

P/13/0265/CU

TITCHFIELD FESTIVAL
THEATRE

TITCHFIELD

AGENT: TITCHFIELD FESTIVAL
THEATRE

CHANGE OF USE OF THE GREAT BARN TO THEATRICAL PERFORMANCE USE, INCLUDING BAR/CAFE, TOILET FACILITIES, ANCILLARY EDUCATIONAL FIELD CENTRE, CRAFT AND FARMERS MARKETS, MUSEUM & EXHIBITION SUITE, CORPORATE, CHARITY, WEDDING AND COMMUNITY EVENTS & USE OF FORMER OFFICE/STORE FOR CAST FACILITIES/SECURITY OFFICE (ALTERNATIVE TO P/12/0362/CU)

THE GREAT BARN MILL LANE TITCHFIELD PO15 5RB

Report By

Kim Hayler - Ext 2367

Site Description

The Tithe Barn or Great Barn as it is also known, to which this application relates is a Grade I listed building. It is approximately 11 metres deep east to west and 45 metres wide north to south with a high vaulted roof across this large floor space.

The Barn is situated on rising ground to the west of Mill Lane and is approached by a long straight tarmac drive from Mill Lane. It is set in the countryside as defined in the Fareham Borough Core Strategy and Fareham Borough Local Plan Review and is within the Titchfield Abbey Conservation Area and Meon Strategic Gap.

Description of Proposal

This application seeks permission to change the use of the barn from agricultural usage, to use for theatrical performance use, including bar/cafe, toilet facilities, ancillary educational field centre, craft and farmers markets, museum and exhibition suite, corporate, charity, wedding and community events and use of former office/store for cast facilities/security office (alternative to P/12/0362/CU).

There are no alterations/extensions proposed to the internal and external fabric of the barn.

Policies

The following policies apply to this application -

Approved Fareham Borough Core Strategy:

CS14 - Development Outside Settlements

CS17 - High Quality Design

CS22 - Development in Strategic Gaps

Fareham Borough Local Plan Review:

DG4 - Site Characteristics

C18 - Protected species

Relevant Planning History

The following planning history is relevant:

P/07/1323/CU - Change of Use of Tithe Barn from Agricultural to Theatrical Performance Use Including Stationing of Mobile Units - Withdrawn

P/02/0059/CU - Titchfield Abbey, Mill Lane Use of land for musical functions, plays, school parties and erection of marquees and other structures associated with events - Temporary permission for two years granted May 2002.

P/12/0362/CU - Change of use of the Grade 1 listed barn from agricultural to theatrical performance use, including bar/cafe, toilet facilities, ancillary educational field centre, craft and farmers markets and use of former office/store for cast facilities/security office - Permission 8 October 2012

Representations

Three letters have been received raising no objection in principle subject to the following concerns:

Experience of last season's operation demonstrated effort has been made to avoid unnecessary disturbance to neighbours;

The internal toilets are yet to be provided;

The renewed permission should cease all operations by 2200 hours;

The new proposal is expanding the use to an array of potential activities;

The former character of the store/office should be reinstated;

Who will manage the additional events?

Who will secure the gates after events?

What time will weddings finish?

No fireworks;

The theatre should not sub contract events;

Horses are kept very close and any potential noise may cause stress to horses;

Council should give a 12 month trial;

Conditions should be specific to the uses.

Twenty nine letters of support have been received.

Eight letters supporting a petanque use at the site have been received, although this does not form part of the planning application.

Consultations

Director of Planning and Environment (Highways) - The alternative proposal will result in some further use of the main barn for community and wedding events. No highway objection is raised subject to a planning condition to secure traffic management measures.

Director of Regulatory and Democratic Services (Environmental Health - Pollution) -

As with the previous application, the main concern lies with possible noise nuisance associated with the use of amplified equipment and with patrons leaving the area in vehicles late in the evening.

With regard to both these noise sources, the lack of noise complaints associated with the current use of the barn for theatre productions indicates that such activities are sufficiently controlled to limit their impact on nearby neighbours.

