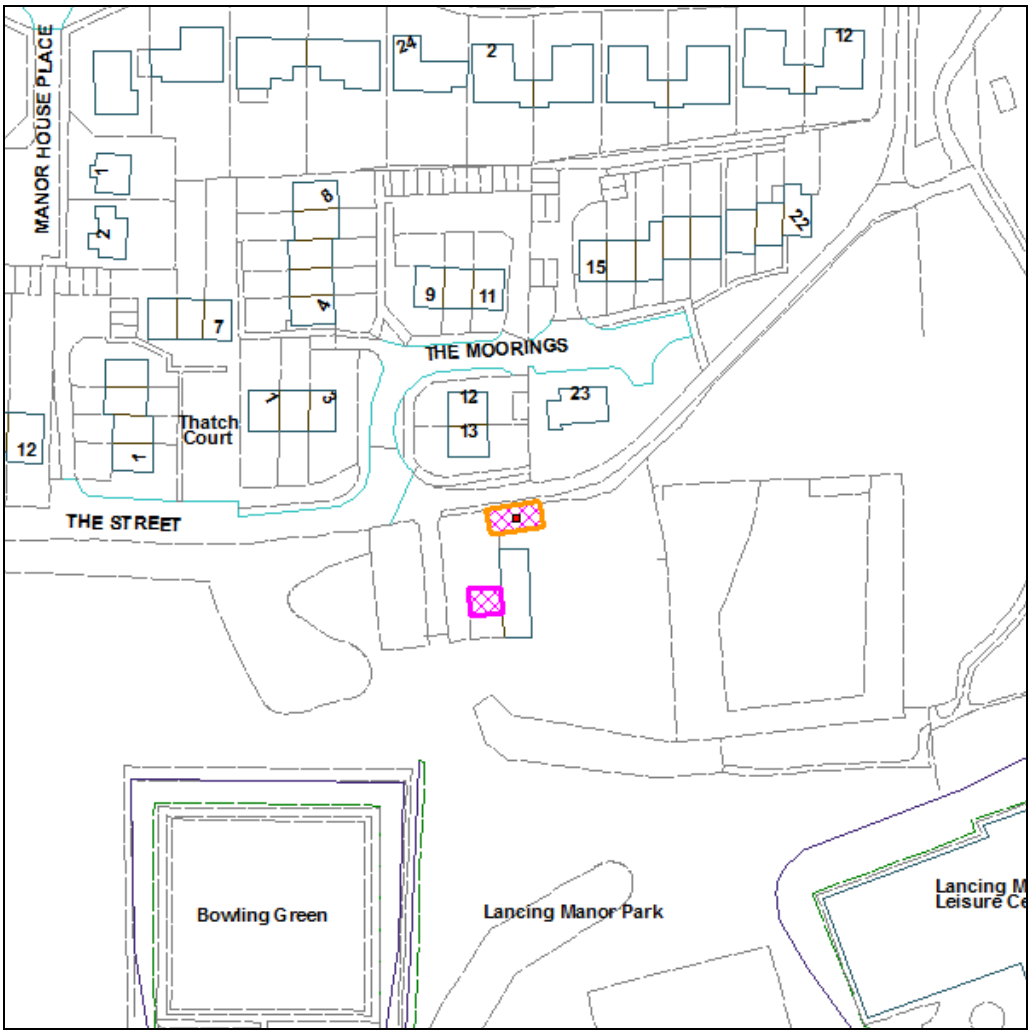
Application Number: AWDM/1842/19 **Recommendation – APPROVE**

Site: **Lancing Horticultural Society, The Street, Lancing**

Proposal: **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**

Applicant: Men In Sheds Lancing and Sompting Ward: Manor

Case Officer: Peter Barnett



Not to Scale

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Proposal, Site and Surroundings

The application relates to two buildings, known as The Barn and The Garage, at the north end of Manor Park which are owned by the District Council and were previously used for storage of grounds maintenance equipment. They form part of a small group of buildings with a hardsurfaced parking area to the west, accessed from The Street. The site lies to the east of the North Lancing Conservation Area. There are residential dwellings directly to the north at The Moorings.

The proposal is to use the buildings in connection with a community group known as "Men In Sheds". The supporting information submitted with the application states that the group was set up:

"*to challenge isolation by providing a space for the local residents of Lancing & Sompting, where they can under guidance, carry out craft works, woodworking, work on community projects or projects of their own or simply come in for some company, a chat and a cup of tea – all with the aim of boosting well-being*."

The Council has offered a 10 year lease on the buildings for use as a workshop and storage. Planned works are to install new electrics, internal toilet facilities and maintenance work on the buildings as and when needed. The buildings will also be made secure.

It is proposed to make items such as planters, bird boxes, bug houses, bird feeders, bird tables, owl and bat boxes, etc. They will 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 'sheds' are to be open on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursday mornings but the applicants are seeking longer opening hours, including Saturday mornings, to allow the completion of projects and deliver items on days that are not the usual shed session days.

Members would be able to park in the car park to the west or on street. They encourage car sharing and sustainable means of travel.

Standard hand and machine tools will be used, common to a domestic environment, rather than industrial machinery.

