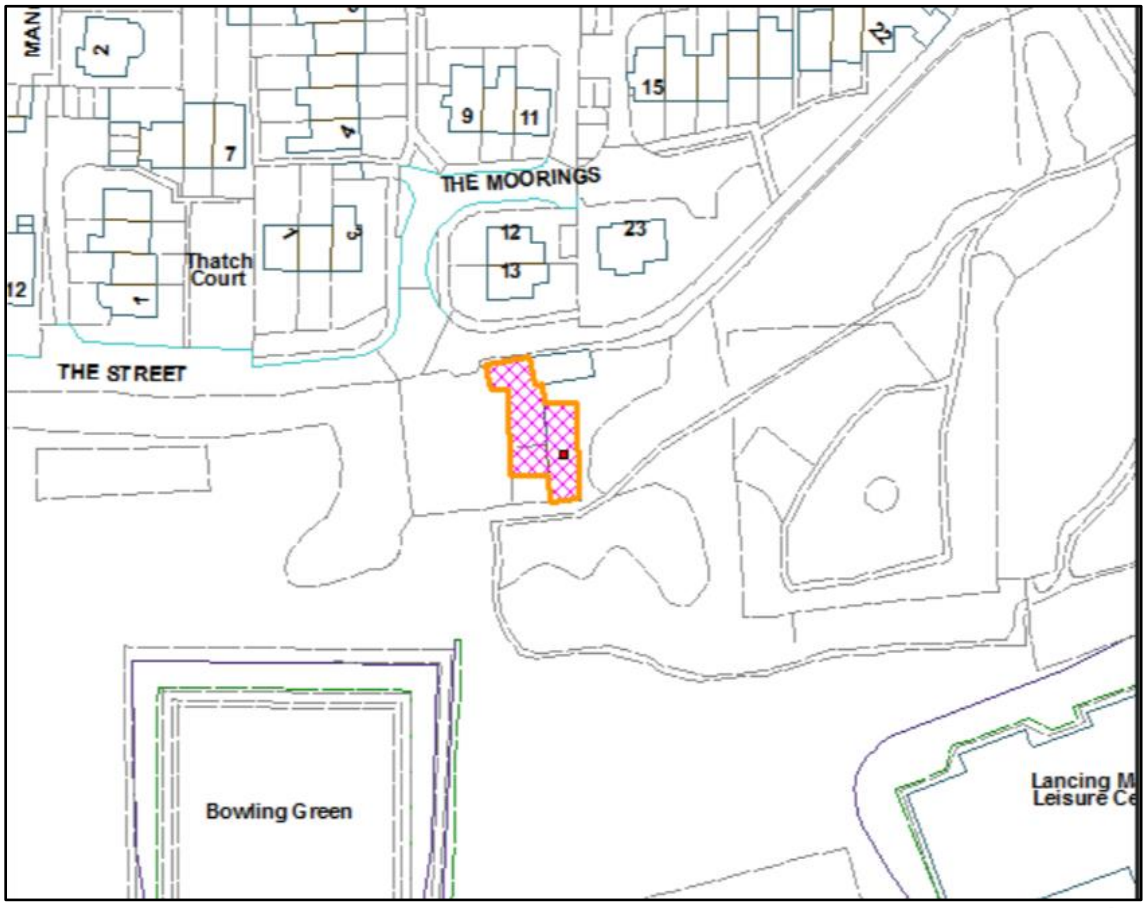
Application Number:	**AWDM/0630/23**	**Recommendation - APPROVE**
Site:	**1 The Street, Lancing**	
Proposal:	**Change of use from groundsman's shed to workshop with storage area and quiet room for social, educational and recreational activities. Application to vary condition 4 (hours of opening) of approved AWDM/1877/21 to allow building to be used from 7.30am-4pm Monday-Friday and 8am-4pm Saturday, to enable preparation/set up in advance of use of building by members from 8.30am plus retention of outside toilet unit.**	
Applicant:	Men In Sheds Lancing And Sompting	Ward: Manor
Agent:	Mr Frank King	
Case Officer:	Peter Barnett	



Not to Scale

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Proposal, Site and Surroundings

The application relates to a group of buildings at the north end of Manor Park which are owned by the District Council and were previously used for storage of grounds maintenance equipment. There is a hardsurfaced area to the west, accessed from The Street, which is used informally for parking. The site lies to the east of the North Lancing Conservation Area but is not within it. There are residential dwellings directly to the north at The Moorings.

