographic references depict a tree with additional arable grounds to the rear, suggesting that the area was unpaved. The rear would have been partially enclosed from the west and south, opening towards the drive and further into the backyard.



Fig. 26, East elevation and outbuildings, as existing.

The Garden Wall

The inscription on the stone set on the southern side of the garden wall dates back to 1823, likely indicating the original construction date of the wall. The wall maintains its height along the south-east extension but gradually reduces in height along the beer garden. The supporting buttresses also decrease in height accordingly. The wall is finished with the brick coping throughout. Wooden fencing has been installed to maintain a uniform height, ensuring adequate separation and privacy for the adjacent property.

The Condition Report, conducted by Hockley & Dawson Consulting Engineers in July 2024 notes that the boundary wall “has a significant lean towards the neighbouring property; the lean is outside the middle third of the wall line and is therefore unstable.” It also states that “the wall is past the stage of being able to be supported with additional; buttressing and will continue to lean until it eventually collapses”.



Fig. 27, Garden Wall as seen from the adjacent property from the south.



Fig. 28, Buttress.



Fig. 29, 1823 stone inscription.



Fig. 30, Garden Wall as seen from the pubs' beer garden and the car park.

The Bar Room

The Bar Room spans the entire width of the building and can be accessed externally through a 19th-century porch or an additional post-war door opening. A modern bar occupies a central position. The axial beam extends from a lateral beam, supported by a centrally positioned post with a brick plinth. Floor joists are visible in the northern part of the bar room. Both gable walls are left unfinished with exposed brick, while the east and west internal elevations reveal posts and plastered infill. A brick chimney breast with a timber lintel is located on the southern side of the room, appearing recently refurbished.

The northeast portion of the bar area is finished with plain render, except for two timber posts at the gable wall. Along the east elevation of the room, a timber frame is exposed, suggesting that this could have been the original size of the room, with the northeast corner being an extension.



Fig. 31, North-west portion of the bar area.



Fig. 32, North-east portion of the bar area.



Fig. 33, Bar room.

Hallway

The original east elevation is enclosed by modern extensions, creating a corridor along the elevation. The timber frame remains exposed, reinforced with a timber plinth along the posts. The entrance to the bar area, constrained by the existing timber structure, appears to have been enlarged and additionally framed to accommodate a sliding door. Opposite the historic internal elevation, there is a modern plastered wall with three doorways leading to modern WCs and kitchen facilities. The door leaves at each end of the hallway have been replaced with modern ones. A modern skylight is positioned near the entrance to the bar area.



Fig. 34, Corridor, original east elevation seen to right.



Fig. 35, Details of the east elevation.



Fig. 36, Corridor, east elevation seen to the left.



Fig. 37, Doorway into the corridor, internal east elevation seen to the right.

Barrel Store

The height of the Barrel Store is significantly lower than the rest of the store rooms. Brick wall finish present but the floor and the ceiling both have a modern finish.

Store Room

The interior of the Barrel Store which belongs to the early 19th century extension has been fully concealed with modern wall cladding. The height of the room increases when accessed from the adjacent Barrel Room. There is a modern steel column supporting the floor joist.



Fig. 38, Store Room.



Fig. 39, Barrel Store.

Kitchen

The kitchen extension has been fully concealed by modern wall, floor and ceiling finishes. Commercial kitchen appliances are present, with large vents fixed on the ceiling. Notably, this room adjoins the staircase and a doorway provides an access to staircases hallway. It is possible that some of the original fabric and features of the staircase survive under the wall cladding.

Kitchen Store

The kitchen store is a lean-to structure adjacent the kitchen extension. The ceiling is construction of simple timber trusses and polycarbonate sheets.



Fig. 40, Commercial Kitchen, as existing.



Fig. 41, Kitchen Store, as existing.

Main Bedroom

There is a frame with queen post and queen strut trusses and straight wind braces. The studs partitions, likely 19th century, are visible throughout, including in the walk-in closet, see Fig. 42.

Wattle and daub detail

A portion of the original wattle and daub has been left exposed on the internal east elevation on the bedroom. This represents the earliest phase of buildings' construction and hence is a feature of high significance.



