

No.4	APPLICATION NO.	2019/1164/WL3
	LOCATION	Tawd Valley Allotments Manfield Skelmersdale Lancashire WN8 6SU
	PROPOSAL	Installation of a communal storage and facilities cabin for the use of allotment holders of the Tawd Valley allotments.
	APPLICANT	Mr S Kent
	WARD	Ashurst
	PARISH	Unparished - Skelmersdale
	TARGET DATE	5th May 2020

1.0 SUMMARY

1.1 The proposed installation of a communal storage and facilities cabin within the existing allotment site for use by allotment holders is considered acceptable. The proposals are not considered to create any significant harm to the character and appearance of the area or the residential amenity of surrounding properties. The proposed development is therefore considered compliant with the NPPF and Policies GN1, GN3, EN2 and EN3 of the West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 DPD

2.0 RECOMMENDATION- APPROVE with conditions

3.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

3.1 This application relates to an established allotment site comprising of 35 plots and parking for 18 vehicles which is located to the south west of Manfield in Skelmersdale. The site has 2.4m high fencing and mature planting lining its perimeter. It is noted that the original planning permission for the allotment scheme (Ref: 2015/0971/WL3) included the siting of one communal shed and one communal storage cabin towards the entrance of the site, neither of which have been installed.

4.0 PROPOSAL

4.1 The application is for the proposed siting of a storage and facilities cabin building within the existing boundary of the allotment site and would have the following dimensions; 12m in length, 3.6m in width with a maximum height of 2.4m. The single building is intended to be a replacement for the two smaller storage/shed units previously approved, retaining the same siting towards the entrance of the site adjacent to the north eastern boundary fencing.

4.2 During the course of the application the proposed purpose and use of the building has been amended from a community classroom to a storage and facilities cabin for the use of allotment holders. A formal re-consultation on the revised purpose of the scheme has been completed.

5.0 PREVIOUS RELEVANT DECISIONS

5.1 2015/0971/WL3 GRANTED Creation of 35 plot allotment site on recreation field. 1 no. communal shed, 1 no storage cabin, 1 small garden shed on each plot. 2.4m high security fencing around perimeter. New car park for 18 cars. Access as continuation from end of Manfield, Ashurst.

6.0 OBSERVATION OF CONSULTEES

6.1 Environmental Health Officer. No Objections (13.11.2019) (02.03.2020).

7.0 OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

7.1 A number of neighbour representations were received in relation to the initial proposal for a community classroom building, a summary of which are outlined below:

The allotment site at the foot of Manfield is directly overlooked by my property;
The site access path is already an eyesore;
A small car parking area for allotments was erected without consultation;
Notification about the application has been inadequate;
The container will be unsightly and potentially attract vandalism;
Impact of school children travelling to the site;
Why is this resource not sited at the proposed visitor centre?;
The allotment site is already in varied states of upkeep;
Will the classroom also be used as a tool store?;
Harmful visual impact;
Why is a community classroom needed here?;
Contractors already working on site;
Increase in traffic in this small cul-de-sac;
Would the container be totally screened from view?;
The original planning application has not yet been fully implemented;
Car parking signs have not been placed in the parking area.

7.2 The use of the building has been reconsidered by the applicant and the proposal has now been amended. The applicant has indicated a revised intention to use the building as a facilities cabin for the allotment holders only. A formal re-consultation has taken place. A summary of the secondary representations received in relation to the current proposal are outlined below:

The container would be in direct view of my property and have a negative impact on outlook;
Potential to attract crime and vandalism;
Query use of public funds to provide such a facility;
The article in The Champion states that the container will be hidden from view and will not impact on the community;
The footings works has already commenced prior to approval;
There are already a multitude of sheds and storage containers on site so why is another required?;
The location has been put in full view of the houses rather than to the rear of the site- I assume the applicant wishes the community to be 'unofficial night watch' for vandalism;
Negative impact on view in semi-rural environment;
The amendment has come at a time when communities are isolated and unable to collectively react to such a negative application.

8.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

8.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 Development Plan Document provide the policy framework against which the development proposals will be assessed.

National Planning Policy Framework – (NPPF)

Chapter 8. Promoting healthy and safe communities

Chapter 15. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

- 8.3 **West Lancashire Local Plan (2012-2027) DPD – (Local Plan)**
GN1 – Settlement Boundaries
GN3 – Criteria for Sustainable Development
EN2- Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire's Natural Environment
EN3- Provision of Green Infrastructure and Open Recreation Space

- 8.4 The application site is identified as Green Infrastructure/ Open Recreation Space as designated in the WLLP

All the above Policy references can be viewed on the Council's website at:
<http://www.westlanacs.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy.aspx>

9.0 **OBSERVATIONS OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF PLACE AND COMMUNITY**

- 9.1 The main considerations for this application are:

Principle of Development
Design and Appearance
Residential Amenity

Principle of Development

- 9.2 Paragraphs 91 - 101 of the NPPF are relevant to the determination of this application. In particular paragraph 91(c) states that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe spaces which enable and support healthy life styles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs- for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities and allotments. Paragraph 92 additionally requires planning authorities to plan positively for the provision and use of community facilities.