Permission was granted in 2019 to use the buildings (the Barn and The Garage) in connection with a community group known as “Men In Sheds” which provides a space for residents to come together to meet up and carry out woodworking with the aim of challenging isolation and improving wellbeing. The use began on the site in August 2021. A subsequent application in 2021 expanded the use into the Groundsman’s Building.

The building is a community resource where locals come in and learn how to use tools and undertake DIY projects. The group makes items such as planters, bird boxes, bug houses, bird feeders, bird tables, owl and bat boxes, etc. They also offer a free repair service to residents for items such as benches, seats, tables, chairs, etc. Some items are refurbished and put back into community use at local nursing homes, for example.

The buildings are currently allowed to be open between 9am and 4pm Monday to Friday and 8.30am-4pm on Saturdays.

This application seeks retrospective permission to retain a toilet within a structure that has been constructed on the north side of one of the buildings. The application also seeks to vary the opening hours to allow the building to be accessed from 7.30am Monday to Friday and 8am on Saturdays. The applicant has explained that he wishes to open the buildings up earlier to enable him to get the space ready for when members of the group arrive. Some members have dementia and/or mobility issues and cannot easily set up the equipment themselves. The applicant has advised that no equipment would be operated until members arrive at 8.45-9, on the 3 days a week that the buildings are open currently.

The toilet is an ‘anti-vandal’ construction and has been located adjacent to a central area between the buildings. This central area has been fenced off with a low picket fence and contains several benches, a ‘wishing well’, plus planters. There are also bags and materials stored within the area, contrary to condition 3 of the original planning permission (see Planning History section below).

Signs have been displayed on the fence advising that there is no parking in front of the fence.It is understood that the compound is not a car park but has been used as such informally by park visitors over the years. It is owned by Adur District Council and was previously used for groundsman’s vehicles and equipment. The car park serving the recreation ground is at the Leisure Centre.

Relevant Planning History

AWDM/1842/19 Regulation 4 application for Change of Use of 'The Barn' currently used for Council storage to a workshop and 'The Garage' to ancillary storage area - approved

AWDM/1877/21 Change of use from groundsman's shed to workshop with storage area and quiet room for social, educational and recreational activities - approved.

Condition 3 of this permission states:
No external working or storage shall take place anywhere on the site to which this permission relates and all working shall be confined to within the buildings.

Condition 4 states:
No working (including arrival, reception or despatch of deliveries) shall take place on the premises except between the hours of:-

9.00 am and 4.00 pm on Mondays to Fridays inclusive

08.30am and 4.00pm on Saturdays

nor at any time on Sundays or Public Holidays.

Condition 6 states:
There shall be no external alterations to the buildings without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority.

Consultations

West Sussex County Council: Given the existing use of the site, the proposal is not anticipated to result in a material intensification of use of the access. No highways safety concerns would be raised regarding the proposed alterations of the site's opening hours

Lancing Parish Council: Support the application

Adur & Worthing Councils: Public Health: No adverse comment

Sussex Police: No major concerns with the proposals, however, additional measures to mitigate against any identified local crime trends and site specific requirements should always be considered.

Representations

8 objections received from the occupiers of 17 The Moorings, 1 and 2 Bay Tree Cottages, Lamorna Cottage, 17, 18, 21 The Street

- Toilet is an ugly structure and out of keeping with flint buildings and walls
- Toilet should be inside the building or hidden away
- Additional structures outside - planters, fencing, wishing wells, artificial grass, felt matting

- Depriving local people of parking spaces - ‘no parking’ signs displayed
- Fencing between back of buildings blocks access/right of way
- Enterprise has expanded and should be relocated to an industrial estate
- 7.30am is too early to open up being so close to residential properties

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

Adur Local Plan 2017 Policies 15, 33, 34
National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021)

