

REPORT TO THE EASTERN AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	11 th October 2012
Application Number	E/2012/0987/FUL
Site Address	1 South Street and The Old Forge, Aldbourne, Wiltshire SN8 2DW.
Proposal	Demolition of existing rear extension and erection of two storey rear extension to 1 South Street and The Old Forge. Erection of rear outbuilding and change of use of ground floor and first floor at 1 South Street to tea rooms, library and community space.
Applicant	Mr and Mrs Hart
Town/Parish Council	ALDBOURNE
Grid Ref	426543 175672
Type of application	Full Planning
Case Officer	Victoria Cains

Reason for the application being considered by Committee

This application has been put before the Committee by the Area Development Manager as objections have been received to a proposal where Wiltshire Council may utilise part of the building to deliver a Council service. It is therefore considered appropriate in this case for the Committee to consider the application in public.

1. Purpose of Report

To consider the recommendation that the application be approved.

2. Report Summary

The main issues to consider are:

1. Whether the change of use element of the application is acceptable in principle;
2. Whether the scheme would give rise to an adverse impact upon the residential amenities of the occupiers of the neighbouring dwellings;
3. Whether the scale/design of the extension and outbuilding is acceptable, particularly in relation to the listed building(s) and conservation area;
4. Whether the change of use would give rise to issues of highway safety (namely relating to parking provision);
5. Other matters – namely the impact of The Old Forge; and
6. Whether the proposed outbuilding is acceptable.

The accompanying listed building application E/2012/0986/LBC is also to be determined at this committee and this recommendation is contained in the subsequent report.

3. Site Description

This application relates to 1 South Street and The Old Forge in Aldbourne. No.1 currently houses the library on the ground floor whilst the Old Forge has recently re-opened as a working forge. The site is located on the north-eastern edge of the centre of the village, just off The Square, and is set back from Oxford Street (which leads to Baydon to the north) with a small parking area in front. Plate 1 shows the site in the context of The Square and the pond found within the centre of the village.

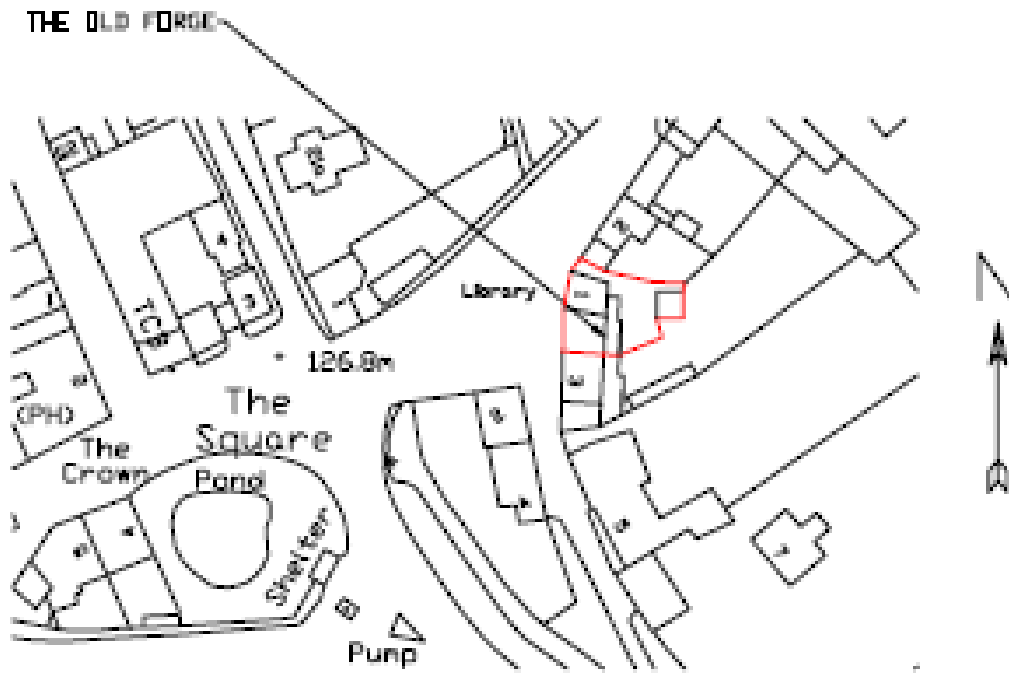


Plate 1: Location Plan (not to scale)

