



Land West of The Kings Arms Public House, 79 Wyke Road, Hilperton, Wiltshire, BA14 7NZ

Heritage Impact Assessment

20 July 2026

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Client:	Ashford Homes (South Western) Limited
Project Site:	Land West of The Kings Arms Public House, 79 Wyke Road, Hilperton, Wiltshire, BA14 7NZ
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Non-Technical Summary

Heritage Planning Services has been commissioned to prepare a Heritage Impact Assessment to inform plans for the proposed development of land west of The Kings Arms Public House, 79 Wyke Road, Hilperton, Wiltshire, BA14 7NZ (the Project Site).

The proposed development will comprise a mix of two- and three-bed dwellings arranged on land to the rear of the Grade II listed Kings Arms Public House. A private road will lead northwest off Hammond Way, providing access to the front of all properties, with a turning point located to the north.

The assessment considers the significance of the host asset, the Grade II listed Kings Arms, together with three neighbouring Grade II listed buildings that share a demonstrated relationship with the Project Site: Kennet Cottage, Wharfhuse (No. 2 Marsh Road) and Wharf Cottage (No. 1 Marsh Road). The value of these assets rests principally in their architectural, evidential and historical interest as a group of late 18th and early 19th century buildings associated with the development of Hilperton Marsh and the Kennet and Avon Canal. The modern car park that comprises the Project Site is not itself a heritage asset and is not considered significant to the wider setting of this group.

Although within the curtilage of the Grade II listed Kings Arms Public House, the Project Site makes no discernible contribution to the character and setting of the heritage asset or to the wider setting of designated and non-designated assets that preserve the wider historic character.

While the current tarmacadam car park does not make a positive contribution to the setting of the heritage asset, the loss of associated land through the infilling will have an impact on the sense of openness to the rear of The Kings Arms, resulting in less than substantial harm, at the lower end of the scale, to the setting of a Grade II listed building. The scheme has reduced from eight to seven dwellings since the site was first assessed, with the northernmost unit closest to Marsh Road omitted, further limiting this impact.

Any harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the scheme, which are considered to carry significant weight: securing the optimum viable use of this underused car park, delivering seven new homes in a sustainable and accessible location, and generating economic benefits through construction and occupation, as set out in full in the Public Benefit section of this report. In line with the National Planning Policy Framework, this harm is considered to be clearly and convincingly justified by these public benefits.

A Note on Archaeology

Although this report focuses on the potential impact on the character and setting of the built environment, research undertaken for its preparation noted that the Project Site has the potential to preserve archaeological activity associated with the Medieval settlement of Smallbrook (Mon UID MWI1871), identified approximately 200m to the northwest. Aerial photographs record ridge and furrow across the Project Site prior to the landscaping for the car park, potentially indicating that the land formed part of the agricultural hinterland during this period. However, as the date of the ridge and furrow has not been established, it is possible that it relates to Post Medieval land management, thereby raising the potential for associated roadside Medieval settlement to survive.

Land bordering Marsh Road has also revealed prehistoric and Roman activity, notably at Blacklands, approximately 400m to the northwest of the Project Site. As land within the Project Site occupies a similar position, bordering Marsh Road to the southwest, there is considered to be potential for contemporary activity.

Although perhaps of minor significance, it is noted that the demolished northwest annex of the public house (shown on the 1883 Tithe Map) extended to the area of the Project Site. Landscaping in this area had the potential to reveal the foundation of the building which may date to the late 18th century or early 19th century.

Works carried out to level and landscape the car park and seating areas, along with the presence of agricultural ridge and furrow, will have impacted potential archaeological deposits. Any surviving evidence is therefore predicted to be of local and regional significance only.

As there is no reason to suspect the survival of archaeology of such significance as to preclude the granting of planning permission, any further programme of investigation and recording may be secured by way of a suitably worded planning condition.

1. Introduction

1.1. Heritage Planning Services has been commissioned to prepare a Heritage Impact Assessment for land west of The Kings Arms Public House, 79 Wyke Road, Hilperton, Wiltshire, BA14 7NZ (the Project Site).

1.2. The proposed development will comprise a mix of two- and three-bed dwellings on land to the rear of the Grade II listed Kings Arms Public House. A private road will lead northwest off Hammond Way, providing access to the front of all properties, with a turning point located to the north.

1.3. The report has been completed by Sam Driscoll, MCiFA under Project Code HPS678/25.



Figure 1 Detailed Project Site location outlined in red. Centred on ST 86148 60190.

