

THE COCK INN

Twycross Road, Sibson, CV13 6LB

HERITAGE STATEMENT

Section 19 Application to Vary Listed Building Consent

Application Reference: 22/00019/LBC

Proposed Internal Works to Install New Structural Steelwork

1.0 Introduction.

This Heritage Statement has been prepared to accompany a Section 19 application to vary the previously approved Listed Building Consent (Application Reference: 22/00019/LBC) for repair works to The Cock Inn, Sibson.

The original consent approved an extensive programme of external structural repairs and remediation works to the building fabric. Following further structural investigation and assessment by specialist consulting structural engineers GCA (UK) Ltd, it has been established that the critical structural objective; the stabilisation of the failed roof purlin, external wall and external timber frame, and prevention of further deterioration, can be achieved through a more targeted internal intervention: the installation of a new internal steel frame. This approach involves a substantially reduced level of disturbance to the historic fabric of the building than the works previously approved.

This Statement sets out the significance of the building as a heritage asset, its listing details, the history of the premises, and an assessment of the impact of the proposed works on that significance. It should be read alongside the accompanying Design and Access Statement and the structural engineering drawings prepared by GCA (UK) Ltd (Drawing References K04172-GCA-XX-XX-DR-S-0004 through 0009).

2.0 Description of the Building.

The Cock Inn is a two-storey building at the front with its principal entrance facing onto Sheepy Road, and single-storey wings to the rear facing Twycross Road. The building is of considerable architectural interest, comprising brick infilled, timber framed cladding walls surrounding a timber framed interior. There is a thatched roof over a cut timber roof carried on timber A-frame trusses on timber posts, with sections of the single-storey portion also covered with thatched roofs. The remaining areas of the building have clay roof tile finishes.

A plaque attached to the building records the presence of a public house at the site since 1250. The layout and form of the front building appear to date from the 17th Century. The West, North and East elevations all appear to be brick infilled timber frame construction dating from the mid 19th Century, with early 20th Century Crittall windows installed following modification of the timber frame. The western wing appears to date from the mid 19th Century where it connects to an earlier stable block. Two further wings extending the bar appear to date from 1987.

The building closed permanently in November 2019 and has since suffered significant and progressive deterioration. The structural defect that is the subject of this application is a failed timber purlin at first floor ceiling level, which has split at mid span. This has placed excessive horizontal thrust on the external wall and, without intervention, risks further structural deterioration.

3.0 Listing Details and Conservation Area.

The Cock Inn is a Grade II Listed Building and is located within the Sibson Conservation Area. The listing details, as recorded on the Historic England National Heritage List for England, are as follows:

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Official List Entry.

Heritage Category: Listed Building.

Grade: II.

List Entry Number: 1074279.

Date First Listed: 07 November 1966.

Date of Most Recent Amendment: 13 October 1986 (minor amendment 03 August 2017).

Statutory Address: The Cock Inn, Twycross Road, Sibson, CV13 6LB.

County: Leicestershire.

District: Hinckley and Bosworth (District Authority).

Parish: Sheepy.

National Grid Reference: SK 35530 00822.

List Entry Description.

SK30SE 4/100. SHEEPY SIBSON TWYCROSS ROAD. The Cock Inn. 7.11.66 GV II. Public house and dwelling. Late C16 or early C.17. Timber framed with brick nogging and thatched roof on rubble plinth. Low two storeyed, framed in square panels, 12 x 2, but divided into three principal bays by arched braced posts. One bay to left of doorway, with casement window, two to its right. Two eyebrow dormers above to the right, and a small light over the door. Gable and axial stacks.

The building's listing reflects its special architectural and historic interest as a rare example of a largely intact late 16th or early 17th century timber framed public house. Its continued use as a public house for much of its recorded history, and the remarkable longevity of its occupation of the site, contribute significantly to its heritage value. The setting of the building at the heart of Sibson village, within the Conservation Area, further reinforces its importance as a landmark heritage asset.

4.0 Building History.

The recorded history of The Cock Inn is remarkably rich and spans at least seven centuries. A plaque on the building records the establishment of a public house at this site since 1250. The building's history encompasses significant local, regional and national events, and it has been a focal point of village life in Sibson throughout its long existence.

Among the most colourful aspects of the building's history is its purported association with the highwayman Dick Turpin, who is said to have taken refuge in the bar chimney whilst his horse Black Bess was stabled in the cellar. A cock pit, which gave the inn its name, was located at the rear of the building and was reportedly still in use as recently as 1870. The building is also said to have been witness to the Battle of Bosworth in 1485.

The building's history is well documented in local newspaper records. A selection of significant historical references is set out below:

Coventry Standard, Friday 12 July 1844.

Sibson Burglary, and Capture of Three Notorious Burglars. On the 3rd inst., Samuel Smith, of Nuneaton, Benjamin Taylor, of Chilvers Coton, and Edward Dewis, three notorious characters,

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who have for some time been the terror of their respective neighbourhoods, were brought before R. H. Harpur, Esq., on a charge of committing a burglary in the house of Mr. Upton, the Cock Inn, Sibson, Leicestershire, on the morning of the 29th of June, and were committed to Leicester gaol, to take their trials at the ensuing assizes.