The application site is the end property of a terrace of three buildings which comprise the Aldbourne library (1 South Street), The Old Forge and adjacent dwelling (3 South Street). No.1 and The Forge are part of a grade II listed row of cottages dating from the late 18th/early 19th century. Built of rubblestone, now colourwashed, the buildings are two-storeys high with single storey extensions to the rear. The neighbouring thatched cottages adjacent to the site are also grade II listed buildings. The terrace of three is also notably listed because of their group value, being an important element enclosing The Square, itself being a focal point within the Aldbourne conservation area.

To the north of the application site is 2 Oxford Street which is a listed residential property with the rear courtyard of the application site abutting the rear garden of this neighbouring dwelling. The site is situated within the village centre which is characterised by its mix of residential and commercial uses (e.g. village shops, public house, post office cafe and deli, hairdressers and library). The building itself is grade II listed and lies within the conservation area and North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Plate 2 shows the site in relation to its immediate neighbours.



Plate 2: Block plan (not to scale)

4. Planning History

This application has been resubmitted following the withdrawal of a similar scheme in June 2012 (E/2012/0526/FUL and E/2012/0527/LBC). These applications were withdrawn because of the concerns regarding the impact upon neighbour amenity, particularly overlooking and to a degree the dominance of the extension upon the occupiers of 2 Oxford Street.

This latest application varies in that it now includes a rear outbuilding for a disabled toilet, the extension now angles slightly away from no.2 and the rear window closest to no.2 has now been removed (a brick inset is proposed in lieu of the window). A summary of the recent history is set out below:

K/18753/L	Demolition of existing lean-to, new single storey extension and alterations to existing dwelling – APPROVED 1992
K/18754	Replacement single-storey extension – APPROVED 1992
E/2012/0422/LBC	Replace existing corrugated roof coverings to rear single storey lean-to extension and separate shoeing shed with plain clay tiles. Insertion of rooflights into single storey lean-to extension – APPROVED 2012
E/2012/0526/FUL	Erection of two storey extension to rear & demolition of existing extension. Change of use of ground floor & first floor to tea rooms, library & community space – WITHDRAWN
E/2012/0527/LBC	Erection of two storey extension to rear and demolition of existing extension. Additional extension & internal alterations - WITHDRAWN

5. The Proposal

This application seeks to erect a two storey rear extension to 1 South Street (which partly attaches at its rear corner to The Old Forge) and a single-storey outbuilding. The extension is required to facilitate the change of use from a library at 1 South Street to a mix of uses, namely the library, a new tea room business as well as occasional use for community purposes such as meetings for parish council, mums and babies groups and any other local groups. A rear outbuilding is also proposed to house a unisex disabled toilet for users of the building.

This scheme differs from the previous submission as the extension now angles slightly away from no.2. The scheme has been amended to remove the rear facing first floor window closest to the boundary with no.2 Oxford Street and replace it with a masonry inset. Two high-level (i.e. above head height) conservation style rooflights are now proposed.

Internal alterations are proposed to facilitate the re-organisation of the building and these specifically require listed building consent and are considered in the subsequent report for E/2012/0986/LBC.

Plate 3 shows the ground floor of the proposed extension and the outbuilding.