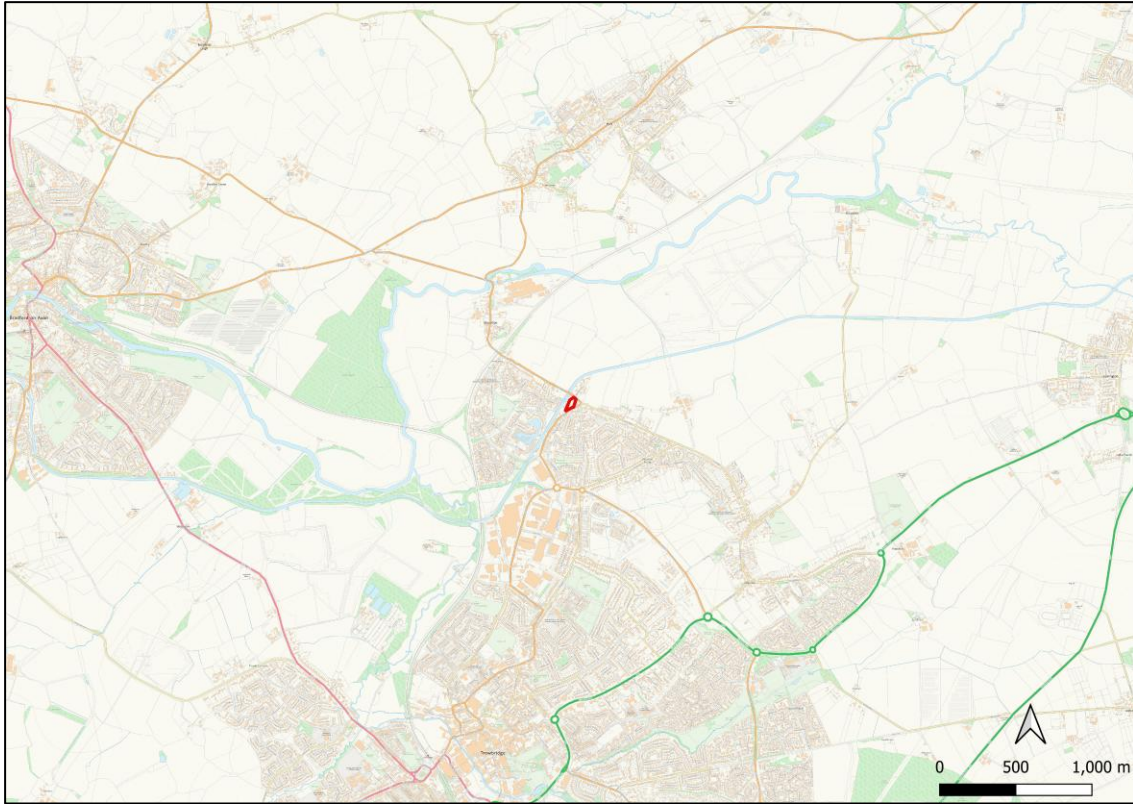


Figure 2 General Project Site location outlined in red. Centred on ST 86148 60190.

2. The Project Site

2.1. A site visit was carried out on the 24th April 2025 in overcast conditions.

2.2. The Project Site comprises the Grade II listed Kings Arms Public House, which preserves the historic core (18th century) building with 19th century additions and 20th century extension to the rear (west) and south. A tarmac parking area wraps around the building to the north, east and southwest, with a small landscaped roadside seating area and grassed area to the north.

2.3. A low (three to four course) stone wall defines the north boundary, along Marsh Road. A modern low brick wall (<1m in height) defines the roadside boundary with Hammond Way. Land within the curtilage is mostly landscaped for parking and is bound to the west by a high timber fence, with mature treeline preventing clear views of the canal and former wharf buildings.

2.4. The land is situated 1.4 km northwest of the village of Hilperton and 2.5 km NNE of the historic centre of Trowbridge.

2.5. The early 19th century route of the Kennet and Avon Canal is situated c. 40m west of the Project Site boundary.

2.6. The Project Site is accessed to the southwest, off a modern section of the B3105 (Hammond Way) and to the northeast, from Marsh Road.

2.7. The Project Site was set within a semi-rural environment until the encroachment of modern residential development in the latter half of the 20th century. From the 1950s onwards, land at Hilperton Marsh and Canalside saw substantial development, with a new road system laid out. The Project Site is situated to the north of the modern development, which is bound by Marsh Road to the northeast. Land on the opposite side of the road retains its rural character.

2.8. The 20th century development included the installation of a new three way roundabout east of the Project Site and the pedestrianisation of access from Marsh Road to Wyke Road. Although the Kings Arms Public House retains the Wyke Road address, the building no longer fronts the historic route.



Photo 1 Southwest facing view along Hammond Way, with the pedestrian link to Wyke Road indicated with the blue arrow.



Photo 2 West facing view of the principal elevation of the Grade II listed Kings Arms Public House, no. 79 Wyke Road.



Photo 3 North facing elevation of the Kings Arms Public House from the car park.



Photo 4 South facing elevation of the Kings Arms Public House with 20th century single storey extension.



Photo 5 West elevation of the Kings Arms Public House.



Photo 6 South facing view from the Kings Arms car park, looking towards the modern route of Hammond Way.



Photo 7 Southwest facing view from the car park towards the rear of the Grade II listed Kennet Cottage, indicated by the blue arrow.



Photo 8 Northwest facing view from the car park towards the Grade II listed No. 2 Marsh Road, indicated by the blue arrow.

