

**REPORT TO THE EASTERN AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE**

Report No. 1

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	12 August 2010
<b>Application Number</b>	E/10/0767/FUL
<b>Site Address</b>	Barge Inn, Honeystreet, Pewsey SN9 5PS
<b>Proposal</b>	Replacement of attached barn with new barn (to remain as ancillary to the main pub)
<b>Applicant</b>	Mr I McIvor
<b>Town/Parish Council</b>	Alton Barnes
<b>Grid Ref</b>	410063 161620
<b>Type of application</b>	Full Planning
<b>Case Officer</b>	Peter Horton

**Reason for the application being considered by Committee**

This application has been called to committee at the request of the ward member, Cllr Hall.

**1. Purpose of Report**

To consider the recommendation that the application be approved subject to the conditions set out.

**2. Report Summary**

The main planning issues to consider are:

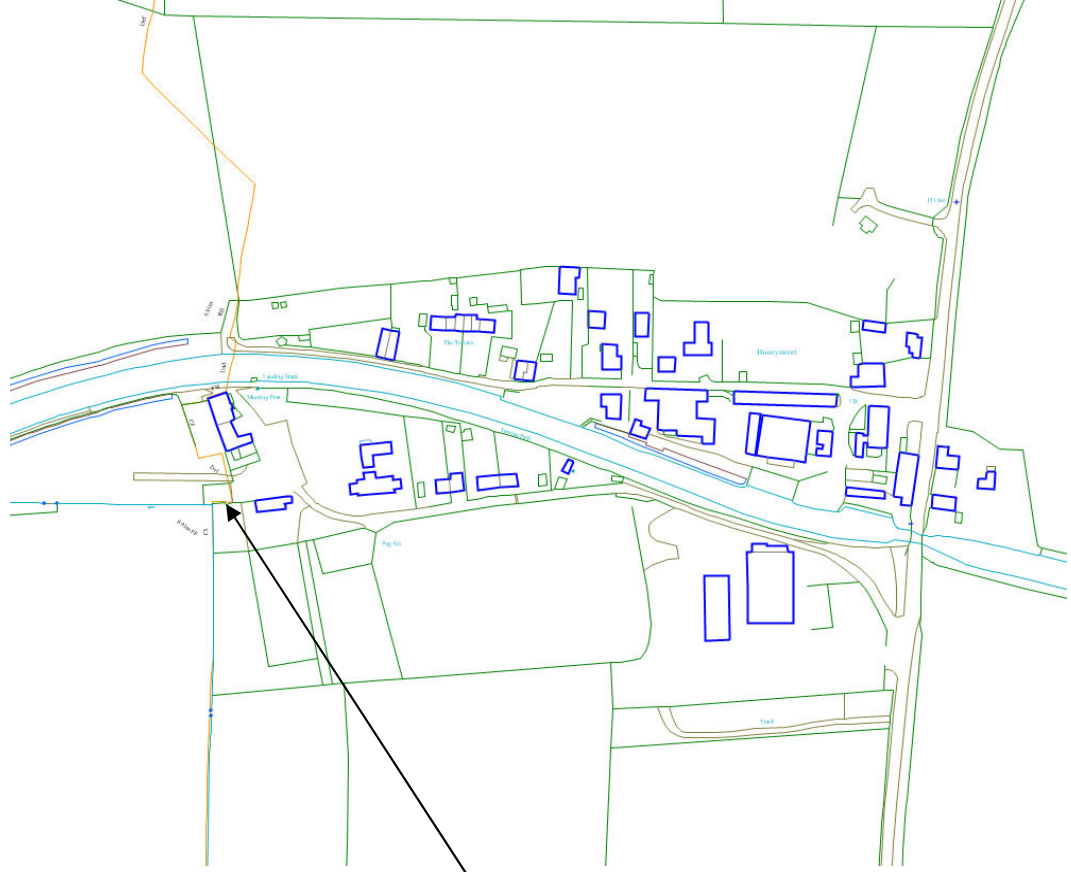
- the principle of the demolition of the existing barn;
- the design of the proposed new barn and its impact on the setting of the listed pub;
- traffic issues.

The Parish council notes that the replacement will be a visual improvement, but expresses some concerns. One letter of support and two of objection have been received from local residents.