- 9.3 Policy EN3 of the Local Plan supports the provision of a network of multifunctional green space which, at section 1(iv) includes the development of new allotments. The principle of establishing the allotment site was accepted via the original planning permission for the site granted in 2015. The application does not propose to change this use, only to replace the original storage cabin and shed with a single communal building to be sited in the same location. I am therefore satisfied the proposal remains acceptable and compliant with Policy EN3 and the requirements of the NPPF.

Design and Appearance

- 9.4 Policy GN3 of the WLLP together with the Councils SPD Design Guide states that new development should be of a scale, mass and built form which responds to the characteristics of the site and its surroundings. Care should be taken to ensure that the buildings do not disrupt the visual amenities of the street scene because of their height, scale or roofline.

- 9.5 The proposed building would be positioned adjacent to the site boundary at the entrance to the allotments. It is proposed that the building will be painted dark green in order to appear unobtrusive when viewed against the mature planting which forms the boundary of the site. In my view the cabin would have a satisfactory appearance and will assimilate well into the existing landscape and context of the allotment site. As outlined in the submitted visual assessment documentation and confirmed during site visits, the existing hawthorn hedges provide substantial screening of the site and owing to the siting, scale and height of the proposed cabin which would sit directly behind the hedges, it would only be glimpsed from the street scene of Manfield. It is acknowledged there is a short distance

of the perimeter (towards the entrance of the site) where the mature planting does not extend, however this has recently been planted with replacement hedging.

- 9.6 Although a painted steel portacabin is generally not a long term storage solution, I considered the appearance and location of the cabin will be screened from wider views and I am therefore satisfied the proposal would comply with the requirements of Policy GN3 of the Local Plan in terms of design and appearance.

Impact on Residential Amenity

- 9.7 The Environmental Protection Team have been consulted with regard to the proposal and have raised no objections to the development. As the use of the facility will be confined to existing allotment users there are no anticipated additional car parking requirements or intensification of the site as a result. The site is secure due to existing boundary fencing so restricted access to the building can be maintained.
- 9.8 I acknowledge and have given due consideration in my assessment to the concerns raised in neighbour representations relating to the siting and visual impact of the building upon the amenity of occupants in nearby properties on Manfield. As outlined previously, the original planning permission included the installation of two storage cabins/ sheds in the same location. Whilst these units had a slightly smaller cumulative width and length than the proposed single cabin they were of a similar height. Noting the height of the existing mature hedging I am satisfied that the development would be mostly screened from the view of the nearest residential properties.
- 9.9 Furthermore whilst I accept that given the topography of the site there may be partial/ restricted views overlooking the site entrance, when the existing screening is considered alongside the retained separation distances to the nearest properties, the overall impact of the proposal upon the amenity of residents is considered to be adequately mitigated.
- 9.10 A number of the concerns raised within residents' representations (outlined in section 7.2) relate specifically to the upkeep of the allotment site and funding of the scheme. In this respect such issues are the responsibility of the applicant and are not material considerations in the determination of this application.
- 9.11 The application is not considered to result in any significant detrimental impact to the amenity of the neighbouring properties and is therefore accordant with Policy GN3 of the Local Plan in this respect.

10.0 CONCLUSION

- 10.1 The proposed development is compliant with the NPPF and the relevant policies in the West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-27 and is therefore recommended for approval.

11.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 11.1 That planning permission be GRANTED subject to the following conditions

Condition(s)

1. The development must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.
Reason: To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
2. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with details shown on the following plans:

Communal Cabin Manufacturers Specification. Received by the Local Planning Authority on 14th November 2019

Site Location Plan. Received by the Local Planning Authority on 14th November 2019

Floor Layout Plan. Dwg No: STACK-11825. Received by the Local Planning Authority on 14th November 2019

Communal Cabin Photograph. Received by the Local Planning Authority on 14th November 2019

Streetscene Visuals: Groundwork. Received by the Local Planning Authority on 10th March 2020

Site Layout Plan. Received by the Local Planning Authority on 10th March 2020

Landscape and Visual Assessment Statement. Received by the Local Planning Authority on 6th May 2020

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure compliance with the provisions of Policy GN3 in the adopted West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 Development Plan Document.

3. Within one month of its installation, the communal storage and facilities cabin hereby approved shall be painted dark green.

Reason: To prevent unsightliness and visual intrusion and so ensure that the development complies with the provisions of Policy GN3 in the adopted West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 Development Plan Document.

4. The building hereby permitted shall be retained for the sole use of the Tawd Valley Allotment holders for the purpose of a communal storage and facilities cabin and shall be used for no other purpose.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of occupants of existing dwellings located in the vicinity of the application site and to comply with the provisions of Policy GN3 in the West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 Development Plan Document.

Reason for Approval

1. The Local Planning Authority has considered the proposed development in the context of the Development Plan including, in particular, the following Policy/Policies in the adopted West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 Development Plan Document:

GN1 - Settlement Boundaries

GN3 - Criteria for Sustainable Development

EN2- Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire's Natural Environment

EN3- Provision of Green Infrastructure and Open Recreation Space

together with Supplementary Planning Guidance and all relevant material considerations. The Local Planning Authority considers that the proposal complies with the relevant Policy criteria and is acceptable in the context of all relevant material considerations as set out in the Officer's Report. This report can be viewed or a copy provided on request to the Local Planning Authority.