

## OFFICER REPORT FOR COMMITTEE

DATE: 17 July 2019

P/19/0316/FP  
TITCHFIELD FESTIVAL THEATRE

TITCHFIELD  
AGENT: SOUTHERN PLANNING  
PRACTICE

RESURFACE CAR PARK AREA WITH TARMAC (RETROSPECTIVE APPLICATION)

THE TITHE BARN, MILL LANE, TITCHFIELD, FAREHAM, PO15 5RB

### ***Report By***

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### ***1.0 Introduction***

- 1.1 Planning permission was granted in 2013 for the use of the Tithe Barn (also known as Great Barn) and surrounding land (our reference P/13/0265/CU). The approved use allowed the barn to be used for theatrical performances, as an educational centre, for craft and farmers markets, as a museum and exhibition suite and for corporate, charity, wedding and community events.
- 1.2 In light of the number and nature of representations received the application is reported to the Planning Committee.

### ***2.0 Site Description***

- 2.1 The application site includes the barn which is a Grade I Listed Building and the surrounding land. The site is within the countryside, the Titchfield Abbey Conservation Area and Meon Strategic Gap.
- 2.2 The barn is situated on rising ground to the west of Mill Lane and is approached by a long driveway from Mill Lane. Where it enters the site there are two small fields on either side of the drive to its north and south. The drive continues and opens out into a car park on the immediate east side of the barn itself. The car park continues around the northern side of the barn where it leads to a gate providing a right of way into the land to the west which forms part of the new Titchfield country park.
- 2.3 Right of Way 41a passes through the car park on the northern side of the barn.

### ***3.0 Description of Proposal***

- 3.1 The access drive from Mill Lane has recently been resurfaced under Class E of Part 9, Schedule Two of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) and did not require planning permission. However, the car park and land surrounding the barn is not an unadopted street or private way, and so these resurfacing works would require planning permission.
- 3.2 Retrospective planning permission is sought for the resurfacing of the car park area comprising type one limestone, base course macadam and a wearing course macadam.

#### **4.0 Policies**

- 4.1 The following policies apply to this application:

##### **Adopted Fareham Borough Core Strategy**

CS17: High Quality Design

##### **Adopted Development Sites and Policies**

DSP5: Protecting and Enhancing the Historic Environment

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019

#### **5.0 Relevant Planning History**

- 5.1 The following planning history is relevant:

P/16/1192/VC – Vary condition 15 of P/15/0786/VC to increase the number of wedding ceremonies and/or wedding functions from 14 to 28 to be held on the application site in any one calendar year – Refused – 14 December 2016

P/16/0738/FP – Retrospective application for underground sewage tank and proposed hedge screening and provision of soakaway and standpipe – Approve – 25 January 2017

P/16/0406/LB – Retrospective consent for glazing to window slits and cladding of toilets; new external doors to barn – Approve – 11 January 2017

P/15/0786/VC - Remove CONDITION 2 allowing outside of barn to be used; vary CONDITION 8 to allow removable/temporary structures under 9m x 9m within the grounds of the barn to be erected for up to 72 hours; remove CONDITION 13 requiring need for visibility splays; remove CONDITION 16 allowing unrestricted number of weddings subject to recorded amplified music (DJs) or non amplified acoustic music (bands) & installation of a noise limiter; vary CONDITION 17 to allow garden benches & tables to be left in the grounds on a permanent basis.

Refuse – 15 October 2015

Appeal part allowed – 27 June 2016

P/13/0265/CU - 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) – Approve – 2 July 2013

## **6.0 Representations**

6.1 Seven objections from six households have been received raising the following issues:

- This sterile expanse of tarmac almost surrounding the barn is hideous and should be removed;
- The tarmac and fences have altered the exterior look of the barn;
- This retrospective application should not be permitted;
- The area was originally roughly laid gravel and loose road planings, not attractive but appropriate and sympathetic in this rustic setting;
- The tarmac should be removed and replaced with gravel;
- The proposal destroys the visual appearance and character of the barn;
- There are other suitable materials that would visually enhance the surrounding of the barn and being permeable to encourage the dispersal of rainwater.

6.2 Three representations have been received supporting the proposal.

## **7.0 Consultations**

EXTERNAL

### **7.1 Historic England**

Due to workload commitments, Historic England were only able to give verbal comments.

The barn is Grade I listed and is therefore one of highest heritage significance.

The setting of the barn contributes to its importance. The barn historically had a rustic and informal rural setting. The formal tarmac surfacing recently laid around the barn is totally inappropriate, significantly harming the historic

interest of the barn and the character and appearance of the Titchfield Abbey Conservation Area.