Designated Heritage Assets

2.9. The Project Site is situated on land to the rear of the Grade II listed Kings Arms Public House, 79 Wyke Road ([List Entry Number: 1021678](#)). The public house was formally added to the list in November 1976 and is described as follows:

“Late C18. 2 storeys painted pebbledash. 2+1 windows, late glazed sashes. Main part has coupled windows with beaded inner edges, another similar on ground floor to right. Modern thin band over ground floor. Doorway in centre of main part, rusticated quoins and brackets to hood, 6 panel door. Modern porch to right. Main part has tiled roof with coped verges and gable end chimneys; addition has pantiles also with coped verge and gable end chimney. Rubble extensions to rear.”

2.10. The Kings Arms forms part of a group of heritage assets that were all added to the list in November 1976. The group includes four early 19th century cottages numbered 1, 2 & 3 Marsh Road and no. 1 Hammond Way (formerly no. 4 Marsh Road). The heritage assets are described as follows:

Wharf Cottage - No. 1 Marsh Road

2.11. Wharf Cottage, 1 Marsh Road is situated 66m NNW of the Kings Arms.

"MARSH ROAD 1. 5411 (North Side) No 1 (Wharf Cottage) ST 86 SE 1/314 II GV 2. Early C19. 2 storeys, 3 windows. Painted stone with a 2 storey wide gabled extension continued to wharf. Rubble with pantile roof, and 2 ranges of windows to canal front. The main house has slab surrounds to windows with marginal glazing to sashes. Outside staircase on north side. Pigeon holes in angle to north east. Horizontal bands of decorative tiles (fish scale variety). Gable end brick chimneys. Central porch with tented canopy. Small windows to road." ([List Entry Number: 1198288](#)).

Wharhouse - No. 2 Marsh Road

2.12. The former wharhouse is located 60m to the northwest of the Kings Arms. The list entry was subject to a Minor Amendment on 17 January 2024 to update the name and address.

"Former wharhouse. Early C19. Two storeys. Coursed and dressed rubble. 2+2 windows to south with timber lintels, except on ground floor to left which has segmental arched lintel and on ground floor to right which has a large lintel in common with two now blocked openings. Double roman tile roof." ([List Entry Number: 1021624](#)).



Photo 9 Southeast facing view of Wharhouse No. 2 Marsh Road from the Kennet and Avon Canal Bridge.

Maxcroft House - No. 3 Marsh Road

2.13. Maxcroft House, No. 3 Marsh Road is situated 114m NNE of the Kings Arms Public House, at the end of Maxcroft Lane. The building is described as follows:

"Early C19. 2 storeys, coursed and dressed rubble. Slate roofs. Irregular plan with extension leading to small warehouse on canal side, 1 window projection to south has corner bands, band over ground floor and hipped roof. Glazing bar sash windows on 1st floor, altered, some casements on ground floor. Porch in east front." ([List Entry Number: 1021625](#)).

Kennet Cottage - No. 4 Marsh Road (Amended to 1 Hammond Way, Hilperton in January 2024)

2.14. Kennet Cottage is situated 60m west of the Kings Arms Public House, fronting the Canal and is described as follows:

"Early C19. Two storeys and attic. Coursed and dressed rubble. Three windows on first floor. Double roman tile roof with two gable end chimneys, gable lit attic. Altered windows with glazing bars. Central doorway with brackets to moulded hood, modern door. Modern extensions to rear and to right. Kennet Cottage and No. 2 and Nos 1 and 3 form a group with the Kings Arms, Wyke Road." ([List Entry Number: 1021623](#)).

2.15. The roofline of Kennet Cottage is publicly visible from Hammond Way to the south end of the Project Site and forms part of the wider historic setting. The property is mostly screened from view by the mature trees along the west site boundary and does not make a notable contribution to the setting of the Kings Arms Public House.



Photo 10 ESE facing view of the principal elevation of Kennet Cottage from the towpath. The rear roofline is visible from the Project Site.

Kennet and Avon Canal, Canal Bridge, Staverton

2.16. The Kings Arms Public House is situated 75m southeast of the Grade II listed Kennet and Avon Canal Bridge, Staverton. The bridge was added to the list in June 1988 and is described as follows:

"Bridge carrying B3105 over Kennet and Avon Canal. Circa 1810. Limestone ashlar, with some brick patching. Single arch with raised keystone, plat band to road level and parapet with rounded coping, end pilasters. Towpath passes within bridge on north side. C20 iron footbridge added on east side. John Rennie was the canal engineer." ([List Entry Number: 1021873](#)).

3. Conservation Areas

3.1. The Project Site is not within a Conservation Area, or within close proximity to a Conservation Area.

4. Public Rights of Way

4.1. Public Footpath STAV3 follows the route of the canal towpath on the northwest side of the waterway, c. 45m west of the Project Site boundary. The Project Site is not currently visible from the towpath.

5. Historic Development

5.1. The map by John Andrews & Andrew Dury (Scale 2 inches = 1 mile), dated 1773, records the area of the Project Site. A building shown near to the location may be The Kings Arms Public House. The building is depicted to the west of Wyke Road, which led to Trowbridge via Weeks or Wick House, occupied by Thomas Bithersea Esq.



Figure 3 John Andrews and Andrew Dury Map 1773.

The building circled in red may represent the inn, although it is shown slightly further south.