Fig. 42, Bedroom.



Fig. 43, Wattle and daub framed feature.

Bedroom

Located in the northern part of the building, this bedroom has a modern built en-suite with a “rusticated” look. The partition is made of single brick layer and timber posts. The wall studs are visible but the slopping ceiling is plastered over.



Fig. 44, Bedroom.



Fig. 45, Modern en-suite in the main bedroom.

5.1 Significance

Evidential value

As defined in the English Heritage (now: Historic England) *Conservation Principles, Policies & Guidance* (2008), the evidential value “*derives from the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity.*”

The evidential value of the Swan Inn lies in its traditional timber construction and the local vernacular palette. This Grade II listed building, raised from a rectangular platform, sits over two storeys with attic for the main range, with a single storey wings to the west and two storey wing to the east. The main rectangular body of the house appears to be constructed in two phases, potentially arising from two separate cottages. This is seen in the floor joists distribution which varies between the northern and southern portion of the building as well as in the location of the hearts and chimneys.

The evidential value of the Swan Inn is also particularly demonstrated by a portion of the wall in the first floor, exposed and framed, to show the construction of the building. The staves and withies are visible, as well the daub mixture. As such, this “feature” yields the understanding of the traditional construction methods, typical to the period and the area.

Historical value

The historical value “*derives from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present. It tends to be illustrative or associative.*”

The use of the traditional wattle and daub technique is particularly illustrative of the local vernacular architecture and informs 16th and early 17th century period of construction.

Aesthetic value

“*Aesthetic value derives from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place.*”

The aesthetic value of the building arises from its main

representative elevation, facing the Basingstoke Road. Although transformed over the recent centuries, it is intended to display a sense of proportion through fenestration, three sets of windows distributed between four bays.

Communal value

“*Communal value derives from the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory. Communal values are closely bound up with historical (particularly associative) and aesthetic values, but tend to have additional and specific aspects.*”

The Swan Inn has served as a public house since at least the early 18th century. Beyond its historical significance, it holds communal value as a landmark along the main route from Reading to Shinfield. Mentioned in “Our Village” (Russell, 1828), it is noted as a well-established and bustling hub within the community.

Setting

The main facade of the Swan Inn is best appreciated from Basingstoke Road, where its immediate surroundings remain unobstructed, consistent with cartographic references and early 20th-century photographs. The main rectangular structure is slightly set back from the road, while the southern wing extends closer to it. The proximity to Mitford Hall enhances understanding and appreciation of the historical relationship between these two buildings. This immediate context significantly contributes to the significance of both listed buildings.

Beyond its immediate curtilage, other buildings of similar or later dates, such as Mitford Hall directly to the north, as well as the Post Office and Newsagent to the south, contribute to an understanding and appreciation of the Swan Inn’s historic context along Basingstoke Road.

However, modern constructions such as the BP petrol station (replacing a historical one), Budgens shop, and Tyres & Auto Care, located on the western side of Basingstoke Road, introduce large mass and scale elements that detract from the setting of the Grade II listed Swan Inn.

6 Impact Assessment

6.1 Description of the proposals

Development proposals at the site include the construction of a single storey extension containing new commercial kitchen, WCs and dining facilities with associated parking and landscaping on land currently acting as parking and garden to the east of the Swan Inn pub. Access to the development is proposed via the land immediately to the north of the pub, with the existing access drive.

A full description of the development proposals is outlined in the separately prepared Design and Access Statement.

6.2 Impact assessment

This stage of the assessment will consider the impact of the proposed development on the significance on the heritage assets, by analysing the relevant external elevations and details in the interior of the building, based on the evaluation of heritage significance discussed in the previous section of this statement. It will then examine the potential for maximising enhancement and/or minimising harm, where identified. In examining the impact of the proposed development on the significance of the identified heritage assets, and depending on the degree of details provided, consideration is given to the scale, design, materials, and location of the proposed extension, and the degree to which these may alter the way in which the site and surrounding heritage asset is experienced.