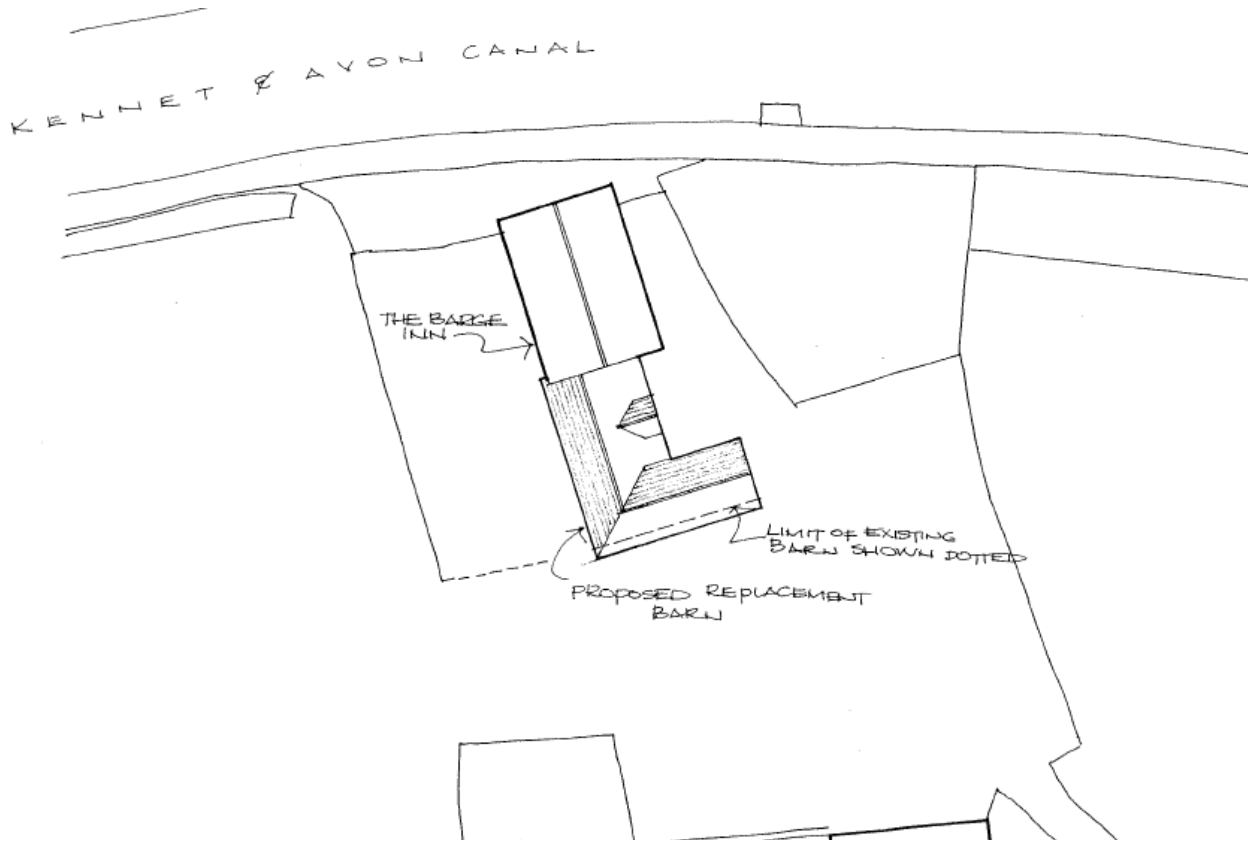
**3. Site Description**

The Barge Inn is a grade II listed pub situated on the south side of the Kennet & Avon canal at the western extremity of Honeystreet. It is located at the end of a private access track serving Honeystreet sawmill and 5 residential properties.

The main pub building is built of stone. A timber barn in very poor condition is attached to its southern side. This has been surrounded by scaffolding and safety fencing and has been unsafe for several years.



*Barge Inn*



*Site of Proposed Replacement Structure*

#### **4. Planning History**

**K/34879** - Approve with Conditions 06/11/1997

Repair/reconstruct ancillary building of Public House, to provide a function room, 4 letting rooms and toilet facilities.

**K/35100** - Approve with Conditions 15/01/1998

Touring caravan park and tenting facilities with associated site works.

**K/44775** - Approve with Conditions 12/02/2003

The variation of condition 1 of planning consent K/35100 to allow an extension of time by which the development shall be begun by one year.