5.2. The building is set to the northeast of a small rectangular enclosure, between the courses of two tributaries of the River Avon. Later, more detailed maps show that the public house was developed within the eastern extent of a larger field named Small Brook on the Tithe Map of 1838 – plots 418 & 419. The field was truncated by the cutting of the canal in the early 19th century. Land to the west of the canal was the focus of archaeological excavation in conjunction with modern residential development. The programme of work identified the small Medieval settlement of Smallbrook (Mon UID MWI1871). Early 20th century aerial photos recorded ridge and furrow

associated with the settlement, which had remained well preserved until the substantial development of the area. Medieval ridge and furrow was also recorded across the Project Site (Mon UID MWI1887).

5.3. The route of the Kennet and Avon Canal was cut through agricultural land to the west of the Project Site in the early years of the 19th century, with Hilperton Wharf opening in 1810 (Chettle et al).

5.4. The First Series Ordnance Survey Map (1817) documents the canal and settlement along the west side of Wyke Road. There are no substantial buildings documented along the east side of the canal at this time.

5.5. In 1824 dwelling houses and lands within the ownership of the Kennet and Avon Canal Company were sold at auction, including freehold lands at Hilperton Marsh, in the Parish of Trowbridge. The sale included lands convertible into wharves, with a frontage to the Canal of 142 feet (approx. 43m) and 250 feet (approx. 76m).¹ The Kings Arms Inn is listed as the location of the auction.²

5.6. The Tithe Map of Trowbridge (1838) shows that the Project Site comprised a roadside building set within Plots 428 & 429. The land and building was owned and occupied by Herbert Bird. The corresponding apportionment dated 1837 documents that Plot 428 was planted as an orchard.

¹ Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette - Thursday 11 March 1824. Auction of Lands convertible to Wharfs with a frontage on the Canal.

² Salisbury and Winchester Journal - Monday 22 March 1824.

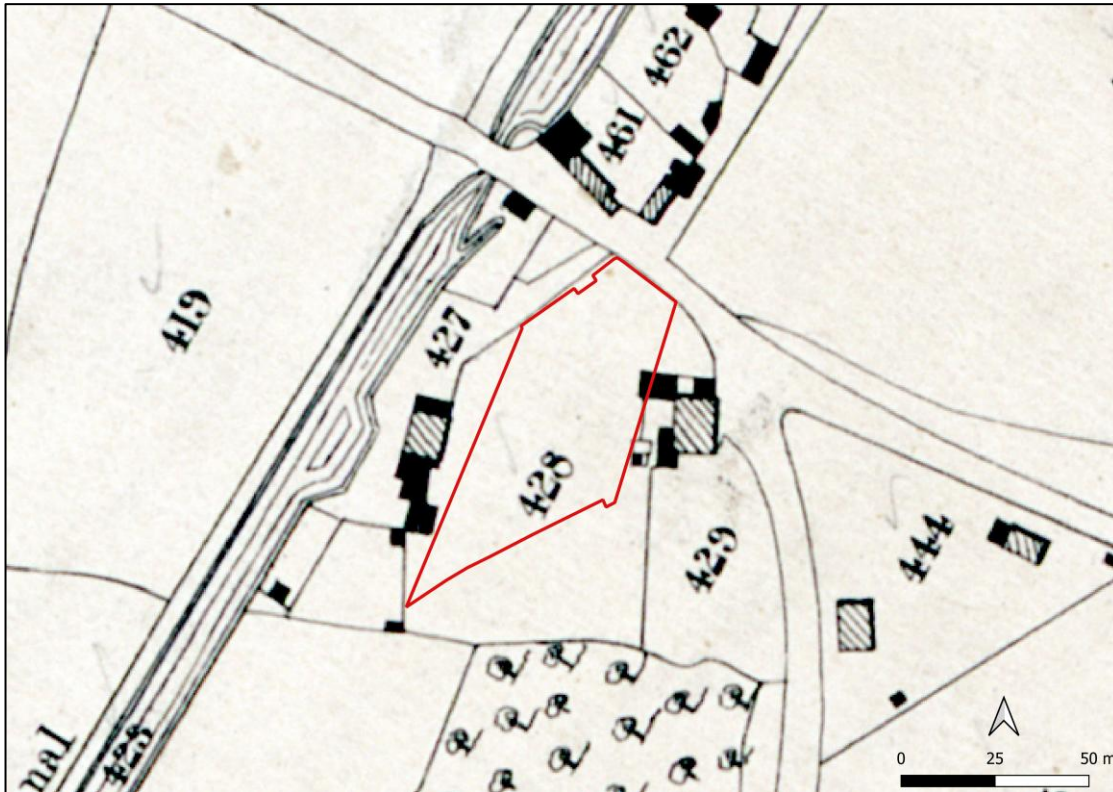


Figure 4 Tithe Map of Trowbridge 1838. Project Site outlined in red.

5.7. Herbert Bird also owned and occupied Plot 427, to the west, described as House, Buildings & Garden & Wharf (Homestead), now Kennet Cottage, 1 Hammond Way. The description likely included the building on the south side of the canal bridge, on the location of no. 2 Marsh Road. It is suggested that Bird may have been one of the early investors who purchased land on the new canal in order to establish the wharf buildings.