Leicestershire Mercury, Saturday 2 October 1847.

LOCAL NEWS. Leicester Trade; Joseph Upton, of the Cock Inn, Sibson, applied for license, notwithstanding the refusal to Handford at the general licensing meeting. Ordered that as William Genders was to succeed, arrangement be made as to the tenancy, and license to be made out to Genders.

Leicester Chronicle, Saturday 24 October 1868.

Market Bosworth Petty Sessions. Mr. Moore, superintendent of police, charged Henry Mears, landlord of the Cock Inn, Sibson, with permitting drunkenness in his house on the 12th Oct. After a long hearing of the case, two churchwardens of the parish came forward and gave the defendant and his house a most excellent character. A written character, signed by ten of the principal gentlemen of the place, was also handed in. The magistrates discharged defendant with a caution.

Tamworth Herald, Saturday 10 April 1926.

63 Years in One Public House. When application was made to the Market Bosworth magistrates for the transfer of the license of the Cock Inn, Sibson, Leicestershire, to Leonard White, from Mrs. Priest, it was stated that the latter had lived there 63 years. The owner of the public house is the Rector of Sibson, the Rev. J. Poyntz.

Tamworth Herald, Saturday 28 January 1933.

Atherstone. The death has occurred at Witherley, Atherstone, at the age of 84, of Mrs. Priest, wife of Mr. D. Priest, who for many years was landlord of the Cock Inn, Sibson. Mrs. Priest was a sister of the late Dr. Mears, of Atherstone.

Western Daily Press, Monday 18 September 1944.

Thieves have removed the two cwt. famous sign of the Cock Inn, Sibson, Warwickshire, reputed hide out of Dick the highway robber, who had the decency to wear a mask.

These records, spanning a century, attest to the central and enduring role of The Cock Inn in the life of Sibson and the surrounding area. They also confirm the continuity of its use as a licensed public house over many generations, a continuity that was only broken by its enforced closure in November 2019. The Applicant is acutely aware of this heritage and is committed to seeing the building restored to its traditional use.

5.0 Significance of the Building.

5.1 Architectural Significance.

The Cock Inn is of considerable architectural interest as an unusually complete and substantially unaltered example of a late 16th or early 17th century timber framed public house. The characteristic features identified in the list entry; the timber framing in square panels, arched braced posts, thatched roof, eyebrow dormers, and rubble plinth, survive and remain clearly legible despite the building's long period of disuse.

The building's historic fabric, including its timber frame, brick nogging, thatched roof structure, and internal features, contributes directly to its architectural significance. Any intervention must therefore be carefully designed to respect and preserve these elements.

5.2 Historic and Associative Significance.

The Cock Inn's significance is greatly enhanced by its exceptionally long and well documented history as a public house, its associations with notable historical figures and events, and its role as a focal point of community life over many centuries. Its position within the Sibson Conservation Area further reinforces its importance as a key component of the historic character and appearance of the village.

The building's closure in 2019 and subsequent deterioration represent a significant threat not only to its physical fabric but also to the continuation of its historic use and its contribution to the vitality of the Conservation Area.

5.3 Communal and Social Value.

Beyond its formal designation, The Cock Inn holds considerable communal value as a beloved local landmark and a cherished part of village life in Sibson. Its reopening would represent the restoration of a social and cultural institution of great importance to the local community, as well as the preservation of a nationally significant heritage asset.

6.0 Proposed Works.

6.1 Nature of the Intervention.

The proposed works consist solely of the installation of a new internal steel frame to stabilise the existing failed roof purlin and prevent further deterioration of the structure, including the external walls and exposed timber frame. No external works are proposed. No dismantling of external masonry panels or replacement of timber frame elements is proposed under this application.

The new steel frame comprises a beam at first floor ceiling level (254 x 102 x 25 UB, Grade S355) to take over the structural function of the failed purlin, supported on new steel columns (254 x 146 x 31 UB or 203 UC 52, Grade S355) that pass vertically through the building from first floor ceiling level, through the first floor structure, through the ground floor, and down to new pad foundations within the existing cellar.

The existing broken purlin will be retained in situ, and it is not removed. The new steel beam takes over its structural role and relieves the horizontal thrust that the failing purlin has been transmitting to the external wall and timber frame.

6.2 Approach to Historic Fabric.

The design of the proposed intervention has been guided throughout by the following principles, each of which is fundamental to a sympathetic approach to works on a listed building of this significance:

- The intervention is entirely internal. The external appearance, character and fabric of the building will not be altered in any respect.
- Disturbance to wall finishes will be kept to the absolute minimum necessary to allow installation of the new columns. Any making good to wall finishes will be carried out in lime plaster, fully compatible with the historic building materials.