**K/50653/LBC** - Approve with Conditions 06/10/2004

Re-location of bar servery and ladies toilets.

**K/30953** - Approve with Conditions 23/05/1995

Proposed touring caravan park with associated facilities.

**K/34944/L** - Approve with Conditions 24/11/1997

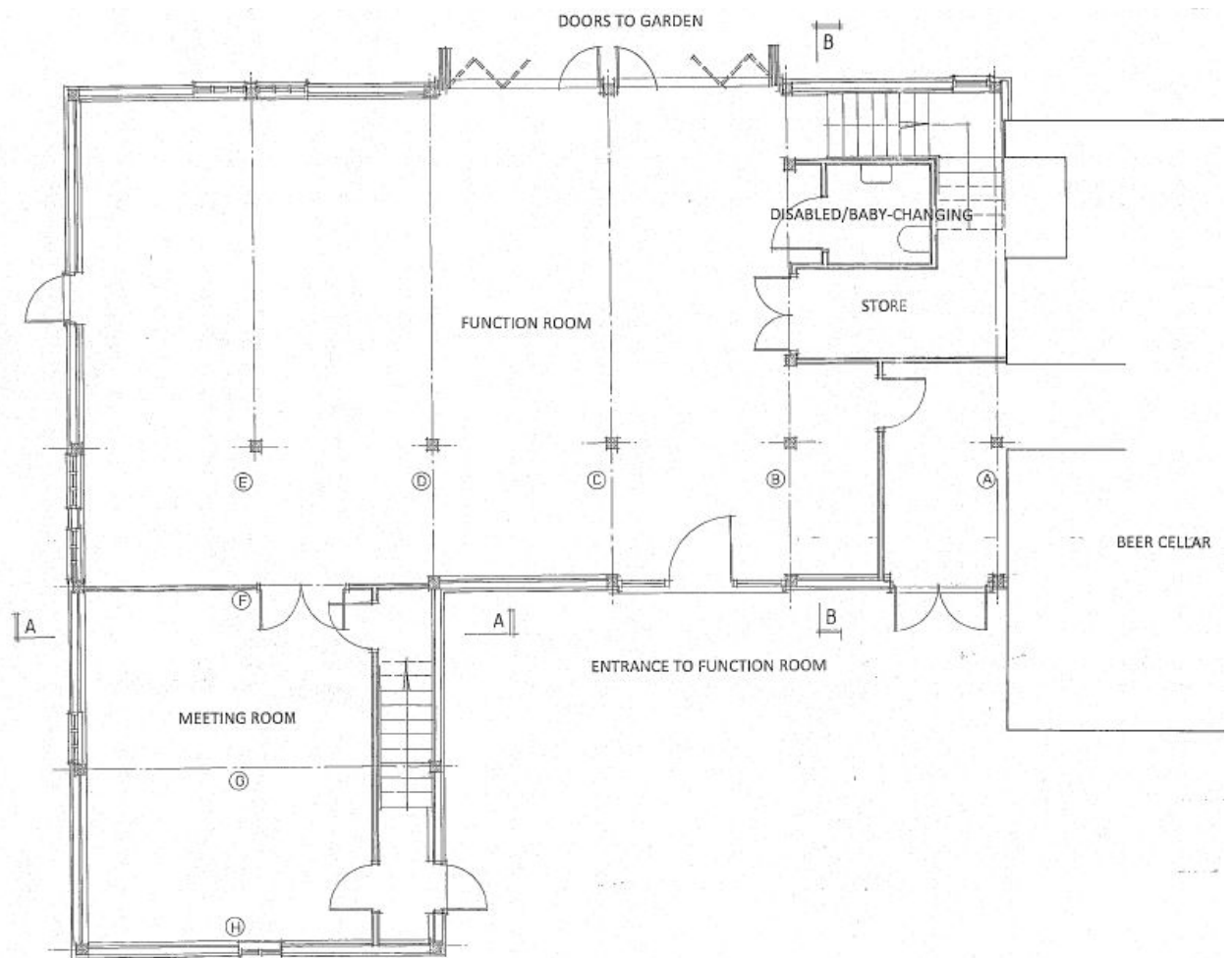
Alterations to ancillary building of Public House, to provide a function room, 4 letting rooms and toilet facilities.