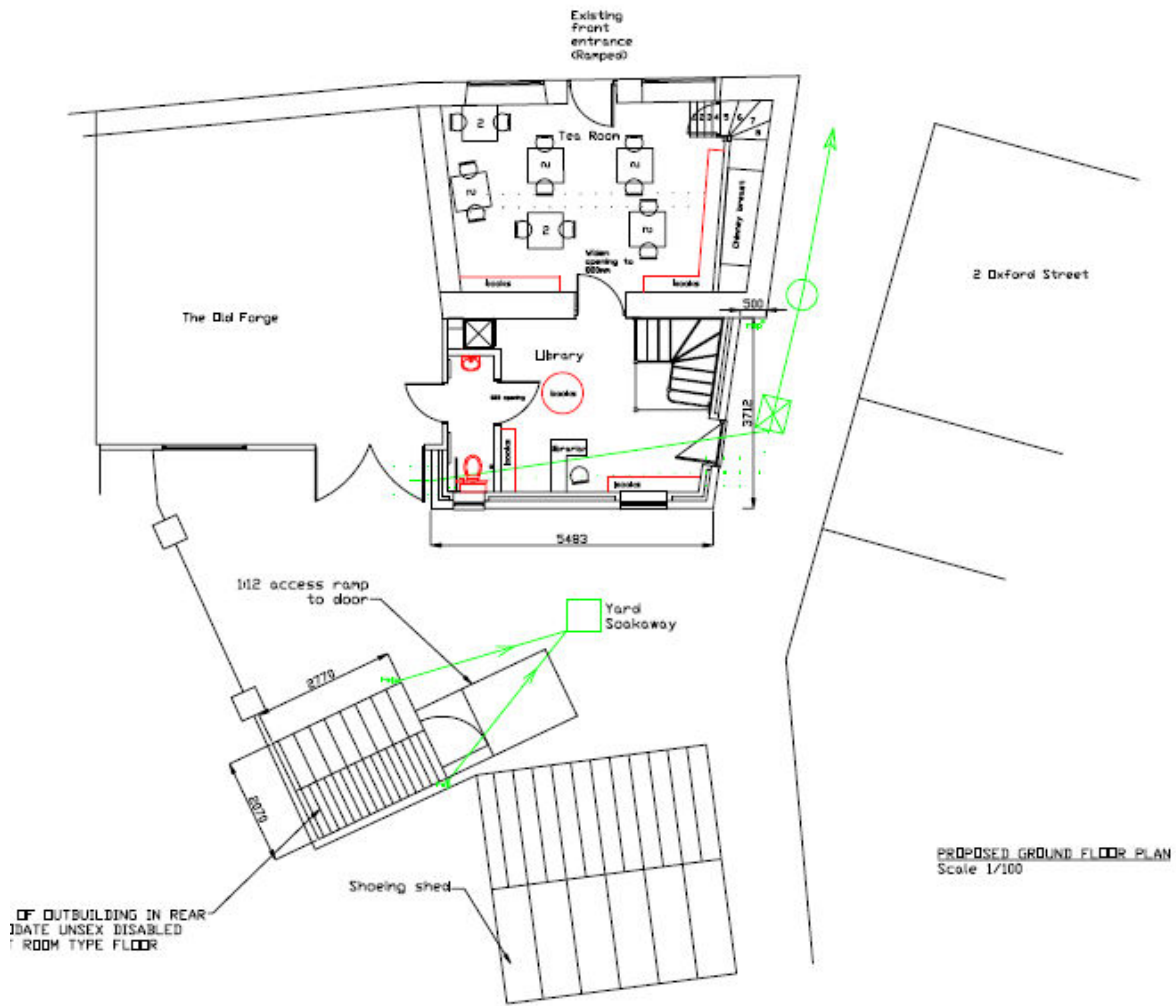


Plate 3: Proposed extension and outbuilding



Plate 4: Planning application site – front elevation

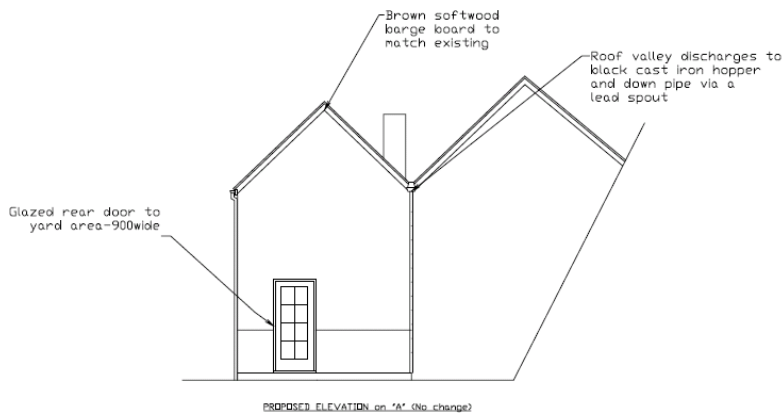
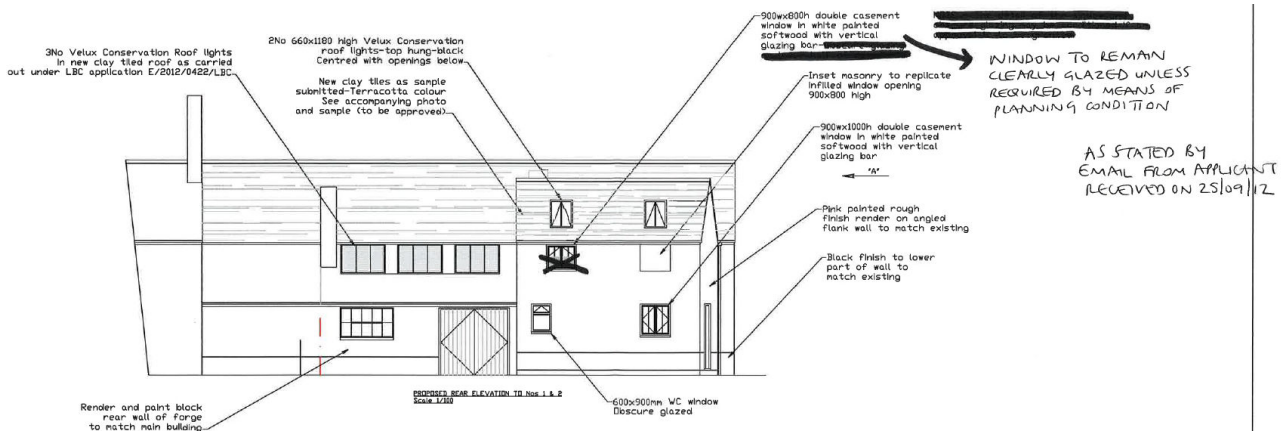


Plate 5: Proposed Elevations

6. Planning Policy

The **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** sets out the general planning policy of central government. Of particular relevance to the determination of this application is section 7 regarding design, section 3 supporting a prosperous rural economy and section 12 regarding the historic heritage. Section 7 not only emphasises the importance of design in terms of visual impact but also in respect of the impact upon the community, including neighbour amenity.

Kennet Local Plan: Policy PD1 regarding general development and design principles is the pertinent consideration.

Wiltshire Core Strategy Pre-submission Document (February 2012): This holds limited weight at the present time as a material consideration but this weight will strengthen as the document progresses towards adoption (timetabled early 2013). The key policies would be Core Policy 1: Settlement Strategy, Core Policy 14: Spatial Strategy: Marlborough Community Area, Core Policy 57: Ensuring high quality design and place shaping and Core Policy 58: Ensuring the conservation of the historic environment.

Other material considerations: The Practice Guide to Planning Policy Statement 5 and the Aldbourne Conservation Area Statement are also material considerations.

7. Consultations

Aldbourne Parish Council: No objection.

Wiltshire Council Conservation Officer: No objection subject to conditions relating to (i) internal elevations and details of works to the building to provide access from the existing first floor to the new extension; (ii) joinery details – windows and door (including internal doors and ‘blind’ window); (iii) materials; (iv) rain water goods to be cast metal and finished in black and (v) details of any new vents/flues etc connected to toilet and kitchen facilities.

Wiltshire Council Environmental Protection. Comments have been received reiterating the response to the previous applications that were withdrawn. No objections are raised because of the small, almost domestic scale of cooking that is to be carried out at the premises for the tea room. Concerns were however raised that the tea room could potentially be used as a more intensive restaurant at a future date and a condition restricting the use of a domestic scale cooker was recommended.

Wiltshire Council Highways: No objection.