## 7.2 Hampshire County Council – Countryside Service

Fareham Footpath 41a runs through the car park area. The application makes no reference to Fareham Footpath 41a which has been directly affected by the proposals.

Nothing connected with the use of the land as car park should have an adverse effect on the right of way, which must remain available for public use at all times. Cars parked within the line of the footpath would constitute an offence under S.137 of the Highways Act 1980.

There must be no surface alterations to the right of way without the prior permission of Hampshire County Council as highway Authority. To carry out any such works without this permission constitutes an offence under S.131 of the Highways Act 1980. In relation to this application a highway agreement may be required to ensure that the surface is suitable for its use as a public footpath as well as the proposed use.

If the application is approved we request the following condition is imposed:

‘A Highway Agreement to be secured for works to the surface of the Public Right of Way and any increase in the cost of maintenance related to the development.’

INTERNAL

## 7.3 Conservation

The Grade I Listed Barn is situated in a rural context. The car parking for the barn was designed in discrete areas with hedging and unmade gravel surfaces. The area as a whole is characterised by unmade rural lanes and hedges.

The barn is located within a yard area which was formerly part of the farm but is now used for access and parking for the various uses and events in the barn.

This development relates to the access and surfacing of the former yard area which has been formed with black tarmac extending throughout the yard area, altering its character and the setting of the barn.

A domestic type timber fence has also been erected to the north east of the barn, partially enclosing the rear setting of the barn.

The character, appearance and setting of the barn has been significantly altered by this new surface which is considered to be intrusive and out of context with the setting of the barn and the Titchfield Abbey Conservation Area.

The specification of the surface material is uncertain, but it is unlikely to be porous and could therefore impact on the water run-off in the area and could also impact on the timber building fabric of the barn in the longer term.

To conclude, the tarmac resurfacing substantially harms the historic significance of the setting of the barn and the Conservation Area.

## **8.0 *Planning Considerations***

8.1 Under Sections 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 the Local Planning Authority has a statutory requirement when considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting to pay 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, and where it is also in a conservation area of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area. The development which is the subject of this report both affects a listed building or its setting and is within a conservation area.

8.3 Policy DSP5: Protecting and Enhancing the Historic Environment states:

'Listed buildings will be conserved by ensuring that development does not harm, and if desirable, enhances their settings, and

Development affecting a conservation area will be permitted where it preserves or enhances its character, setting and appearance.'

8.4 Policy DSP5 goes on to say that harm or loss will require clear and convincing justification in accordance with national guidance. Under the NPPF it is a core planning principle to conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance. 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. The more important the asset, the greater weight should be.

8.5 The NPPF also recognises the importance of considering setting as it sets out that significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justifications. The onus is therefore on the Local Planning Authority to rigorously test the necessity of any harmful works and to seek to reduce harm through amendments to the scheme or the imposition of suitable conditions or planning obligations.

8.6 Paragraph 133 of the NPPF states:

‘Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss.’

8.7 The Grade I Listed Barn is sited upon a gently sloping hillside and by virtue of its size it is a prominent feature of the area. The barn is a distinctive and important part of the Titchfield Abbey Conservation Area, including its association with the Abbey and its monastic estate.

8.8 Right of Way 41a runs through the car park; the car park area is clearly visible from this right of way, including when approaching from the north and west.

8.9 The barn is surrounded by paddocks and fields, with Fernhill Farm house, a Grade II listed property to the north. The car park the subject of this application lies principally to the east of the barn, wrapping around the northern end. The rural rustic setting of the barn and the contribution it makes to the conservation area and monastic landscape are of special interest.

Apart from a small strip of gravel either side of the barn doors, the tarmac surface covers the entire area to the front and north side of the barn, extending up to the doors and surrounding hedgerows. The tarmac has a formal, dark, smooth and shiny surface appearance which is totally inappropriate compared to the original informal rustic surface.

8.10 The character, appearance and setting of the barn has been significantly harmed by this new surface which is considered to be inappropriate, intrusive and out of context with the setting of the barn and the Titchfield Abbey Conservation Area.

8.11 Furthermore, the specification of the surface material is uncertain, but it is unlikely to be porous and could therefore impact on the water run-off in the

area and could also have a possible impact on the timber building fabric of the barn in the longer term.

8.12 It is noted the resurfacing of the car park has enabled easier parking for users of the Titchfield Festival Theatre, however this is a benefit that has to be balanced against the effect of the proposal on the listed building and the conservation area. There is no threat to the continued viability of the heritage asset if the surfacing were to be removed. Officers conclude that the public benefits of the proposal would not outweigh the harm described above.