#### **5. The Proposal**

The proposal is to demolish the timber barn and to replace it with a new barn of approximately similar proportions, but with a slightly larger footprint and slightly higher ridge. The new barn would be used to provide ancillary accommodation for the pub. There would be a function room & meeting room on the ground floor, with new toilets. On the first floor there would be two new bedrooms.



PROPOSED EAST ELEVATION 1:100



*Proposed Ground Floor Plans*

**6. Planning Policy**

PPS4 sets out central government planning policy on economic development and tourism in rural areas.

PPS5 sets out central government planning policy on the historic environment.

The site lies in the area of outstanding natural beauty.

PPS7 sets out central government planning policy on countryside issues.

PPS9 sets out central government policy on nature conservation issues.

Kennet Local Plan policy PD1 sets out general development principles, covering issues such as design and highway matters, whilst policy NR7 covers protection of the landscape.

## **7. Consultations**

Alton Barnes Parish Council: - The proposed replacement barn will be a visual improvement. However they have the following main concerns: (a) the narrow lane and limited parking is already causing problems to local residents when the pub hold special events, and these problems would be magnified by increased use of the pub resulting from the proposed new facilities; (b) the building would be around 20% bigger than the existing, and would lead to an intensity in the use of the pub; (c) improved access and more parking should be provided before any additional accommodation for events is provided; (d) the small windows in the roof would look incongruous;

CPRE: Supports measures to keep the pub and has no objection to the proposed replacement barn. However concerned that the proposal will lead to increased traffic / parking requirements when there are already problems when the pub holds special events.

English Heritage: Do not wish to offer any comments.

Ancient Monuments Society: Acknowledge that the present building is beyond repair and do not object to its demolition. There should be a condition requiring the recording of the building.

Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society (WANHS):

The proposed replacement barn is a pragmatic solution to a building beyond repair. Timbers/slates should be re-used in the replacement building where possible. It should be conditioned that the replacement be erected within a certain time of the demolition.

Wiltshire Council Conservation Officer: No objection subject to conditions. The existing barn is in extremely poor repair and the applicant's case for its replacement is justified. The new structure would not harm the setting of the listed pub.

Wiltshire Council Highway Officer: No objection. Adequate parking is available on site and there will not be an increase in traffic generation sufficient to cause problems on either the access or its junction with the highway.

Wiltshire Council Ecology Officer: Barn swallows nest in the building. The demolition of the existing building will result in the loss of nesting opportunities. However the proposed building has an unused void which could provide nesting opportunities in the long term. This should be secured via condition.

## **8. Publicity**

One letter of support has been received from a local resident keen to see the canal-side prosper. The current building is decaying and unusable. The design of the

replacement is sound.

Two letters of objection have been received from local residents, principally expressing concerns at highway aspects of the proposals. Their main concerns can be summarised as follows:

- The single track access road struggles to cope with the volume of traffic attracted to the pub (customers and service vehicles). These problems will be exacerbated if the application is approved.
- The problems are particularly bad when the pub holds music events. The pub car park is too small to cope with the numbers attracted, and vehicles park in passing places, gateways and in the sawmill yard. This is both inconvenient to local residents and would prevent emergency vehicles accessing the lane.
- Much of the car park is taken up with vehicles from people who live in barges.
- At least an extra 50 parking spaces are required.
- Noise, pollution and dust arising from the increased vehicular generation will harm the amenities of local residents.
- The old barn has not been used for 50 years; noise from the increased activities in the new barn will harm local amenity;
- No attempt is being made to preserve/re-build the existing barn;
- The new barn is much bigger than the existing and will be more intensively used;
- The pub has no benefit to the local economy as staff are from outside the area.

### **9. Supporting Information from the applicant**

It was announced in May 2010 that The Barge Inn Community Project had been awarded a grant of £273,000 to operate the pub and campsite as a social and community enterprise. They have exchanged contracts with the current tenant and they are planning to take over at the end of August 2010.

The rebuilt barn is an integral part of the overall plan for the local community to secure the future of the pub. It would be used to generate additional revenue in the low season when the pub's income drops off dramatically through the likes of activity courses, craft workshops and art and literary events. These are not mass attendance functions and will not cause any parking problems.

