

PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT

REF NO: AL/54/09/

LOCATION: Aldingbourne Community Sports Centre
Olivers Meadow
Westergate

PROPOSAL: The re-siting of Barnham Signal Box to recreation ground at Olivers Meadow, from its present position at Barnham Railway Station. Building to be used as a clubhouse and meeting place for Bognor Regis Model Railway Club. Works include erection of fencing.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

DESCRIPTION OF APPLICATION	The proposal is to dismantle the signal box and remove it from Barnham Station and re erect it at Aldingbourne Community Centre and inserting a floor where the signals were to create a usable space for a meeting room for the Model Railway Club.
SITE AREA	0.125 hectares.
RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT DEN	N/A
TOPOGRAPHY	Predominantly flat
TREES	None of any significance affected by the proposed development.
BOUNDARY TREATMENT	Tree screen adjacent to the existing barn all along the boundary.
SITE CHARACTERISTICS	A piece of grassed land, adjacent to a barn on the far edge of the playing fields. Footpath between the barn and the proposed site and the footpath runs along the back of the field to the shooting gallery.
CHARACTER OF LOCALITY	The site is within the Aldingbourne Community Centre. Residential abuts the site.

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

None.

REPRESENTATIONS

Representations received:

Aldingbourne Parish Council

One letter of objection has been received commenting on the following main matters:-

- objector interested in adjacent property 4 Cornfields currently on the market
- concerned that the siting of the signal box adjacent to this property will impact on the privacy of the property

- Obstruction of winter sun and skyline
- the outcome of this proposal is a major factor in my decision to proceed with the purchase

Comments on Representations received:

In relation to 4 Cornfields, there is a separation distance of 15.8 metres with the garden of that property and 25 metres in relation to the house itself. Although located to the west, the building is not considered to give rise to significant loss of privacy or blocking of the sun/skyline even in winter due to the separation distances involved.

CONSULTATIONS

Parks and Landscapes
WSCC Local Development Divis.
Highways Agency
West Sussex - Listed Building

Consultations responses received:

District Parks & Greenspace: The site is within the boundary of an area of public open space which is afforded protection from development in accordance with policy Area 5, however, there are exceptions to the policy. The exceptions have not been adequately addressed. The construction of a building does not enhance the area of open space. This results in the space not available for playing or its visual amenity. The area lost is approximately 2 percent, no proposal of equivalent open space has been proposed elsewhere. The location of the soakaway will need to be positioned away from the roots of neighbouring trees to ensure that are not damaged. If approved a landscaping condition should be imposed.

Highways Agency: No objections.

County Highways: Access is onto Oliver's Meadow. In terms of parking there are 13 parking spaces shared with other facilities which should be sufficient for what is being proposed given the number of people in the club. The proposal is unlikely to result in a significant increase or have a detrimental impact. There have been no personal injury accidents in this vicinity therefore indicating a low risk of highway safety issues.

Comments on Consultation responses:

Comments noted. It is considered that the proposal does fit into the exceptions policy (1) the development materially enhances the existing facility or satisfies an essential social need that is unable to be provided elsewhere in the locality and where the amount of open space is not significantly reduce, in that it is for a local amenity group, within a community centre site and the loss of public open space is minimal.

POLICY CONTEXT

Designation applicable to site:

Outside the Built Up Area
Class A Road

DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

South East Plan:	SEPBE6	Management of the Historic Environment
Arun District Local Plan:	GEN3	Protection of the Countryside

[GEN7](#)
[AREA5](#)

The Form of New Development
Protection of Open Space

PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE

PPS1	Delivering Sustainable Development
PPS7	Sustainable development in rural areas
PPG15	Planning and the Historic Environment
PPG13	Transport
PPG17	Sport and Recreation

POLICY COMMENTARY

The above policies combine to describe the criteria against which the application will be assessed particularly with regard to visual and residential amenity.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND/OR LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states:-

"If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise."

The proposal is considered to comply with relevant Development Plan policies in that it would have no materially adverse effect on the visual amenities of the locality or the residential amenities of the adjoining properties, nor would it have an adverse impact upon the established character of the surrounding area. Policy AREA5 seeks to retain public open space. An exception can be made under the terms of the policy if "the development materially enhances the existing facility or satisfies social need that is unable to be provided elsewhere in the locality and where the amount of open space is not significantly reduced". In this case it is considered that the retention of a structure of historic interest is of social value to the community and that the proposal is justifiable as an exception. Together with the use to which the building is being put it is considered that an essential need is being met.

OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is considered that there are no other material considerations to warrant a decision otherwise than in accordance with the Development Plan and/or legislative background.

CONCLUSIONS

PRINCIPLE:

The site is within the built up area boundary where development is acceptable in principle. It is within the Aldingbourne Community Centre and on an area designated as public open space.