Concerns remain as the application now covers other activities. The information provided

states that the charitable events will occur both inside and outside the barn but will be limited to 4 - 5 times a year from 10 am - 7 pm. As such these events are unlikely to give rise to ongoing and/or late night noise nuisances. The same is likely to apply to corporate events inside the barn that although may continue until 10 pm, are only planned for 4 - 5 days a year.

Weddings are planned for 12 - 14 times a year and this number could be increased having regard to the existing premises licence which allows, for instance, the service of alcohol and the playing of live or recorded music until 11 pm any Friday or Saturday night. The use of temporary event notices could extend the finishing time beyond 11 pm. Therefore a condition is suggested similar to the previous application requiring all events to cease by 2300 hours. The previous condition limiting outdoor events to five per year may again be appropriate as wedding celebrations may be held outdoors.

The use of fireworks will not be welcomed by nearby residents.

It is not believed the use of flood lights would result in a statutory nuisance.

Director of Regulatory and Democratic Services (Environmental Health - Contamination) - no objection

Director of Planning and Environment (Ecology) - There are no physical changes resulting from this application which were not proposed previously, however the alternative proposal will result in some further use of the main barn for community and wedding events. As such comments are as before - no objection is raised, subject to the ongoing operational use of the site being carried out in accordance with the measures set out in the Bat and Breeding Bird Survey.

Director of Planning and Environment (Conservation) -

The barn is a grade I listed building and lies within the Titchfield Abbey Conservation Area. This application seeks to increase the range of uses granted by P/12/0362/CU to include museum and exhibition suite, corporate, charity, wedding & community events. Previous comments apply to this proposal in other respects.

The application does not show alteration to the historic building's fabric and retains the important open character of its interior. The proposal also allows a degree of public access to its historic interior.

The setting of the barn, the nearby scheduled ancient monuments and the character and appearance of the conservation area derives from the predominantly rural landscape character of the valley. The historic buildings are experienced as part of the quiet rural landscape particularly by users of the adjacent public footpaths. The established character of the valley has been identified as important in the Titchfield Abbey Conservation Area Character Appraisal.

It is important that this established character is not eroded and harmed. There is some concern that together the intensity and frequency of this range of uses, the exact nature of which is not specified, is cumulatively likely to result in change to the established rural character of the valley and harm to the setting of the barn, the other historic buildings and the character and appearance of the conservation area.

External activity including noise (both outside and emitted from within the barn), pressure for further hard surfacing and additional structures/ furniture (such as signage and lighting) all have the potential to erode the existing rural character of the landscape. Without more detailed definitions of the uses proposed and how it is intended to control them it is difficult to be certain concerning the degree of impact on the immediate setting of the barn and the character of the conservation area.

Planning Considerations - Key Issues

Members will recall that planning permission was granted last year for change of use of the Grade 1 listed barn from agricultural to theatrical performance use, including bar/cafe, toilet facilities, ancillary educational field centre, craft and farmers markets and use of former office/store for cast facilities/security office.

Condition 2 of the planning permission stated:

The barn shall be used for theatrical performances, as an education centre and for craft and farmers markets only.

This current application has been submitted seeking permission to extend the use of the barn to museum and exhibition suite, corporate, charity, wedding and community events.

The applicant has been successfully operating theatrical events at the barn for some time, as confirmed by the representations received from immediate neighbours. There is however some concern from neighbours that the theatre will essentially lose control of the management of events if the extended uses are permitted.

Officers have raised this matter with the applicant who has advised that the 'Conditions of Hire' of the Barn clearly state, amongst other things details of all restrictive planning conditions and advises users to be mindful of nearby neighbours. Furthermore a Director of the Theatre resides opposite the road in Mill Lane. It is the intention of the Theatre, when funds are available to have security presence on site during all events.