The pub is only licenses for 3 outdoor music events per year. The last one was exceptionally well attended and parking was an issue. However the new tenants will manage the parking better, with tighter controls on non customers leaving cars on the site. There are also plans to extend the parking area.

The re-built barn will not result in any more commercial deliveries to the site. Deliveries tend to be on set days and the numbers of deliveries per week is the same regardless of how busy the pub is, the vehicles simply carry more goods.

### **10. Planning Considerations**

Permission was granted in 1997 for conversion of the building to provide ancillary residential accommodation. However even at that time concerns were raised as to the capacity of the structure for conversion and upgrading to meet Building and Fire Regulations. Since then the condition of the building has deteriorated substantially and any attempts to convert the building would inevitably result in its complete reconstruction. The building is not of itself of any outstanding merit and there is no objection in principle to its replacement.

The proposed replacement building is a timber framed, boarded building along similar lines to that which it replaces – although on a slightly larger footprint and with a slightly higher ridge height. The impact on the setting of the listed pub would be similar to the existing situation, though the removal of the scaffolding and safety fencing necessitated by the condition of the current building would be of considerable visual benefit. Overall, the setting of the listed building would be enhanced.

Pubs are finding it particularly hard to stay afloat in the current economic climate and 2,365 closed in 2009. The Barge Inn has suffered declining turnover, finding it particularly hard in the long low season. However the proposed development (together with the impetus to be provided by the new tenancy and the grant funding) will help the pub to diversify and to secure a stronger economic future. The proposal could therefore be of benefit to the local community and to the local rural economy. It could also help assist in keeping the listed building in a viable use.

In relation to the highway issues, the highway officer raises no objection to the proposal, considering there to be sufficient existing parking (there are over 20 spaces) and that any increase in traffic will not be detrimental to highway safety on either the access lane or at its junction with the highway. The junction and access road were improved some years ago, with passing bays added, to improve the situation and to facilitate the touring caravan site at the rear of the pub.

There would seem to be a lack of parking to accommodate traffic generated by the 3 or so music festivals which the pub lays on every year. This is a management issue that will have to be addressed by the new tenants. However it is considered that the existing car park is adequate to accommodate every day use of the pub with this new facility and the fact that problems have been known to occur on 3 or so days per year in association with special events is not a valid planning reason to refuse the application.

The applicant has indicated that there are plans to enlarge the car park to provide around an additional 12 spaces. This would require the submission of a separate planning application, but indicates that the new tenants aspire to enhance parking provision at the pub.

## **11. Conclusion**

The existing barn is beyond repair and no objection is raised to its demolition. The design of the proposed replacement barn is considered acceptable and will provide a facility which will help secure the economic future of the pub. Problems associated with the parking shortfall experienced during the 3 music events laid on by the pub each year do not constitute a valid planning reason to refuse the proposed development, for which existing parking facilities are considered to be adequate.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Approve with Conditions

- 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 replacement barn hereby permitted shall not be used at any time other than for purposes ancillary to the use of the Barge Inn as a public house.

**REASON:**

To define the extent of the permission.

- 3 Prior to occupation of the replacement barn hereby permitted, the first floor void (as indicated on Drawing 9055.02) shall be made accessible for use by barn swallows and shall incorporate suitable beams / platforms / cups for swallow nesting.

**REASON:**

To maintain local biodiversity as barn swallows nest in the existing barn.

- 4 **INFORMATIVE TO THE APPLICANT:**

All site staff should be informed of the possible presence of bats at the site and remain vigilant while stripping any materials. Should bats be discovered, staff should stop work immediately and contact the Bat Helpline for advice (0845 1300 228).

- 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.

Plans Ref. Existing Elevations 1:100, Ground Floor survey plan 1:50, First Floor survey plan 1:50, 9055.01, 9055.02 and 9055.03 all received 28 May 2010

**Reasons for granting planning permission;**

The proposed development will have no adverse impact on the setting of the main listed building of the Barge Inn and will help to facilitate a continuing viable future for the building as a public house and community asset. The design is in keeping with the building and the local planning authority is satisfied that the access and parking arrangements are adequate to cater for it. Accordingly, the Council considers that the proposal is in accordance with policies PD1 and NR7 of the Kennet Local Plan and with national planning guidance.

**Appendices:**

None

**Background Documents Used in the Preparation of this Report:**

Planning application file and associated history files