Relevant Legislation

The Committee may grant planning permission for development carried out before the date of the application in accordance with Section 73A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

Save that the development will have already commenced, this is a conventional planning application, and the Committee should consider the planning circumstances existing at the time of the decision in accordance with:

Section 70 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) provides that the application may be granted either unconditionally or subject to relevant conditions, or refused. Regard shall be given to relevant development plan policies, any relevant local finance considerations, and other material considerations; and

Section 38(6) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires the decision to be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Planning Assessment

Principle

The principle of development has been established by the previous permission. Leasing public land for commercial enterprise is an accepted practice for the Council’s Parks and in this case redundant buildings are being re-used for community purposes.

The use of the land and the provision of any structures on the site are regulated by the Council’s Parks and Estates teams, and authorisation has already been given to the siting of the toilet and the various miscellaneous items between the buildings.

This application must consider the amenity and traffic impacts of the development and assess whether it adversely affects the public’s enjoyment of the Park and the visual amenities of the locality.

Visual amenity

The existing buildings are a mix of brick and flint with unsympathetic corrugated metal roofs. The toilet is housed within a timber construction which rises above the eaves of the barn and has a trellis around the edge of the roof, plus a water tank on the roof and a decorative airplane model on a post at the front of the roof. It is not particularly in keeping with the existing buildings but it is positioned within the L-shape of the buildings so as to reduce its visibility from the park. It is visible from The Street to the north.

The toilet is a necessary facility in connection with the continued use of these buildings for community purposes. Its siting and design has been agreed with the Parks and Estates teams and it is not considered that sufficient visual harm is caused to warrant refusal in light of it serving an approved community use. However, a condition is recommended to ensure that the toilet structure is removed on cessation of the current use of the buildings.

The other structures that have been installed are low key and do not cause significant visual harm. They are limited to the fenced off area between the buildings only and do not spill out into the rest of the compound. However, the applicant should be reminded that there should not be any external working or storage and any materials should be moved back into the buildings.

Residential amenity

The proposed increase in opening hours is not considered to be likely to result in disturbance to local residents. As explained above, the earlier opening up of the buildings is to prepare the buildings for use by and no machinery will start up before 8.45am. Noise from the workshop is not excessive, with a maximum noise level of 72 decibels predicted, which is equivalent to a vacuum cleaner. The use is one that can take place in a residential area without causing harm through noise, smell, etc.

The use of the buildings will remain low key and it is proposed to control the use by condition to safeguard against adverse impacts on amenity now or in the future. The buildings are also owned by the Council and they will retain control of any future use on the site.

Accessibility and parking

There is an informal car park immediately to the west of the buildings which continues to be available to the applicants and park users alike. Some residents have objected to the display of signage preventing parking in front of the buildings.However, it is the case that there is an active use of the land in and around the buildings by Men In Sheds and residents have been asked not to block access to the buildings by parking inconsiderately. Space is still available within the compound for the parking of vehicles and the Parks and Estates teams have not objected or expressed concern over this issue.

Recommendation

Approve

Subject to conditions:-

1. Approved Plans
2. No external working or storage shall take place anywhere on the site to which this permission relates and all working shall be confined to within the buildings.
3. The buildings shall not be used except between the hours of 7.30am-4pm Monday-Friday and 8am-4pm on Saturdays. There shall be use of machinery or despatch of deliveries at the premises except between the hours of 8.45 am and 4.00 pm on Mondays to Saturdays inclusive.
   The buildings shall not be used at any time on Sundays or Public Holidays.
4. The premises shall be used as a workshop Class E(g) (iii), for storage (Class B8) and as a meeting place for the local community (Class F2(b)) as set out in the application and for no other purpose within Class E, F or B8 of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (or in any provision equivalent to that class in any Statutory Instrument revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification).
5. There shall be no external alterations to the buildings without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority.
6. No retail sales shall take place from the buildings at any time.
7. The toilet building shall be permanently removed from the site on cessation of the current use of the buildings as workshop and meeting place for the local community

Informative: The applicant is reminded that there should be no external working or storage anywhere on the site and all materials should be confined to within the buildings.