In terms of the impact on the barn, the Council's Conservation Officer raises no in principle objection, however he does have some concerns relating to the intensity and frequency of the range of uses and how this may change the rural character of the Barn. These concerns need to be weighed up against the benefits of opening up the historic Barn to various events.

Officers consider that the use of the Barn for these additional events would help in securing its ongoing use and maintenance, and would increase the public access available to it. Officers believe that this would outweigh any potential limited harm which might temporarily be caused to the character of the building as a result of the uses permitted. Conditions and informatives are recommended requiring tables, chairs and other such paraphernalia to be removed from outside and stored within the Barn when not in use.

In terms of noise and disturbance issues, it is noted that the Council's Environmental Health Officer has not raised objections to these proposals and that no complaints have been received previously when the barn has been used for plays.

On traffic and parking matters, the Council's highway engineer raises no objections.

The concerns raised by local residents have been addressed within this report and by the

recommended conditions.

In conclusion, this proposal has the potential to provide noteworthy community benefits through cultural performances and the opening up to public viewing of the historic Tithe Barn and would secure the future condition of the historic barn by retaining its open character and involving no alteration to its fabric.

Reasons For Granting Permission

The development is acceptable taking into account the policies and proposals of the Development Plan as set out above. The development would not have unacceptable implications in respect of its effect on the visual appearance or character of the Conservation Area, amenities of neighbours living nearby, highway implications or ecological matters. Other material considerations are not judged to have sufficient weight to justify a

refusal of the application, and where applicable conditions have been applied in order to satisfy these matters. The scheme is therefore judged to be in accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and thus planning permission should therefore be granted.

Recommendation

PERMISSION: Use of barn; public performances within the grounds outside of the barn shall be restricted to not more than 5 days in any one calendar year; charitable events within the grounds outside of the barn shall be restricted to not more than 5 days in any one calendar year and shall not take place outside the hours 1000 - 1900; no public performances, theatre performances or other functions shall take place inside or outside the barn outside the hours 1000 - 2300; any bar or catering facilities within the barn shall only be used during performances or functions and not independently outside of those times; any external alterations to office/store/security building to be agreed; any marquee should be first agreed with the Local Planning Authority; no fireworks or pyrotechnics; office/store/security building to be used ancillary to the approved uses of the barn; water tank to be screened; details of traffic management measures; visibility splays; no vehicles to use or park on footpath 41; works and ongoing use to be carried out in accordance with ecology report; no more than 14 weddings to be held in any one calendar year; any tables/chair and other paraphernalia to be stored inside the barn.

Notes for Information

You are advised that:

- (i) These proposals should entail no ground disturbance, either within or outside the Tithe Barn;
- (ii) Any permanent fixtures to, or alteration of, the historic fabric of the Tithe Barn would require a separate application for listed building consent;
- (iii) All vulnerable aspects of the interior fabric of the Tithe Barn should be adequately protected prior to the erection of structures and installation of mobile units;
- (iv) In view of the vulnerability of the ancient timber structure of the Tithe Barn, fire regulations and fire protection measures should be stringently enforced; and
- (v) Adequate measures for internal and external refuse disposal should be implemented. Birds nests, when occupied or being built, receive legal protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is highly advisable to undertake clearance of potential nesting habitat (such as hedges, scrub, trees, suitable outbuildings etc) outside the bird nesting season, which is generally seen as extending from March to the end of August, although may extend longer depending on local conditions. If there is absolutely no alternative to doing the work in during this period then a thorough, careful and quiet

examination of the affected area must be carried out before clearance starts. If occupied nests are present then work must stop in that area, a suitable (approximately 5m) stand-off maintained, and clearance can only recommence once the nest becomes unoccupied of its own accord.

