

INN BATTLE OVER

Christchurch Herald 1965

THE battle of Mudeford Quay ended on Tuesday night with a one-vote victory for those who want to build a new £19,000 Haven House Inn.

The present council-owned pub will be kept for some other use, possibly as a sailing club.

At Christchurch council meeting the scheme's opponents fought it on aesthetic and financial grounds. They were backed by objections from three residents' associations and the Council for the Preservation of Rural England.

'INADEQUATE'

Bench chairman, Ald. John Richardson, said his committee felt as good landlords they ought to do something about the inadequacy of the accommodation at the present inn and that the present tenant was not getting a "fair crack of the whip."

The living accommodation was very small, the storage unsatisfactory, and the public bars had to be improved. The architect prepared a scheme for reconstructing the present inn, but the committee felt that at the cost of £13,000 they would get a second-rate concern.

Ald. Richardson said the Mudeford and Stanpit Residents Association had told the council the present inn should be retained with the living accommodation improved and a circular bar provided with views across to the Isle of Wight, No alterations should be made which were not in strict conformity with the existing building.

Jumpers Residents Association committee had written that they were entirely opposed to demolition of the old Inn and the erection of a new building. The present charm of the quay should be preserved. The existing building could be enlarged without destroying the old-world appearance which was an attraction to visitors.

The Hampshire branch of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England preferred that the existing inn should be kept very much as it was. The possible alternative of altering the inn was not one they recommended, but demolition was to be resisted at all costs.

SUITS LANDSCAPE

The present buildings were not of architectural importance, said the CPRE's letter, but they were eminently suited to the landscape, which was of a particular quality,

Coun. Arthur Griffiths said people were turned away from the inn because they could not get in. Fifty years ago it catered for fishermen and a few visitors, but today motor-cars brought thousands of people to the quay, and the inn could not cope with the demand.

Coun. Arthur Griffiths said the proposed inn would be 30ft. east of the old building and would merge very nicely with the scene. Local organisations, such as the Highcliffe Sailing Club, could be offered a place there.

Ald. Mrs. Dorothy Baker said she wanted to conserve the beauty of Mudeford Quay and found no improvement financially to commend the building of a new inn.

"Something will be destroyed on the Quay that can never be recaptured," she declared. "I have never said it is architecturally fine; it is a fishermen's inn."

UNECONOMIC

Ald. Mrs. Baker said to build a new inn would be uneconomic, and it was not fair to the ratepayers, most of whom were bitterly opposed to it.

Coun. William Bridge said the members of the beach committee agreed that a simple inexpensive scheme would solve the problem of service at the old inn, and the living accommodation should be improved.

It would cost £60,000 to borrow £19,000 for a new inn over 40 years.

The best rental offer for the old inn if improved assumed a turn-over of £2,000 a year. The existing accommodation would give an estimated return of £1,500, while the new building would yield only a £700 per annum increase over that figure with the payment of £620 a year loan charge.

Coun. Bridge said the present inn adequately met the requirements of its present frequenters and was well-suited to the type of person it attracted. Trade was plentiful only during holiday periods. In the winter months the gross profits did not cover even the rent and rates.

Because of restrictive covenants a full catering service could not be given, and the council were "tied" to the existing brewers whatever they did.

Coun. Robert Affleck said the present inn was a disgrace to the Borough. "We need to take a bulldozer and push it all into the sea," he said. "We should rid ourselves of all this silly sentiment."

Ald. William Morgan said they had wrestled with the old inn for years. Internally it was a rubbish heap, a "ropey" old building. It was damp, dingy and airless, and the living quarters were little above slum level, although the present tenants did their best.

"In other words it is a squalid mess," said Ald. Morgan. "When I went there with the committee I was ashamed to be a part-owner of it."

Ald. Mrs. Baker's attempt to get the committee to reconsider the matter was narrowly defeated.

Deputy Mayor, Coun. Barrington Myres was not convinced the proposed design for a new inn took full advantage of the views, but his suggestion that the architect be asked to submit alternative designs was thrown out.

The same fate greeted an idea by Coun. Bridge to shift the site of the proposed new inn close to Sandhills,

Ald. Richardson said some concern had been shown about the design, and he gave an undertaking that the committee would have another look at it.

ONE VOTE MARGIN

The beach committee's recommendation to approve in principle the erection of a new inn was carried by nine votes to eight. The absent votes were those of the Mayor and two councillors away through illness.

Under the terms of the recommendation the architect will prepare final plans and licensing and planning permissions will be sought. Tenders will be invited for the building of the new inn.

The council accepted provisionally the offer of Mr. D. J. Dawe to take a full repairing lease on the new inn for seven years at £1,750 exclusive of rates plus nine per cent of the total gross receipts in excess of £15,000.

The town clerk is communicating with the present tenant of the inn about his occupation after his lease expires on October 7.