5.8. In 1841 Herbert (1776 – 1843) was recorded as aged 65, publican living with wife Priscilla née Hill (60) (1778 / 1779 - 1848), Harriet Bird aged 20 (1820 / 1821 - 1884) and George Bird aged 8 (1833 -). The public house was named The Kings Arms by the 1840s.³

5.9. Bird passed away in April 1843 and records indicate that the public house and associated holdings passed to Samuel James Bird (1811 – c. 1867). Samuel may have been Herbert Bird's eldest surviving son, with James Bird (eldest son 1797 - 1841) and George Bird (1810 – 1825) having predeceased their father.⁴

5.10. The 1851 census recorded Samuel James Bird (39) as innkeeper, living with wife Ann (40), sons Herbert (3) and Samuel (2) and one servant.⁵ The address is given as Hilpertown Marsh. By 1861 Samuel was listed as a coal merchant, an occupation that he continued until at least 1867.⁶

³ The name of the public house was printed in the Wiltshire Independent following the death of Priscilla Bird at her new residence of Darlington Wharf, Bath aged 69. Source Wiltshire Independent - Thursday 10 August 1848.

⁴ James Bird (1807 - ?) may also have predeceased Herbert Bird, leaving Samuel in line for inheritance.

⁵ Samuel Bird (1811 – 1867 / 1870). Samuel is deceased by 1871.

⁶ Wiltshire Independent - Thursday 20 June 1867.

Later records indicate that Samuel retained ownership of The Kings Arms and wharf buildings, whilst relinquishing his role as innkeeper.

5.11. In 1871 John Stokes (24) was registered the innkeeper of the public house, living with Ellen Stokes (22) and general servant Emma Hatt (18). In 1881 James Alexander (43) was registered as the innkeeper living with wife Dinah, two sons and two daughters.⁷

5.12. The Project Site was surveyed in 1884 for the First Edition Ordnance Survey map which shows an orchard on land to the west of the public house.

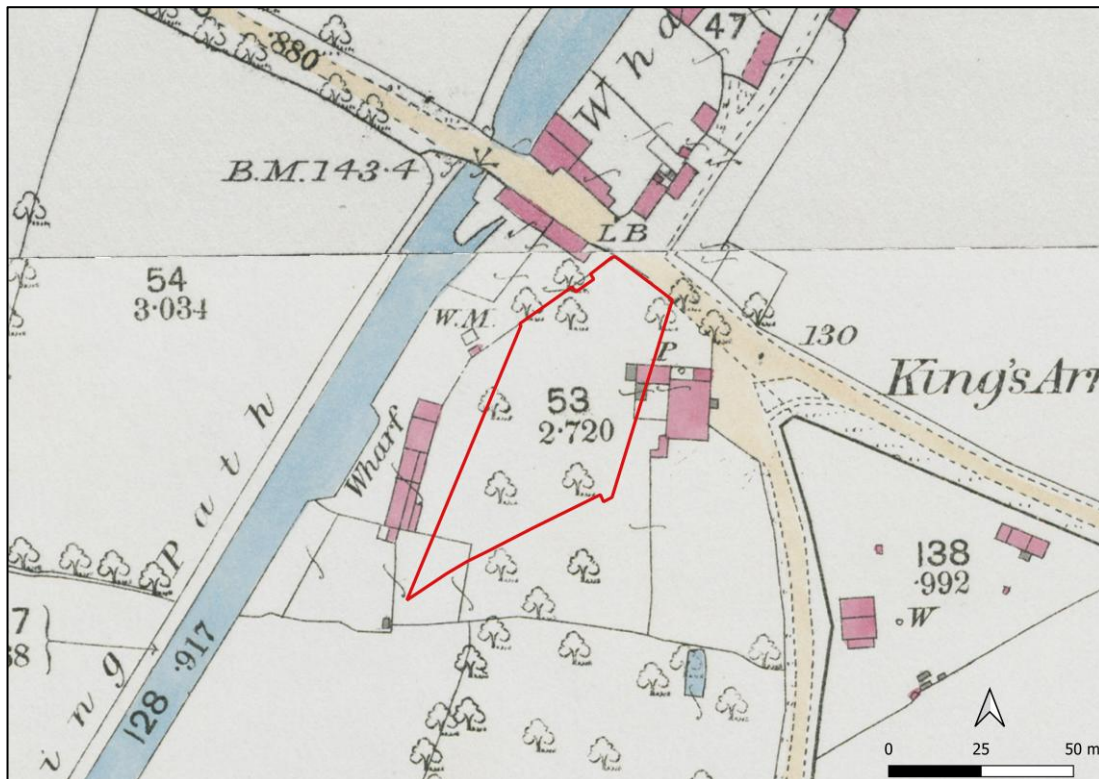


Figure 5 First Edition Ordnance Survey Map (surveyed 1884). Project Site outlined in red.

5.13. By 1891 the licensee had changed to George Gibbs (42) innkeeper, living with wife Harriett (34), their four children and Gibb's widowed Mother in Law, Marth Barnes (63).

5.14. The licensee had changed again by 1901 when Frank Hale (44) victualler was registered at the premises, living with wife Louisa (43) and their four children.

