
2021/0642

Ms A Vint

Creation of multi-use community plaza including container café

Area within Houghton Road Recreation Ground, Houghton Road, Thurnscoe, Rotherham, S63 0JS

Site Location and Description

The application relates to the Houghton Road Recreation Ground, Houghton Road, Thurnscoe.

The recreation ground is located off Houghton Road and consists of a large playing field, a multi use games area (MUGA) and a bowling green. It is bounded by the highway to the north with residential properties beyond, residential properties to the east and Thurnscoe Park to the west.

The recreation ground is screened from the highway by a belt of trees which are protected by tree preservation orders.

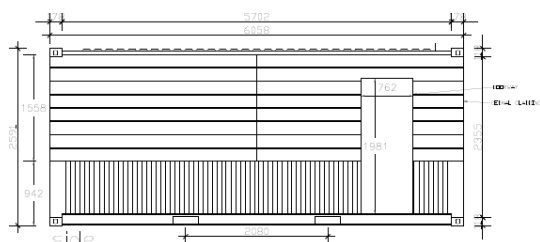
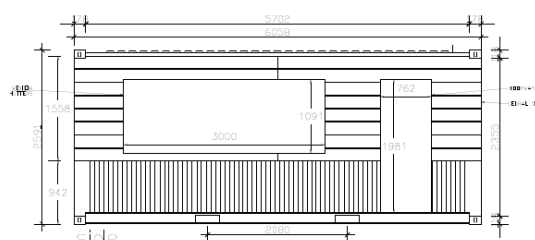


Proposed Development

The applicant seeks permission to install a multi-use community plaza including the installation of 2no containers to serve as a café and a toilet block.

The containers are to measure 5.7m by 2.4m with a height of 2.5m and are to be clad in cedar cladding.

The community plaza is to incorporate paths, seating, planting, sculptures, community planting beds and an area for Parkour. Access into the plaza is to be taken from Houghton Road via a footpath.



Policy Context

Planning decision should be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise and the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making.

The new Local Plan was adopted at the full Council meeting held 3rd January 2019 after it was found to be sound by the appointed Planning Inspector following the examination process. This means that it now takes on full weight for decision making process in planning law terms as the development plan for the Borough.

Local Plan

The site is allocated as Green Space within the Local Plan Proposals Maps and therefore the following policies are relevant:

- Policy GS1 Green Space
- Policy D1 High Quality Design and Place Making
- Policy Poll1 Pollution Control and Protection
- Policy SD1 Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development
- Policy GD1 General Development

NPPF

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

At the heart is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Development proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date, unless the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed or any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies of the Framework taken as a whole.

Section 8 Promoting healthy and safe communities;

Paragraph 92 states that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which

- a) promote social interaction
- b) are safe and accessible and
- c) enable and support healthy lifestyles

Paragraph 93 states that in order to provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should

- a) plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, amongst others)

Open space and recreation

Paragraphs 98 states that access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities, and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is needed, which plans should then seek to accommodate.

Paragraph 99 states that existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

- a) an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or
- b) the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
- c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.

Consultations

Highways – No comments received

Pollution Control – No comments received

Drainage – the details provided are sufficient and that I have no further observations to make with respect to land drainage; happy for the details to be checked by building control

Parks – No objections

Ward Councillors – No comments received

Tree Officer – No objections subject to conditions

Representations

Neighbour notification letters have been sent to surrounding properties and the application has been advertised by the way of a site notice; no representations have been received.

Assessment

Principle of development

Green Spaces are green open areas which are valuable for amenity, recreation, wildlife or biodiversity and include types such as village greens, local open spaces, country parks, formal gardens, cemeteries, allotments, woodlands, recreation grounds, sports pitches and parks.

Proposals that result in the loss of green space or land that was last used as green space will not normally be allowed unless:

An assessment shows that there is too much of that particular type of green space in the area which it serves, and its loss would not affect the existing and potential green space needs of the borough

The proposal is for small scale facilities needed to support or improve the proper function of the green space or

An appropriate replacement green space of equivalent or improved quality, quantity and accessibility is provided which outweigh the loss.

It is considered that the development put forward would not result in the loss of green space as the use is to continue as a community recreation use and would include facilities to support and improve the function of the wider recreation area including the MUGA, the bowling green and the remaining recreation ground. As such it is considered to allow a wider variety of usage of the greenspace making it more appealing to residents which in turn should allow greater usage of the greenspace. The café associated with the proposal is small and is considered ancillary to the scheme and as such would not be of detriment to the vitality or viability of existing commercial centres. As such it would be classed as small scale facilities that support or improve the proper function of the green space in line with Policy GS1.

Visual Amenity

The inclusion of the community plaza would not be out of keeping with the area and provides a space which complements the area and provides better utilisation of the space, contributing to a healthy and sustainable environment. The containers are not normally seen as ideal visual features being temporary in nature. However, they are often used on greenspaces as storage areas or small drinks stations. In this case the containers will be cedar clad, similar to weatherboard, which will soften their appearance. Given they are set back from the road, low in height, will be screened to a certain extent by the existing TPO trees, and there is a similar container on the nearby bowling green, it is considered that this would be acceptable in this instance and in compliance with Local Plan Policy D1 and GD1.

Residential Amenity

The site is located within the existing recreation ground and whilst there are some residential properties bounding the site, the additional facilities are not considered to have significant adverse effects on the living conditions and residential amenity of the existing and future residents, therefore complying with Local Plan Policies GD1 – General Development and Poll1 – Pollution Control and Protection.

Highways safety

The proposal would not result in the loss of off street parking nor have an impact on highway safety and is therefore acceptable and in compliance with Local Plan Policy T4.

Trees

The information provided within the tree survey demonstrates that the trees along the northern boundary can be safely retained with the inclusion of the proposal.

Some hard surfacing will be required in the rooting area of one of the protected trees, Lime tree T5, however the surfacing will be constructed using a no dig cellular confinement system which should leave the trees relatively unaffected.

Conditions are to be included to requiring the submission of details relating to the no dig construction and the development to be undertaken in accordance with the tree protection plans submitted as part of the tree survey.

Recommendation

Approve with conditions