8. Publicity

A site notice was put up and neighbours consulted by letter. Furthermore, the proposal was advertised in the local press. Three letters of objection from neighbours have been received to the scheme as originally submitted (i.e. with two windows at first floor in the rear elevation). These are summarised as:

1. The scheme will have an adverse impact upon daylight received to no.2 Oxford Street
2. The proposed windows will directly overlook the garden area of no.2
3. The tea rooms will generate noise and disturbance to the detriment of the amenity of the occupiers of no.2 Oxford St.
4. The increase in traffic will lead to an increase in pollution that already exists in the vicinity
5. The extension and outbuilding represents a 60% increase in volume of the current listed building and will not appear subservient to the existing listed building.
6. The extension will harm the special interest of the listed building, its evolution over the years and relationship to neighbouring properties. To interrupt the roofline would be detrimental to the roofscape, character and appearance of the conservation area.
7. The scheme would dramatically increase the parking and traffic at this part of Aldbourne. There are existing problems with the Co-op shop close by. Cars already park on the carriageway impairing access and vision. Residents of Oxford Street are regularly blocked in by road users.
8. The fire engines had issues recently when trying to access a property because of traffic problems.
9. The re-opening of the forge has caused intolerable noise created by the forging process, including hammering and the use of other light industrial equipment during the day time. Smell nuisances are also experienced on occasions.
10. The addition of a tea room to the existing uses in the village such as the pub and the forge will create further noise and disturbance to the immediate neighbouring properties.
11. If consent were to be granted then an hours of operation condition should be added to the use as a whole.
12. The tea room may impact upon the viability of other similar uses in the village.
13. The external toilet must be contrary to the Building Regulations.
14. Concern about the increased fire risk from the old forge.
15. An example of a similar forge planning application in Chipping Campden was provided (this can be viewed online). This particular forge was subject to noise control and restrictions in order to protect the amenities of local residents (e.g. decibel restrictions, operating hours, noise insulation and keeping the doors and windows closed when operations are taking place). The objector believes it is reasonable to expect that Wiltshire Council will require similar measures to be taken in this case to protect the amenities of local residents in Aldbourne.

9. Planning Considerations

Whether the change of use is acceptable in principle

This application proposes a collection of community uses at the application site. These are specifically a tea room and the library (the library being a Wiltshire Council service with the space rented from the applicants). Occasional use for local groups and organisations is also proposed although there are no specific details of these uses as these are envisaged to be evolving secondary uses.

The village of Aldbourne is defined as a larger village in both the Kennet Local Plan and the emerging Core Strategy (pre-submission document). As such, it is a village with a range of services and facilities with a larger local population. Indeed, page 11 of the Aldbourne Conservation Area Statement states that *“one of the particular attractions of Aldbourne is the amount of activity that remains within the village. This includes business activity, shopping, the church, the school, the library and the village hall, all of which identify Aldbourne as an important local centre. Pubs and restaurants provide facilities for both residents and visitors. Retention of all these uses is essential if the overall character of the Conservation Area is to be maintained”*.

The application site, within the centre of the village, and close to other businesses and services is considered an appropriate and sustainable location to cluster these uses which will largely serve the local population but in addition tourists. The mutually supporting uses of the library and tea room will help to retain/improve essential local services which are often lost in villages. The NPPF specifically states that the role of development plans (and subsequently decision takers) is to “...promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship”. In a large “active” village such as Aldbourne, your officers consider this change of use acceptable in principle.

Whether the scheme would give rise to an adverse impact upon the residential amenities of the occupiers of the neighbouring dwellings

There are two-fold concerns to address here, (a) the impact of the change of use itself and (b) the impact of the extension. Photographs showing the relationship between the application site and no.2 Oxford Street (the closest neighbour) are set out below:



Plate 6: Rear elevation and view towards 2 Oxford Street



Plate 7: Rear elevation of 2 Oxford Street facing towards the application site



Plate 8: View from the side windows of 2 Oxford Street facing towards the application site

The library already exists and is to be relocated into the ground floor of the rear extension. The tea room will largely occupy the front of the building at ground floor and the first-floor. The proposed catering equipment is a domestic scale oven (that would not give rise to smell nuisances) and the proposed hours of operation are 09.50 to 17.30. The proposal is for a tea room that is compatible with a library and the scale of the use (as indicated by the hours of operation, cooking equipment and links to the library) is low-key. This is a village centre location where residential and business/service uses exist cheek by jowl and it is not unusual for uses to be close to/adjacent to residential properties (as exists elsewhere in the village centre). It is not therefore considered that the change of use proposal would have an adverse impact upon the reasonable living standards of the occupiers of the neighbouring residential dwellings by reason of noise disturbance or smell nuisances. The condition as suggested by the Environmental Protection Team regarding the restriction of the cooking equipment to a small scale domestic cooker is recommended to ensure that a more intensive form of restaurant/tea room does not evolve. Furthermore, a condition restricting hours of use is also suggested to again ensure the use does not become more intensive in relation to hours of operation.