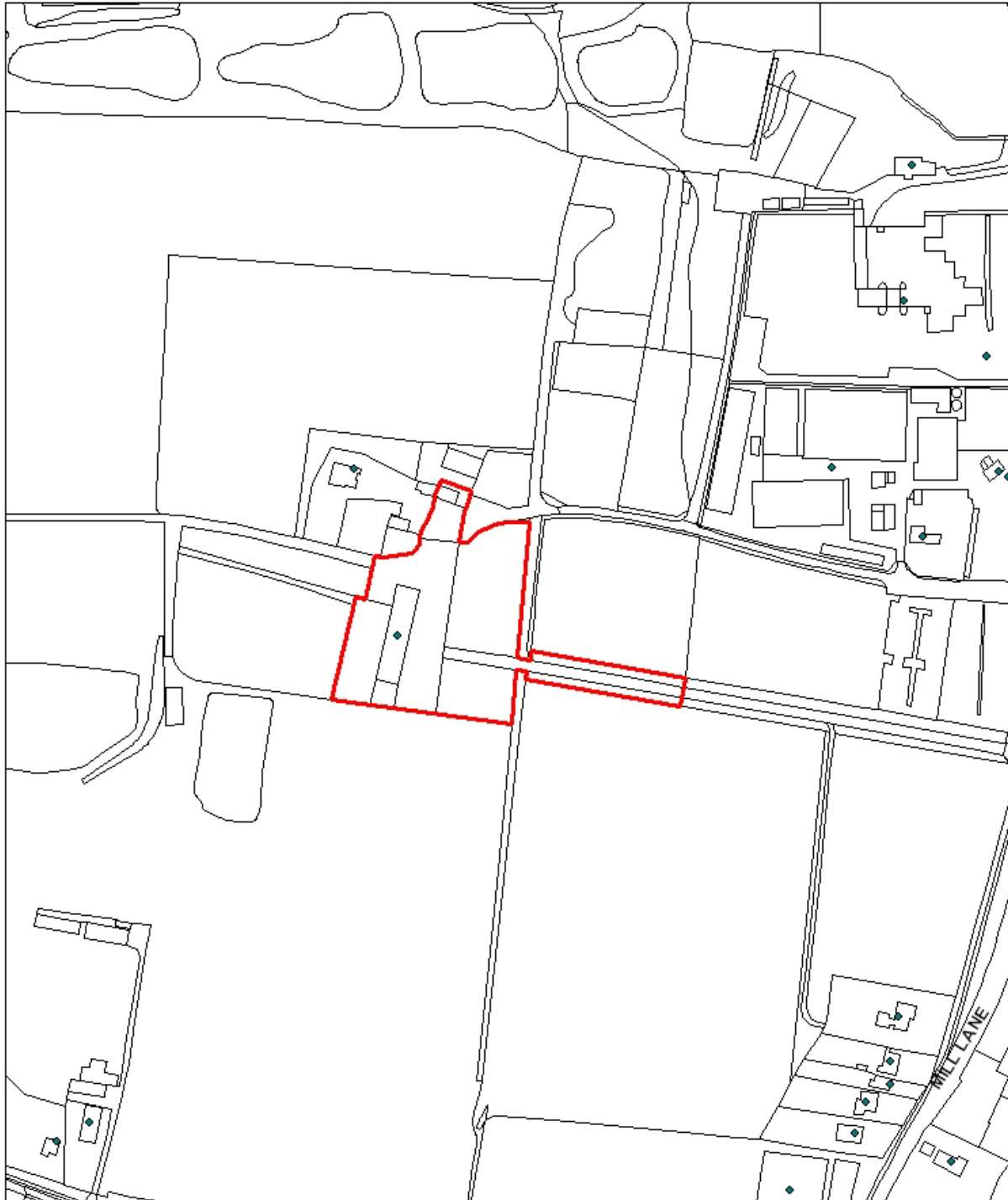
Bats and their roosts are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. All work must stop immediately if bats, or evidence of bat presence (e.g. droppings, bat carcasses or insect remains), are encountered at any point during building demolition - should this occur, further advice should be sought from Natural England and/or a professional ecologist.

Background Papers

See planning history.

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL



THE GREAT BARN, MILL LANE
SCALE 1:2500

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