8.32 To conclude, the tarmac surfacing fails to preserve and substantially harms the historic significance of the setting of the barn and the Conservation Area.

## **9.0 Recommendation**

9.1 REFUSE:

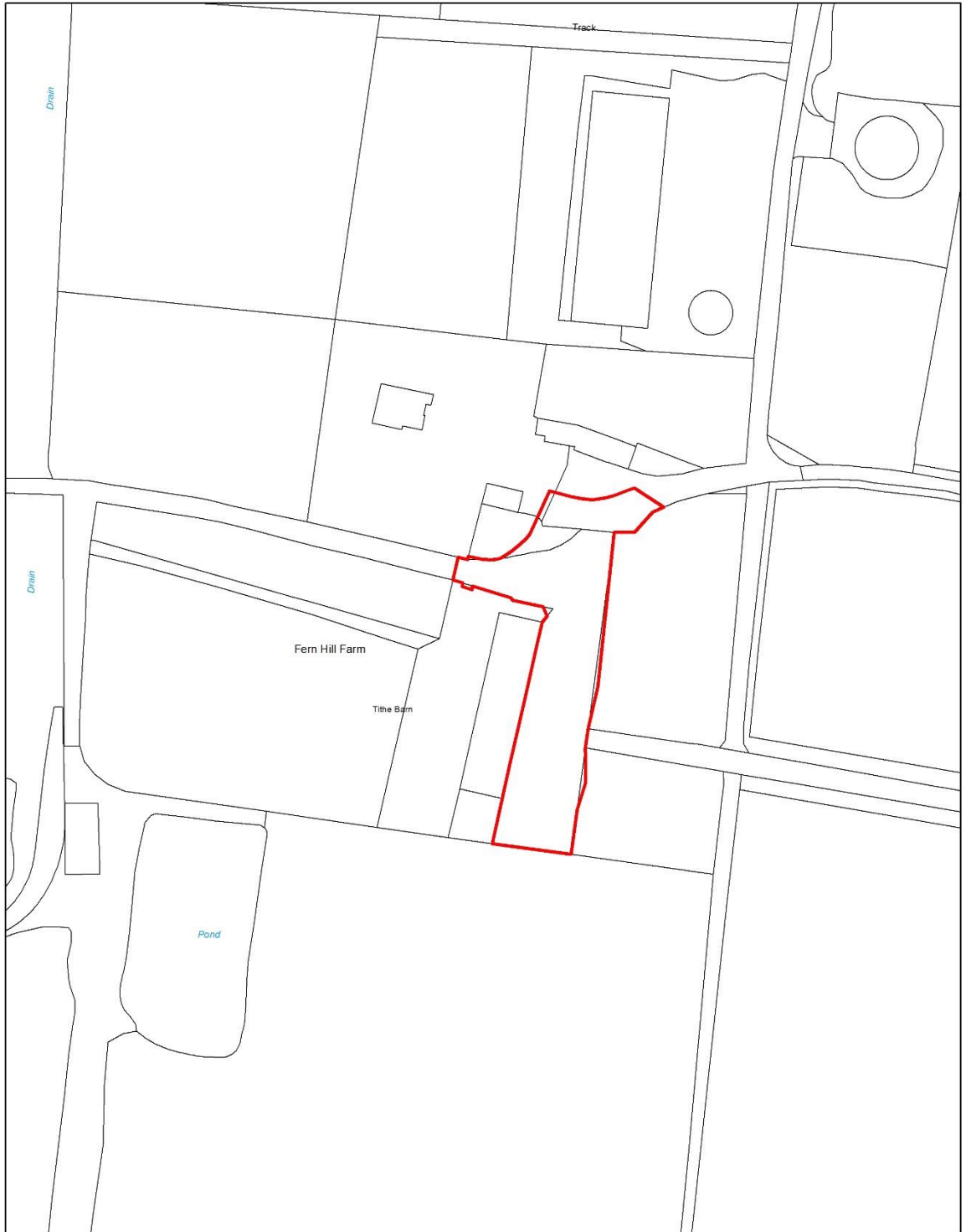
1. The tarmac surfacing material is considered inappropriate for this informal rustic rural setting, failing to preserve and substantially harming the historic significance of the setting of the Grade I Listed Barn and the Titchfield Abbey Conservation Area contrary to Policy CS17 of the Core Strategy and Policy DSP5 of the Local Plan Part 2.
2. The decision is made in accordance with the following plans:

Site location plan – F/362/ID/3/001

Block plan – F/362/ID/3/002

# FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL



The Tithe Barn  
Mill Lane  
Scale: 1:1,250



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