Application Number:	**AWDM/1877/21**	**Recommendation - Approve**
Site:	**Groundsman's Shed Lancing Manor, Manor Road, Lancing**	
Proposal:	**Change of use from groundsman's shed to workshop with storage area and quiet room for social, educational and recreational activities.**	
Applicant:	Men In Sheds Lancing & Sompting	Ward: Manor
Agent:	Mr Andrew Brook	
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. There are residential dwellings directly to the north at The Moorings.

Permission was granted in 2019 to use the buildings 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.

The supporting information submitted with the current application explains the purpose of the application:

"*Our taking over the Groundsman's Building will complement our existing facilities in Manor Park, The Barn and The Garage, to create an integrated facility for our own use and for the use and benefit of the wider community. It will allow The Trustees to implement our ambitious plans to have facilities at our Sheds for twenty-five members who have safe spaces to meet, make friendships and if they wish to work on their own projects or our community projects. The building will have three aspects, a community space, "seating/chill" area and a joint office/I.T. area. We already have funding in place to cover every aspect of our plans*."

The submitted plan shows that the T-shaped building will have a teaching/workshop/community space at the front with the rear part used as a quiet area/IT 'suite' and for storage. The front part will become:

"*a community resource where our project meets and collaborates with our local community. Our thoughts are that the space will provide a teaching area where locals come in and learn how to use tools, work with us, undertake DIY projects and are given guidance and have access to our tools and use them safely. This will be something akin to the TV show "Repair Shop." We are also at an early stage of working with local PCSOs to have regular (monthly) drop-in sessions where locals can come to speak with the Police service and the PCSOs can brief locals on current matters."*

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 to be open between 9am and 1.30pm Monday to Friday and 8am-12pm on Saturdays.

Visitors and “Shedders” are instructed to park in the Lancing Leisure Centre car park and walk across to the buildings. They are also encouraged to travel on foot, by bike and public transport, and there are bus stops nearby. The Men In Sheds van will at times be parked directly outside The Barn.

Standard hand and machine tools will be used, common to a domestic environment,

Relevant Planning History

AWDM/0650/17 - Conversion of existing groundsman's stores into coffee shop - refused

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

Consultations

West Sussex County Council: No objection from a transport/highways aspect. Comments that the site is located on The Street, an un-classified road subject to a speed limit of 30mph. The site has extant permission under AWDM/1842/19 for change of use of 'The Barn' currently used for Council storage to a workshop and 'The Garage' to ancillary storage area. 'The Garage' as approved for storage area is subject to this application. This planning permission appears to have been implemented in August 2021. No alterations to the existing site access are proposed. Given the existing use of the site, the proposal is not anticipated to result in a material intensification of use of the access. 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 utilise 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. Conclusion The LHA does not consider that this proposal would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in ‘severe’ cumulative impacts on the operation of the highway network, therefore is not contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 111), and that there are no transport grounds to resist the proposal.

Adur & Worthing Councils: **Parks and Foreshore** support the change in use of the building. It will enable it to be brought back into use to provide a valuable community asset. The building will be able to provide better facilities for the local community in the process of its change of use and better service the needs and wants of a wider audience. Value a building being given a purpose that benefits the community through that process.

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. I have had the opportunity to examine the details within the application and in an attempt to reduce the opportunity for crime and the fear of crime I offer the following comments. This application pertains to a change of use to repurpose the building as a community resource. From a crime prevention perspective if not already in place - thought should be given to implementing the following security measures to ensure that the building and contents contained therein are kept safe when not in use. As the building will be housing IT equipment and tools - thought should be given to the fitting of an intruder alarm system. The door to the building should be checked to ensure it is adequate and fit for purpose with the appropriate locking mechanisms. I would also recommend that all tools and IT equipment are property marked. Property marking makes items harder to sell on if stolen thus providing an effective deterrent against theft. Further information on methods of property marking can be found on the Sussex police website under property marking. CCTV and lighting should also be considered.

Lancing Parish Council: No comment

Representations

None received

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

Adur Local Plan 2017 Policies 15, 17, 33
National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021)

Relevant Legislation

The Committee should consider the planning application 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.

Section 73A and also Section 72 Planning (Listed Building & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 require the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the appearance of the Conservation Area.

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. New doors are to be fitted to replace the existing metal garage doors although no details have been provided at this stage. This can be controlled by condition.

It is not anticipated that the proposal will result in harm to the visual amenities of the locality as woodworking 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 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. 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 retail sales from taking place directly from the buildings. There is a maximum of 25 people expected to use the 'sheds' and the proposal is considered to provide a valuable resource which will greatly benefit the wellbeing of a local group of residents without causing harm to residential amenity. There have been no objections received to the application.

The use of the buildings is to be more varied than originally sought back in 2019, with the workshop use complemented by the education and community use now proposed. It will remain low key however 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 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 ask their members and

visitors to park at the nearby leisure centre. It is not anticipated that the proposal will cause traffic or parking problems along The Street 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 shall take place anywhere on the site to which this permission relates and all working shall be confined to within the buildings.
4. 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.
5. 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).
6. There shall be no external alterations to the buildings without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority.
7. No retail sales shall take place from the buildings at any time.