North elevation

The north elevation of the building is visible from Basingstoke Road, but views into the car park and the rear are restricted by the narrow driveway leading to the back amenities. The proposed extension would be positioned slightly set back from the existing historic facade, situated behind the curved north-east corner of the historical building. As such, the newly proposed extension would not

be immediately visible from main road, rather, its is gradually introduced as it expands into the rear, along the historical Garden Wall. As such, the visual impact of this intervention would be considered minimal when viewed from the public realm at Basingstoke Road. The aspiration is that when accessing the rear of the Swan Inn, one can appreciate the juxtaposition of the new with the existing.

The proposed extension aims to address several shortcomings associated with the existing facilities, which currently detract from the overall setting of the Grade II listed building. It includes essential upgrades such as a new kitchen, improved WC facilities, accessible dining areas, an additional accessible entrance, and an outdoor decorative pergola. The scale of the extension has been carefully reduced from 274sqm (additional to the existing footprint) originally submitted for pre-planning, to 82sqm gross external area (additional to the existing footprint) submitted for this full planning application. These figures do not take into consideration the 33sqm garage outbuilding to be removed. This reduction ensures that the extension remains subordinate to the historic north elevation and does not overly extend along the Garden Wall, thereby mitigating any potential competition or distraction from the heritage values of the Grade II listed building and its curtilage.

By integrating the extension in this manner, the design ensures that the proposed facilities do not compromise the historical value of the site. The approach taken allows for the sufficient context for appreciation of the building's significance, both evidentially and historically. Overall, the design aims to harmonize modern functionality with the architectural integrity of the Grade II listed building, enhancing its overall appeal and functionality while respecting its historical context.

The intention is to design a distinctly contemporary structure that also pays homage to the existing building.

This approach is aimed at providing clarity for both users

of the building and the general public, enhancing their understanding of its historical context while ensuring efficient and accessible use.

The choice of material for the new structure is contemporary long-format red brick in English bond. This contrasts with the orange brick in Flemish bond used in the existing south-east wing and Garden Wall. This deliberate differentiation helps to distinguish the new addition while respectfully acknowledging the existing architectural elements.

Additionally, the proportion of introduced glazing in the design serves multiple purposes. It not only enhances the contemporary aesthetic but also introduces transparency and visual interest to what would otherwise be opaque wall surfaces. This discernment of a contemporary language is a principle supported by the early pre-planning comments.

Furthermore, the outdoor decorative open timber pergola, constructed with dark treated timber, represents a contemporary interpretation of the traditional exposed timber structures associated with the Swan Inn. This element adds a layer of visual interest and serves as a nod to the historical context of the site.

East elevation

Based on the previous analysis in this report, the removal of the existing extensions to the rear of the building is expected to have a positive impact on the building's significance values. This action presents an opportunity to reinterpret the east elevation and introduce a new design language that effectively communicates the historical narrative in a clear and authentic manner.

The current configuration of the extension has obscured the external arrangement of the east elevation. However,

remnants of the internal arrangement along the east elevation within the hallway are still discernible, albeit within the constraints of a narrow corridor, limiting their visual appreciation. The proposed intervention includes enclosing part of the corridor leading to the kitchen area, which will be accessible only to staff. This adjustment aims to open up a portion of the internal east elevation, creating a more spacious circulation route from both the existing and new entrances to the building. This reconfiguration allows for a longer viewing distance and a better contextual appreciation of the wall's architectural elements.

Furthermore, the rearrangement of the kitchen area contributes to the visual benefit by eliminating the corridor and thereby providing more space. This enhancement not only improves the functional layout but also enhances the overall visual experience within the building. By removing the existing rear extensions and carefully reconfiguring the interior spaces, the intention is to restore and showcase the historical significance of the east elevation. This approach ensures that the building's heritage values are preserved and celebrated through thoughtful design and spatial planning.