5.15. Minor extension of the main building is notable between 1899 and 1922 when a complex of small structures were added to the north annexes. The porch appears to have been removed in this time.

⁷ Trowbridge Chronicle - Saturday 17 September 1881. Auction listing.

5.16. The Lloyd George Survey of 1910 records that the Public House, Wharf, Buildings and Land were within the ownership of A H & S Bird, resident at Rock Villa.

5.17. Herbert Bird, coal merchant (1848 - 1914) was resident at Rock Villa living with his wife Eliza Jane née Balding (62) and Edith Bailey, Servant (22). It is likely that A. H. Bird refers to Herbert Bird and S. Bird may refer to his brother Samuel (1849 – 1921), the surviving sons of Samuel Bird who took over The Kings Arms following the death of his father Herbert Bird in 1840s. The Lloyd George survey records would appear to confirm that the Bird family purchased the public house in the early 19th century, probably drawn by the new commercial opportunities offered by the Kennet and Avon Canal. The property remained in the family into the early 20th century.

5.18. In 1913 Temporary Protection of the pub licence was granted to Henry Sartain from Frank Hale.⁸ The licence was formerly transferred in 1917.⁹

5.19. In 1926 the licence was transferred to Edward Ransome, who ran The Kings Arms with his wife until c. 1944, when the license was transferred from Ransome to Leslie Frank Naish.¹⁰

5.20. The Kings Arms was taken on by the Frome and Lamb Brewery c. 1955.¹¹ In 1956 licensees Mr & Mrs Reader announced the completion of their new bar and lounge which was opened by Mr H. Mann, Area Manager for the Brewery.¹²

5.21. In 1957 the brewery was taken over jointly by Stroud Brewery Co. and Usher's Wiltshire Brewery.

6. Planning Policy

6.1. With regards to the relevant policy and development framework, the following are considered appropriate to the current proposal:

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2024;

⁸ Wiltshire Times and Trowbridge Advertiser - Saturday 29 November 1913.

⁹ Wiltshire Times and Trowbridge Advertiser - Saturday 31 March 1917. By 1922 there is a reference to James Alfred Sartain as licensee (1858 – 1940). Wiltshire Times and Trowbridge Advertiser - Saturday 25 November 1922.

¹⁰ Wiltshire Times and Trowbridge Advertiser - Saturday 20 November 1926. Reference in 1939 to Mr and Mrs Ransome of the Kings Arms. Wiltshire Times and Trowbridge Advertiser - Saturday 15 July 1939. In 1944 licence transferred from Ransome to Leslie Frank Naish. Wiltshire Times and Trowbridge Advertiser - Saturday 05 February 1944.

¹¹ The Frome & Lamb Brewery registered 1889 as Frome United Breweries Co. Ltd were located at Badox Brewery, Frome. In 1955 Frome United Breweries merged with the Lamb Brewery in Frome. In 1957 Frome & Lamb Brewery was acquired by Stroud Brewery Co and Usher's Wiltshire Brewery. Source breweryhistory.com [accessed 10th June 2025].

¹² Wiltshire Times and Trowbridge Advertiser - Saturday 07 April 1956

"207. In 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. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

210. In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

212. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

213. Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.

215. 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 its optimum viable use.

218. Local planning authorities should require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this

evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible. However, the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted.

219. Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.”

6.2. The policies at Chapter 16 of the Framework apply to the heritage-related consent regimes for which local planning authorities are responsible under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Section 66 of that Act imposes a statutory duty on the decision-maker to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building, or its setting, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

6.3. This assessment has also had regard to Historic England’s Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (2015) and Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition): The Setting of Heritage Assets (2017), which set out the recommended approach to identifying heritage assets and assessing the contribution of setting to their significance.

Wiltshire Core Strategy adopted 2015

Core Policy 58 Ensuring the conservation of the historic environment.

“Development should protect, conserve and where possible enhance the historic environment.

Designated heritage assets and their settings will be conserved, and where appropriate enhanced in a manner appropriate to their significance, including:

- i. nationally significant archaeological remains;
- ii. World Heritage Sites within and adjacent to Wiltshire;
- iii. buildings and structures of special architectural or historic interest;
- iv. the special character or appearance of conservation areas;
- v. historic parks and gardens;
- vi. important landscapes, including registered battlefields and townscapes.

Distinctive elements of Wiltshire's historic environment, including non-designated heritage assets, which contribute to a sense of local character and identity will be conserved, and where possible enhanced. The potential contribution of these heritage assets towards wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits will also be utilised where this can be delivered in a sensitive and appropriate manner in accordance with Core Policy 57 (Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping).

Heritage assets at risk will be monitored and development proposals that improve their condition will be encouraged. The advice of statutory and local consultees will be sought in consideration of such applications."

7. Proposed Development

- 7.1. The proposed development will comprise a mix of two and three bed dwellings on land to the rear of the Kings Arms Public House. A private road will lead northwest off Hammond Way, giving access to the front of all of the properties, with a turning point to the north.
- 7.2. All seven properties will benefit from the provision of private gardens. Plots 01, 02 & 07 will benefit from attached single garages, following the omission of the northernmost dwelling (formerly Plot 01) from the scheme.
- 7.3. All properties will have private parking bays within the curtilage of the individual plots. Additional resident and visitor parking will be provided to the southwest.
- 7.4. A green landscape buffer is planned to form a visual separation between the rear of the public house and the new development.