BACKGROUND:

Network Rail have commissioned a new signal box for Barnham Station and therefore the existing is redundant. It is proposed to lift the building in one piece within an exo skeletal frame and keep the structure stable. It will then be transported by road and placed at the site proposed at the Aldingbourne Community Centre for the use by the Bognor Regis Model Railway club who have been meeting at the Centre in excess of ten years. The proposal is to convert the building by placing a mezzanine floor over the signal area.

The Signal Box is the last remaining Edwardian signal box circa 1911. It is one of the oldest working buildings in the area. It is used also for visiting school children and this use is proposed to be continued in the new location.

LOCAL PLAN POLICY AREA 5:

This policy is to protect public open spaces. The Aldingbourne Sports & Community Centre contains such an open space. The proposal is sited to the north west corner of the open space on the side of a public footpath, adjacent to a barn on a small piece of land that could not feasibly be utilised as usable public open space. It is considered that in view of the fact that the use is for a group who use the Community Centre and for a use which preserves a utilitarian building of local community interest, the loss of this small space from the public open space (250 square metres) is considered to be acceptable as an exception to policy Area 5 (1) "the development materially enhances the existing facility or satisfies an essential social need that is unable to be provided elsewhere in the locality and where the amount of open space is not significantly reduced". In this case it is considered that the retention of a structure of historic local interest is of social value to the community and that the proposal is justifiable as an exception. Together with the use to which the building is being put it is considered that an essential social need is being met.

VISUAL AMENITY:

Within the Community Centre, the proposal will be sited to the north west corner and will not represent any visual intrusion. Adjacent to the proposed site are residential properties but they are sited sufficient distance away from them for there to be no detriment to visual amenity.

RESIDENTIAL AMENITY:

As stated above, the distance between the proposed siting and the signal box is approximately 25 metres there would not be any direct overlooking of Calluna. Similarly with the properties in the Cornfields, due to the distance and oblique views and boundary treatment, it is not considered that there would be any significant loss of residential amenity.

HIGHWAY SAFETY:

As stated above, the proposal will be transported in one piece by road. This will mean closing the road to transport the signal box. A full methodology has been included with the application. Neither the Highway Agency or County Highways have raised any objections.

SUMMARY:

The proposal will ensure the historic structure is retained and reused for the benefit of the Model Railway group but also the wider community of local schools. It is considered that the retention of a structure of historic local interest is of community value and that the proposal is justifiable as an exception. Together with the use to which the building is being put it is considered that an essential need is being met. There are no adverse effects with regard to residential, visual or highway amenity. Therefore it is recommended that the application is approved with the following condition.

RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE CONDITIONALLY

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

- 2 The removal and reinstatement of the Barnham Signal Box shall be undertaken in accordance with the submitted Feasibility Study.

Reason: To preserve the special character and appearance of the structure for the future and because the site lies outside the built up area boundary where development would not normally be permitted in accordance with Arun District Local Plan GEN3 and GEN7.

- 3 The building shall be used solely for purposes within Use Class D1 (Non-residential Institutions as defined in the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987.

Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to control the use of the premises in detail having regard to the amenities of nearby residential properties in order that the Local Planning Authority may regulate and control the use of the premises in accordance with policies DEV1 of the West Sussex Structure Plan and GEN7 of the Arun District Local Plan.

- 4 No development shall take place unless and until there has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority a scheme of landscaping hard and soft, which shall include indication of all existing trees and hedgerows on the land, and details of any to be retained, together with measures for their protection in the course of development.

Reason: In the interests of amenity and of the environment of the development in accordance with policy GEN7 of the Arun District Local Plan.

- 5 Before development commences, details of the location of the soakaway shall be submitted, to show a position away from the root zones of neighbouring trees to ensure they are not damaged, and approved by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of amenity and of the environment of the development in accordance with Arun District Local Plan policy GEN7

- 6 **INFORMATIVE:** Summary of Reasons for Grant Article 22(1) General Development Procedure Order 1995

SUMMARY

This planning permission is granted because it complies with the policies listed below in that the development would not cause any material adverse effect on visual or residential amenity on the surrounding area and its character and there are no material considerations to indicate otherwise. Policy AREA5 seeks to retain public open space. An exception can be made under the terms of the policy if "the development materially enhances the existing facility or satisfies social need that is unable to be provided elsewhere in the locality and where the amount of open space is not significantly reduced". In this case it is considered that the retention of a structure of historic interest is of social value to the community and that the proposal is justifiable as an exception. Together with the use to which the building is being put it is considered that an essential need is being met.

RELEVANT POLICIES

LOCAL PLAN: GEN3, GEN7, AREA5

SOUTH EAST PLAN: BE6

NATIONAL POLICIES: PPS1, PPS7, PPG13, PPG15, PPG17

This is only a summary of reasons for granting to comply with Article 22 and full reasons appear in the Officer report.