The proposed extension will have an impact upon the residential amenities enjoyed by the occupiers of no.2 Oxford Street but the issue to consider is whether that impact would be harmful enough to justify a refusal of planning permission. The extension will present a significant change

to views of the site as experienced from the first floor bedroom window in the gable of no.2 (see plates 6 & 8). However, the extension is modest in length (it will project from the rear wall of the existing building by 3.712 metres) and its ridge height will be lower than the existing property. The extension will also be angled slightly away from no.2 and will be separated from the neighbour by a side access (the intervening distance ranging from 2.1 to 2.6 metres). The neighbours' outlook would undoubtedly change as a result of the development, but it is not considered that the extension would be dominant or overbearing. There may be some loss of light to the neighbours' window; however, this window already looks towards the gable end and lean-to extension for 1 South Street and therefore any additional impact is not likely to be significant enough to justify a refusal of planning permission.

When viewed from the neighbours' garden the extension would not be unduly imposing; its modest length means that it would project no further forward than the end of the neighbours' existing lean-to extension, thus ensuring a reasonable separation distance (see plate 7). The rear garden of no.2 steps up towards its rear end and this will assist in reducing the impact.

The problem of overlooking has been addressed in the latest proposal by the removal of the rear first floor window closest to no.2. The remaining first floor window is 6.5 metres from the shared boundary and views would be at an oblique angle (particularly when stood behind the kitchen sink in the tea room) such that there would be limited opportunity for casual overlooking of the neighbours' garden.

Overall, it is not considered that the proposals would be harmful to the amenities of the neighbours at no.2 Oxford Street. Whilst there will be a degree of impact, this is to be expected in a built-up area where there is already a cheek by jowl relationship between buildings; it is not considered that there would be grounds to consider a refusal of planning permission in this instance.

Whether the scale/design of the extension and outbuilding is acceptable, particularly in relation to the listed building(s) and conservation area

The extension replicates that at 3 South Street but at a smaller scale (the extension to No.3 can be seen on the block plan in plate 2 and glimpsed in the photograph on plate 7). The extension will therefore be viewed against the backdrop of the terrace of 3 listed buildings and a similarly designed extension. With a reduced ridge height and smaller span, the extension would be subservient to the host listed building and the materials and design features are to match those of the listed building. The Conservation Officer has specifically stated *"that there is general support for the aims of the project to enhance the building and expand its use as a public library, tea rooms and children's workshops/learning facility and to utilise the existing forge. These proposals will hopefully provide a considerable public benefit by optimising the use of the buildings although it is acknowledged that to enable this to be done, an extension to one building is required. Due to the proposed public benefit, there are no objections to the proposals as they are not considered to have a negative impact on the character and setting of the listed buildings or any significant impact on the building's special interest"*.

In respect of the character and appearance of the conservation area, the scheme is considered to have a largely neutral impact. The scheme will be glimpsed as part of the collection of listed buildings many of which have already been extended (for example no.2 Oxford Street and 3 South Street). The roofline will be glimpsed as part of the streetscene and will not be out of keeping or unduly prominent. Given the central village location, it is not considered that the scheme would give rise to an adverse impact upon the landscape character and quality of the AONB.

With the appropriate conditions added to any permission, your officers therefore consider the scheme to be a visually acceptable addition within this historic setting.

