

## “Why can’t Tun Tavern once again stand in Philadelphia?”



The land on which Tun Tavern stood is now under I-95 as it follows the north-south path of the Delaware River. The street on which it once stood, Water Street, was a victim of Urban-renewal in the early 1960’s when the Interstate Highway boom was in full swing. A concrete wall along the west-side of I-95 now hides the exposed cliff that would have been across Water Street from Tun Tavern. But Tun Tavern was gone by 1781 and a warehouse stood on the land by the 1800’s through the 1960’s.

Taverns were truly the “internet” of the 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries—the places that people went for the day’s news, business negotiations, meet friends, discuss the important topics of day, or just relax. Taverns were simply the heart and soul of a town, where men from all walks of life could share a table and a conversation. Taverns were as ubiquitous as gas stations and convenience stores are today.

TODAY, the idea of rebuilding The Tun originated in 2015. While there had been earlier attempts to rebuild the tavern, none were like this. Past attempts did not include the other organizations that can trace their origins to The Tun. Once the decision was made to “rebuild”, the other organizations were contacted, and a “coalition” was formed that eventually included all six organizations with a heritage at Tun Tavern: Pennsylvania Freemasons, The Society of Saint George, Saint Andrews Society, and the Sons of Saint Patrick, Marines and even the Navy. In 2021, the search for a location as close as possible to the original location commenced, to give The Tun’s eventual patrons the experience of colonial Philadelphia. The land chosen is currently a parking lot and only about 250 yards from the original location.

From the beginning the organizers insisted that a re-established Tun Tavern should be a functioning tavern, but operate as a non-profit with all operating profits donated to veteran charities, masonic charities, and scholarships. A Foundation, “Tun Tavern Legacy Foundation”, was formally created in February 2021, and registered as a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation with the stated mission “To rebuild and re-establish The Tun™ as it was, a functioning mariner’s tavern reminiscent of colonial Philadelphia, serving period-influenced refreshments, food, and entertainment and offering an educational experience through exhibits, historical documents, and special events.” The Foundation, headquartered in Philadelphia, with representation on its Board of Directors from each of the six “coalition” organizations, is tasked with the rebuilding of The Tun, oversee its management, and the eventual distribution of profits to veteran, masonic, and educational charities.

Since the creation of the Foundation, progress has been considerable. In October 2023, an Agreement of Sale was signed to purchase the required land. In November 2023, an architect, engineer, and construction manager were formally under contract. In December of 2023 the Board of Directors were ratified and adopted the Foundation’s formal bylaws. While the bulk of the historical research has been accomplished, ongoing research continues for clarification purposes. Initial environmental testing has also been completed and a zoning application is currently being readied for submission.

While much has been accomplished to ensure the completion of this goal, there is much remaining. In February 2024, we are set to close the land deal; June 2024 the design, zoning and permitting is on schedule to be completed. The goal is to have the groundbreaking and construction begin in November 2024 with the grand opening, 10 November 2025. We are now in full fund-raising mode. There are multiple ways you can help see this dream become reality. Begin by visiting the website [www.TheTun.org](http://www.TheTun.org); you can help spread the word on this effort; and you can follow us on social media to be kept updated on the dream.