The proposed alterations involve two main interventions: firstly, the introduction of a doorway to the kitchen area, and secondly, the removal of an existing door in the north-east corner of the building. These changes are carefully considered in relation to their impact on the historical fabric of the building. The installation of a new doorway parallel to the existing internal east wall is expected to affect the exposed timber frame and lime plaster. Mitigation measures for these impacts are detailed in Section "6.3 Mitigation and conclusion" on page 30. The removal of the door opening in the north-east corner of the building is deemed to have no negative impact on the building's illustrative and aesthetic values. This door is identified as a relatively modern addition, likely dating from the post-war period (contemporary to the entrance door in the west elevation) and not contributing significantly to the historical character or significance of the building.

Setting

The proposed extension, due to its set-back position along the northern elevation of the Swan Inn, will not significantly alter the streetscape along Basingstoke Road. Instead, it will be subtly visible from the vantage point located between Mitford Hall and the Swan Inn.

In this context, apart from Mitford Hall, the immediate surroundings of the Swan Inn are characterized by late nineteenth and twentieth-century developments along Basingstoke Road. The north elevation of the proposed redevelopment will face towards the south side of the Grade II listed Mitford Hall. Similar to the Swan Inn, Mitford Hall's primary facade is oriented towards Basingstoke Road. Historically, the two properties were connected by a busy drive, which remains in use today.

This historical context underscores the importance of integrating the proposed extension sensitively into its surroundings. Although it will be glimpsed from a specific viewpoint between Mitford Hall and the Swan Inn, its design and placement aim to minimize visual impact on the main thoroughfare while respecting the historical connections and architectural character of the area.

The rear of the building is most affected due to the location of the replacement facilities. Whilst the car park to the rear of the building, covered in tarmac, as well as the modern extension structures, have negative impact on the evidential, historical and aesthetic values of the designated heritage asset, the space afforded by the car park allows the building to be appreciated and experienced from within the curtilage and at from greater distance. Currently, the irregular composition as well as the choice of building materials and colour palette, visually "blur in" with the historical asset in a negative way, distract from the historical structure. Hence, the opportunity to replace the modern extension with uniformly and distinctively designed facilities would make a positive contribution to the evidential, historic and aesthetic values.

Garden Wall

The Condition Report by Hockley & Dawson Consulting Engineers recommends rebuilding of the wall due to its poor structural condition beyond repair. Therefore, the recommendation is to reclaim the existing brick and ensure the lime based pointing throughout. As such, this would allow to retain the evidential and historical character of the wall. The design consideration acknowledges that a portion of the Garden Wall remains visible from the outdoor pergola area, while another segment is concealed behind the enclosed dining space. This approach ensures that there is adequate context to recognize the presence and function of the Garden Wall, thereby retaining its evidential and historical illustrative value.

By strategically situating the outdoor pergola to provide a view of the Garden Wall, visitors and occupants can appreciate its historical significance within the overall setting of the site. Even though part of the Garden Wall is obscured by the enclosed dining area, its presence and role in the historical narrative are preserved and highlighted. This thoughtful arrangement allows for a nuanced understanding of the heritage asset's architectural and historical context.

6.3 Mitigation and conclusion

In terms of mitigation, internally, there is a need to ensure that the interventions are done with care of the existing buildings fabric. Particularly, the internal east elevation of the hallway would be exposed to the re-development and adjoining the perpendicular wall and the door frame. It is recommended that there would be no structural changes to the existing wall in the process of attaching the new partition wall as it is very likely that the wattle and daub infill panels, contemporary to the timber frame, survive and they should not be disturbed. Rather, the structural “burden” should be put on the newly introduced partition wall and its eastern side. The profile of the historic wall is irregular due to the buildings setting over time of the box frame timber construction. It is advised that the profile of the partition should not cut through plaster but be shaped around it to allow for the possibility of reinstatement at a later date. The adjoining of the new wall should be done with the traditional materials compatible with the existing to maintain the traditional breathing performance. This approach is recommended with any jointing to the existing structure would take place.

Externally, the design, scale, massing and location of the proposed development has ensured that the aesthetic and illustrative value of the identified heritage assets will be retained. As such, there is no mitigation necessary to reduce harm to the significance of any of the assets through development within their respective settings.

6.1 Bibliography

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