Whether the change of use would give rise to matters of highway safety (namely relating to parking provision)

Concerns have been raised about the impact of the scheme upon existing parking problems experienced within the immediate vicinity. However, the library already exists and it will only be

the additional tea room and community uses that would add pressure to this situation. There is a small parking area in front of the library and at the time of the 3 site visits carried out by the planning case officer (within the day time of a week day) there were always vacant parking spaces (as shown on plate 4). No doubt there are “peak” periods where parking can become difficult as stated by the objectors but during the daytime when the uses are open there is sufficient parking either close to the site or elsewhere within the village centre. As this is a service for local residents as well, one would also expect a proportion of visitors to walk and not use the car.

The highways department does not raise an objection to this scheme. As there is no objection from the highways department and because of the reasoning given above, the application is therefore considered acceptable in respect of matters of highway safety and parking provision.

Other matters – namely the impact of The Old Forge

Concerns have been raised by neighbours regarding noise disturbance in relation to the re-opening of The Old Forge but this element does not require planning permission and as such is not a matter to determine the application upon. The Old Forge has re-opened (albeit after a long period of time) but as the use was never abandoned in planning terms (e.g. there has been no other intervening uses at the site and all the equipment etc remained in situ) then this re-opening does not constitute a change of use requiring planning permission. As such, it would be unreasonable and unnecessary to impose conditions regarding the forge as suggested by some objectors. Any concerns need to be dealt with through the Environmental Protection Team.

Proposed outbuilding

The application also proposes a small outbuilding to be used as a disabled toilet for users of the building. The building would be modest in size and is to be constructed of materials to match 1 South Street. It is located in the shared rear courtyard of 1 South Street and The Old Forge. In terms of its scale and design, the building is an acceptable addition and is sited far enough away from the listed buildings so as not to harm their setting. Given that it is “tucked” into the south-eastern corner of the site, it will not be visible within the context of the conservation area nor will it cause harm to the amenities of the occupiers of the neighbouring dwellings. The outbuilding is therefore considered acceptable.

10. Conclusion

In conclusion, it is considered that the scheme represents a significant local benefit. The collection of services will be mutually supporting and represent a sustainable “hub” of uses in the one building within a central location in the village. The scheme is not considered to give rise to problems of neighbour amenity or highway safety nor is it considered to be harmful to the special interest and setting of listed buildings or the character and appearance of the conservation area. This is a positive venture that the village of Aldbourne will benefit from and members are therefore advised to approve the application subject to the recommended conditions.

RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be GRANTED for the following reason and subject to the conditions set out below.

The decision to grant planning permission has been taken on the grounds that the proposed development would not cause any significant harm to interests of acknowledged importance and having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework and the following policies and proposals in the Kennet Local Plan 2011 namely: policy PD1.

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years of the date of this permission.

REASON:

To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The use hereby permitted shall only take place between the hours of 0900 and 1800 from Mondays to Saturdays (inclusive) and between 0800 and 1300 on Sundays. The use shall not take place at any other time.

REASON:

To protect the amenities of the neighbouring residential properties.

3. The cooking facilities within the tea rooms hereby permitted shall be restricted to a domestic-size cooker and extracting hood. No other form of cooker, ventilation or extraction equipment shall be installed on the premises without a fresh grant of planning permission.

REASON:

In the interests of residential amenity.

4. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order, 1995 (or any Order revoking and re-enacting or amending that Order with or without modification), no windows, doors or other openings, other than those shown on the approved plans shall be inserted above ground floor level in the extension hereby permitted.

REASON:

In the interests of the privacy of the neighbouring properties.

5. This decision relates to documents/plans submitted with the application, listed below. No variation from the approved documents should be made without the prior approval of this Council. Amendments may require the submission of a further application. Failure to comply with this advice may lead to enforcement action which may require alterations and/or demolition of any unauthorised buildings or structures and may also lead to prosecution.

- 20 -12 Sheet 1 Revision B, Date Received: 1st August 2012;
- 20 -12 Sheet 2 Revision B, Date Received: 1st August 2012;
- 20 -12 Sheet 3 Revision C, Date Received: 1st August 2012;
- 20 -12 Sheet 4 Revision B, Date Received: 1st August 2012;
- 20 -12 Sheet 5 Revision D and accompanying email from the applicant, Date Received: 25th September 2012;
- 20 -12 Sheet 6 Revision B, Date Received: 1st August 2012.

Appendices: None

Background Documents Used in the Preparation of this Report: None