8. Statement of Significance

- 8.1. The Project Site is defined by a modern enclosed car park which has been annexed from a large field and former orchard that formed part of the 19th century setting.
- 8.2. The historic boundaries have been eroded, with the west boundary moved east to provide a private garden for Kennet Cottage and the south boundary truncated to allow for the new route of Hammond Way, cut through the landscape in the later 20th century.
- 8.3. Although within the curtilage of the Grade II listed Kings Arms Public House, the Project Site makes no discernible contribution to the character and setting of the heritage asset or to the wider setting of designated and non-designated assets that preserve the wider historic character.
- 8.4. The significance of the heritage assets engaged by the proposed development is considered below, limited to those designated heritage assets that share a demonstrated visual or physical relationship with the Project Site, namely the Kings Arms (the host asset), Kennet Cottage, No. 2 Marsh Road (Wharfhouse) and No. 1 Marsh Road (Wharf Cottage).

The Kings Arms Public House

- 8.5. The Kings Arms preserves a late 18th century core with 19th century additions and a 20th century extension to the rear and south, and is described in its list entry as a painted pebbledash

building of two storeys with coupled sash windows, a rusticated doorcase and gable end chimneys. Its significance rests principally in its architectural interest as a well-preserved former coaching inn, its evidential and historical value as a documented public house and coal merchant's premises associated with the Bird family and the development of Hilperton Marsh from the early 19th century, and its group value as the senior member of a set of five buildings added to the list together in November 1976.

Kennet Cottage, 1 Hammond Way (formerly No. 4 Marsh Road)

8.6. Kennet Cottage is situated 60m west of the Kings Arms, fronting the canal. Its own list description records that it forms a group with No. 2 and Nos 1 and 3 Marsh Road and the Kings Arms, confirming its group value is statutorily recognised. The roofline of Kennet Cottage is publicly visible from Hammond Way at the south end of the Project Site and from the car park itself (Photo 7), although the property is mostly screened by mature trees along the west site boundary and, as previously noted, does not make a notable contribution to the setting of the Kings Arms. Its significance otherwise rests in its architectural and evidential value as an early 19th century canal-side dwelling with surviving glazing bar sashes and a moulded door hood.

No. 2 Marsh Road (Wharfhouse)

8.7. The former Wharfhouse is located 60m northwest of the Kings Arms and is directly visible from the car park (Photo 8). Its significance rests in its architectural value as a coursed and dressed rubble building with a double roman tile roof, its strong evidential value as a former wharf building directly connected to the operation of the Kennet and Avon Canal, and its group value with the Kings Arms and the wider Marsh Road group.

Wharf Cottage, No. 1 Marsh Road

8.8. Wharf Cottage is situated 66m NNW of the Kings Arms. A secondary view towards the rear of the Kings Arms and the Project Site beyond is available from a small ground-floor window in the south-east gable of Wharf Cottage, looking SSE, although this is not considered a key view given its restricted scale and oblique angle. Its significance rests in its architectural value as an early 19th century painted stone building with a gabled extension to the wharf and decorative tile banding, its evidential value as a former canal wharf building, and its group value with the Kings Arms and the wider group.

8.9. The value of these four assets therefore rests principally in their architectural, evidential and historical interest as a group of late 18th and early 19th century buildings associated with the development of Hilperton Marsh and the Kennet and Avon Canal, reinforced by their shared group

listing in November 1976. The modern car park that comprises the Project Site is not itself a heritage asset, makes no discernible contribution to the setting of the Kings Arms, and is not considered significant to the wider setting of this group.

9. Impact Assessment

Grade II Listed Kings Arms Public House

9.1. The proposed development will be situated on ground to the rear (and formerly within the curtilage) of The Kings Arms Public House. The further reduction of land within the curtilage of the heritage asset will have an impact on setting. The scheme has since reduced from eight to seven dwellings, with the northernmost unit closest to Marsh Road omitted, reducing the built form nearest to this part of the site boundary.

9.2. Key views of The Kings Arms Public House are achieved principally in an arc travelling north through east to south from Marsh Road and Hammond Way. Although the proposed development will not impede these views, it will introduce a modern built form to the rear of the heritage asset. The proposed plans include residential development buffered from The Kings Arms Public House by an access road and front garden plots. The layout is considered favourable and will not detract from the key views in the way that a linear terrace might. Overall it is considered that a high quality development which promotes the upkeep and care of grounds within the immediate setting of the Public House may improve on the existing setting.

9.3. Views east from the canal side towards the Project Site are not publicly significant. Significant views are interrupted by Kennet Cottage which obscures the Project Site and neighbouring heritage asset.



Photo 11 View looking east from the canal path. Kennet Cottage interrupts views towards the Project Site.