Relevant Planning History

AWDM/0650/17 - Conversion of existing groundsman's stores into coffee shop – refused for the reason:

"*The proposal, by reason of the associated activity, increased traffic and resulting pressure for on street parking spaces in the vicinity of the site during peak times, would*

be harmful to the residential amenities of local residents and detrimental to the residential character of the area. The proposal is therefore contrary to saved policy AG1 of the Adur District Local Plan, policies 15 and 29 of the Submission Adur Local Plan and the relevant policies of the National Planning Policy Framework."

Consultations

West Sussex County Council: No objection from a **transport/highways** aspect. Comments that no alterations to the existing site access are proposed. The workshop will be in use by clients on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays between 9.30am and 1.30pm. The proposed opening hours will be Monday-Friday 9.30am-2pm and Saturdays 9am-12pm to enable staff to be present on site during these times when client sessions are not running. No details pertaining to the number of clients have been provided, however, as the project is aimed at local residents of Lancing and Sompting, the LHA do not anticipate that any highway capacity concerns would be raised to the potential trips that could be generated by the proposed use. Given the existing use of the site, the proposal is not anticipated to result in a material intensification of use of the access.

The proposed storage building will be used for timber storage and as such, is not anticipated to result in a material intensification of use. Although there are parking spaces on site, no designated parking will be provided to the proposed storage and workshop use. Clients are encouraged to car share, walk, or utilize public transport. The LPA are advised to consider the potential impacts of this proposal on on-street parking from an amenity point of view. The LHA would not raise a highway safety concern to the proposed nil parking provision.

The **Archaeologist** has no objection.

Adur & Worthing Councils: The ***Environmental Health*** officer has no adverse comments to make

Sussex Police: No major concerns, however additional measures to mitigate against any identified local crime trends and site specific requirements should be considered, such as making the buildings as secure as possible.

Lancing Parish Council: No objection

Representations

1 letter of support received from a resident in Tower Road:

"*Having first hand experience of this community group I fully support their application to use said building for their workshop. They work closely within the community and help support local elderly gentlemen and woman and protect them from isolation and boost their well-being. The group runs as a workshop making numerous items and also take*

on projects for the community as well making items for local organisations such as Lancing & Sompting Lions & Chesham House amongst others. They also work closely with the Council's park rangers department and refurbish benches that would normally be disposed of and refurbish them and put them back into the community at nursing homes and the like. A great local community group working within the community for the community. It will be a great addition to Manor Ward and the residents who can use the repair services this group offers and also drop by for some advice or perhaps to even enjoy some time in the workshop. They are a very friendly, helpful group and always willing to help with a project whether it be a personal project or a community project. The Men In Sheds will always help if they can."

1letter received from the occupier of 21 The Street:

- What will happen when current applicants cease using the building?
- Will a more commercial operation take over, resulting in problems with parking, noise, etc?
- Permission should be made personal to Men in Sheds
- Clarification on parking needed
- If car park is full there could be overspill on to The Street, impacting on local residents

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

Adur Local Plan 2017 Policies 15, 17, 33
National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019)

Relevant Legislation

The Committee should consider the planning application in accordance with:
Section 70 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) that provides 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 that requires the decision to be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Planning Assessment

Principle

Leasing public land for commercial enterprise is an accepted practice for the Council's Parks and in this case it will result in redundant buildings being re-used for community purposes.

The application is therefore considered to be acceptable in principle, subject to consideration of amenity and traffic impacts of the proposal and an assessment of whether the use adversely affects the public's enjoyment of the Park.

Visual amenity

The existing buildings are a mix of brick and flint with unsympathetic corrugated metal roofs. No external changes are specified within the application but reference has been made to carrying out maintenance work and making the buildings more secure. Such works may involve alterations which require planning permission but this can be assessed at the time such works are proposed, as no details currently exist.

It is unlikely therefore that the application will result in harm to the visual amenities of the locality as all activity will be limited to within the buildings, with external working and storage prohibited by condition.

Residential amenity

The workshop use and increased activity associated with the use may have some impact on the amenities of local residents. However, noise from the workshop is not anticipated to be excessive, with a maximum noise level of 72 decibels predicted, which is equivalent to a vacuum cleaner. Opening hours will generally be between 9.00am and 1.30pm and the use is expected to be reasonably 'low-key.' A condition is proposed to prevent retails sales from taking place. A further condition is recommended to make this permission personal to 'Men In Sheds' only in order to control future use of the buildings.

No objection has been raised by the Council's Environmental Health Officer and it is striking that no objections have been received from local residents (compared with 200 objections received to a previous proposal for a café in the buildings).

The proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of impact on residential amenity.

Accessibility and parking

There is a car park immediately to the west of the buildings which would be available to the applicants and park users alike. No designated parking is provided however, and there may be some overspill on to the local roads. However, the applicants encourage sustainable travel and car sharing and it is not anticipated that the proposal will cause traffic problems or impact on residential amenity.

Recommendation

APPROVE

Subject to Conditions:-

1. Approved Plans
2. Standard 3 year time limit
3. No external working or storage
4. Opening hours
5. Use as workshop and storage by Men In Sheds only
6. No external alterations to buildings without prior consent
7. No retail sales from shed