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- Disturbance to floor and ceiling finishes will similarly be limited to what is strictly necessary to allow installation of the columns. No more material will be removed than is required for the works.
- Where ceilings are disturbed, they will be reinstated in lath and lime plaster to match the existing, preserving the traditional character and material composition of the internal finishes.
- All materials removed during the works will be retained on site and will be available for inspection by the Local Planning Authority or Historic England if required, in accordance with best practice for works to listed buildings.
- The existing failed purlin will remain in situ. Its retention avoids any unnecessary loss of historic fabric and ensures that the historic structure of the roof remains as complete as possible.
- No external works of any kind are proposed. The comprehensive programme of external repair previously approved under 22/00019/LBC is not included within this application.

Taken together, these measures ensure that the proposed works represent the minimum intervention necessary to achieve structural stabilisation, and that they are carried out in a manner that is fully respectful of the building's listed status and its significance as a heritage asset.

7.0 Proposed Works.

The works previously approved under Listed Building Consent 22/00019/LBC comprised an extensive programme of external repair and remediation, including dismantling of masonry infill panels, replacement and splicing of timber frame elements, replacement of window frames, masonry crack repairs, and replacement of the broken purlin with a new triple timber section. These works, whilst fully justified at the time of the original application, involved a substantial degree of intervention in the external historic fabric of the building.

The proposed works under this Section 19 application are significantly more limited in their scope and impact. The intervention is wholly internal, and involves no external alteration whatsoever. The following comparison illustrates the reduced extent of the proposed works:

Previously Approved Works (22/00019/LBC):

- Dismantling and reconstruction of external masonry infill panels to north and west elevations.
- Replacement and splicing of multiple external timber frame elements in oak.
- Replacement of deteriorated window frames throughout.
- Masonry crack repairs to eastern gable.
- Replacement of broken purlin with new triple C24 timber section.
- Extensive temporary propping and bird cage scaffold.

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- Installation of new internal steel frame (beam and columns) to stabilise purlin — no external works.
- Minimal and targeted opening up of floors and ceilings for inspection and steelwork installation.
- Internal bird cage scaffold for temporary stability.
- Making good of all disturbed finishes in lime plaster / lath and lime plaster.
- Retention of all removed materials on site.

The proposed works therefore represent a lesser degree of intervention in the fabric of the listed building than the works previously approved. They are considered to be fully consistent with the principles of minimum intervention, reversibility, and respect for historic fabric that underpin the statutory framework for works to listed buildings.

8.0 Heritage Impact Assessment.

Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that, in considering whether to grant listed building consent, the Local Planning Authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Historic England's guidance document 'Conservation Principles' (2008) and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) both emphasise that the significance of a heritage asset is a key consideration in assessing any proposed works, and that interventions should be designed to cause the least possible harm to that significance consistent with achieving the necessary objective.

The proposed works are assessed as causing no harm to the significance of the listed building. The intervention is entirely internal and reversible in principle. The use of lime plaster and lath and lime plaster for all making good ensures full material compatibility with the historic fabric. The retention of the existing purlin in situ preserves the completeness of the historic roof structure. No features of special architectural or historic interest are removed or permanently altered.

On the contrary, the proposed works are necessary to prevent further harm. The continued deterioration of the building's structure resulting from the failed purlin places the building at increasing risk. The installation of the new steel frame will arrest this deterioration, stabilise the structure, and create the conditions for the building's long term preservation and eventual reopening to the public.

The Applicant therefore respectfully submits that the proposed works are entirely consistent with the statutory duty to have special regard to the preservation of the listed building, and with the policies of the development plan and the NPPF as they relate to heritage assets.

9.0 Reopening and Future Use.

The Cock Inn has been closed since November 2019. Its closure has been a source of considerable loss to the local community and represents an ongoing threat to the significance of the building as a heritage asset, since an empty and deteriorating building is inherently more vulnerable than one in active use.

The proposed structural intervention has been specifically designed to achieve the necessary stabilisation in the most efficient and least intrusive manner possible, with the explicit objective of enabling the building to be returned to its traditional use as a public house at the earliest opportunity. The Applicant is committed to this outcome and regards the reopening of The Cock Inn as inseparable from the long term preservation of its heritage significance.

A building of this age and quality, with its remarkable history and its cherished place in the life of Sibson, is best preserved in active use. The proposed works are the necessary first step towards that goal.

10.0 Conclusion.

The Cock Inn, Sibson is a Grade II Listed Building of exceptional historic and architectural significance, with a documented history as a public house stretching back to at least the 13th Century. It is a building that has played a central role in the life of its community for centuries and whose preservation is of the highest importance.

The proposed works; the installation of an internal steel frame to stabilise the failed roof purlin, represent the minimum intervention necessary to arrest the building's structural deterioration and create the conditions for its long term preservation and reopening. The works are wholly internal, cause no harm to the external character or fabric of the building, and are carried out using materials and methods that are fully compatible with its historic construction.

The proposed works are a lesser intervention than those previously approved under Listed Building Consent 22/00019/LBC and are considered to be fully consistent with the statutory framework and policy guidance applicable to works to listed buildings.

The Applicant respectfully requests that the Local Planning Authority give favourable consideration to this application, in recognition of the importance of this building to the heritage of Sibson and the surrounding area, and of the Applicant's commitment to its sympathetic repair and restoration to public use.