Heritage Assets Within the Wider Setting

9.1. The Project Site is set within a urban environment, where a modernised street plan and infill development appears dominant. However, the restoration of the canal in the 1960s – 1980s has ensured that the historic character retains a strong presence, enhanced through the survival of the canal bridge, Wharfhouse, Wharf Cottage Kennet Cottage and Maxcroft House. The group of early 19th century buildings are intrinsically linked to the industrial heritage of the area. Together with non-designated assets within the wider environs they preserve the historic character of the area.

9.2. The proposed development will largely blend into the modern urban landscape. A documented visual relationship exists between the car park and Wharfhouse (Photo 8) and, to a lesser extent, Kennet Cottage (Photo 7). A limited, secondary view towards the rear of the Kings Arms and the Project Site is also available from a small ground-floor gable window at Wharf Cottage, looking SSE, though this is not considered a key view given its restricted scale and oblique angle; no equivalent sightline has been recorded towards Maxcroft House, which lies at a greater remove. Following the omission of the northernmost unit closest to Marsh Road, this view is expected to remain largely unchanged, with the grassed area and low boundary wall to the rear of the Kings Arms retained as soft landscaping and the only change being the perimeter planting proposed around the edge of the Project Site. On this basis the proposed development is

considered to have a neutral impact on the Grade II Listed Wharfhouse, Wharf Cottage and Maxcroft House.

9.3. Significant views towards the Grade II listed Kennet Cottage will not be impeded by the proposed development, however the roofline of some of the new dwellings may be visible in the skyline framing public views east from the canal path, potentially introducing a modern built form into the wider setting of the heritage asset. This identified harm is weighed against the public benefits of the scheme in the following section.

10. Public Benefit

10.1. The Project Site comprises a redundant, tarmacadam car park that makes no positive contribution to the setting of the Kings Arms or the wider historic character of the area. The proposed development secures the optimum viable use of this land, in accordance with paragraph 215 of the National Planning Policy Framework, replacing an underused and visually unattractive surface with high quality housing set within a landscaped, managed setting. The ongoing use and maintenance associated with residential occupation is itself capable of enhancing the immediate setting of the Kings Arms, an outcome the existing car park does not offer.

10.2. The scheme will deliver seven new homes, comprising a mix of two- and three-bedroom dwellings, on previously developed land within an established residential area. The delivery of new housing of this kind is a benefit that attracts weight under the Framework's presumption in favour of sustainable development, and is achieved here without the loss of any greenfield land or open countryside.

10.3. The Project Site benefits from a sustainable, accessible location, with direct access onto Hammond Way (B3105) and the existing residential amenities, services and transport links of Hilpertown Marsh and Trowbridge close by. The construction and occupation of seven new dwellings will also generate economic benefits, including short-term construction employment and local expenditure.

10.4. Taken together, these benefits — securing the optimum viable use of underused land, the delivery of new housing in a sustainable location, and the associated economic benefits — are considered to carry significant weight, sufficient to clearly and convincingly justify the less than substantial harm identified above, in accordance with paragraphs 213 and 215 of the Framework.

11. Conclusion

11.1. The infilling of the plot to the rear of The Kings Arms Public House will result in the further truncation of land formerly within the curtilage of the historic inn. While the current tarmac car park does not make a positive contribution to the setting of the heritage asset, the loss of associated land through the infilling will have an impact on the sense of openness to the rear of The Kings Arms, resulting in less than substantial harm to the setting of the Grade II listed Kings Arms Public House. The reduction of the scheme from eight to seven units, and the omission of the northernmost dwelling closest to Marsh Road, further limits this impact. In accordance with paragraph 212 of the National Planning Policy Framework, great weight has been given to the conservation of the heritage asset in reaching this view, and in accordance with paragraph 213 this harm is considered to be clearly and convincingly justified by the public benefits set out above.

11.2. These benefits are considered, on balance, to outweigh the identified harm.

A Note on Archaeology

11.3. Although this report focuses on the potential impact on the character and setting of the built environment, research undertaken for its preparation noted that the Project Site has the potential to preserve archaeological activity associated with the Medieval settlement of Smallbrook (Mon UID MWI1871), identified approximately 200m to the northwest. Aerial photographs record ridge and furrow across the Project Site prior to the landscaping for the car park, potentially indicating that the land formed part of the agricultural hinterland during this period. However, as the date of the ridge and furrow has not been established, it is possible that it relates to Post Medieval land management, thereby raising the potential for associated roadside Medieval settlement to survive.

11.4. Land bordering Marsh Road has also revealed prehistoric and Roman activity, notably at Blacklands, approximately 400m to the northwest of the Project Site. As land within the Project Site occupies a similar position, bordering Marsh Road to the southwest, there is considered to be potential for contemporary activity.

11.5. Although perhaps of minor significance, it is noted that the demolished northwest annex of the public house (shown on the 1883 Tithe Map) extended to the area of the Project Site. Landscaping in this area had the potential to reveal the foundation of the building which may date to the late 18th century or early 19th century.

11.6. Works carried out to level and landscape the car park and seating areas, along with the presence of agricultural ridge and furrow, will have impacted potential archaeological deposits. Any surviving evidence is therefore predicted to be of local and regional significance only.

11.7. As there is no reason to suspect the survival of archaeology of such significance as to preclude the granting of planning permission, any further programme of investigation and recording may be secured by way of a suitably worded planning condition.

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