

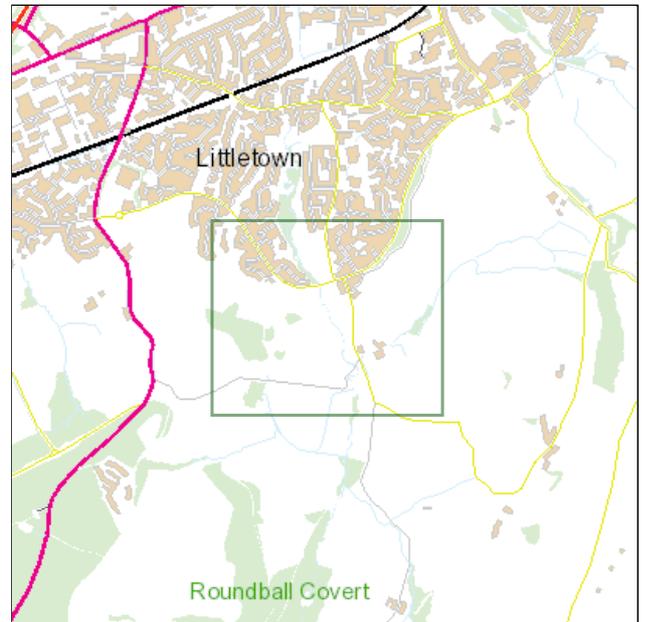
Ward Honiton St Michaels

Reference 22/1346/FUL

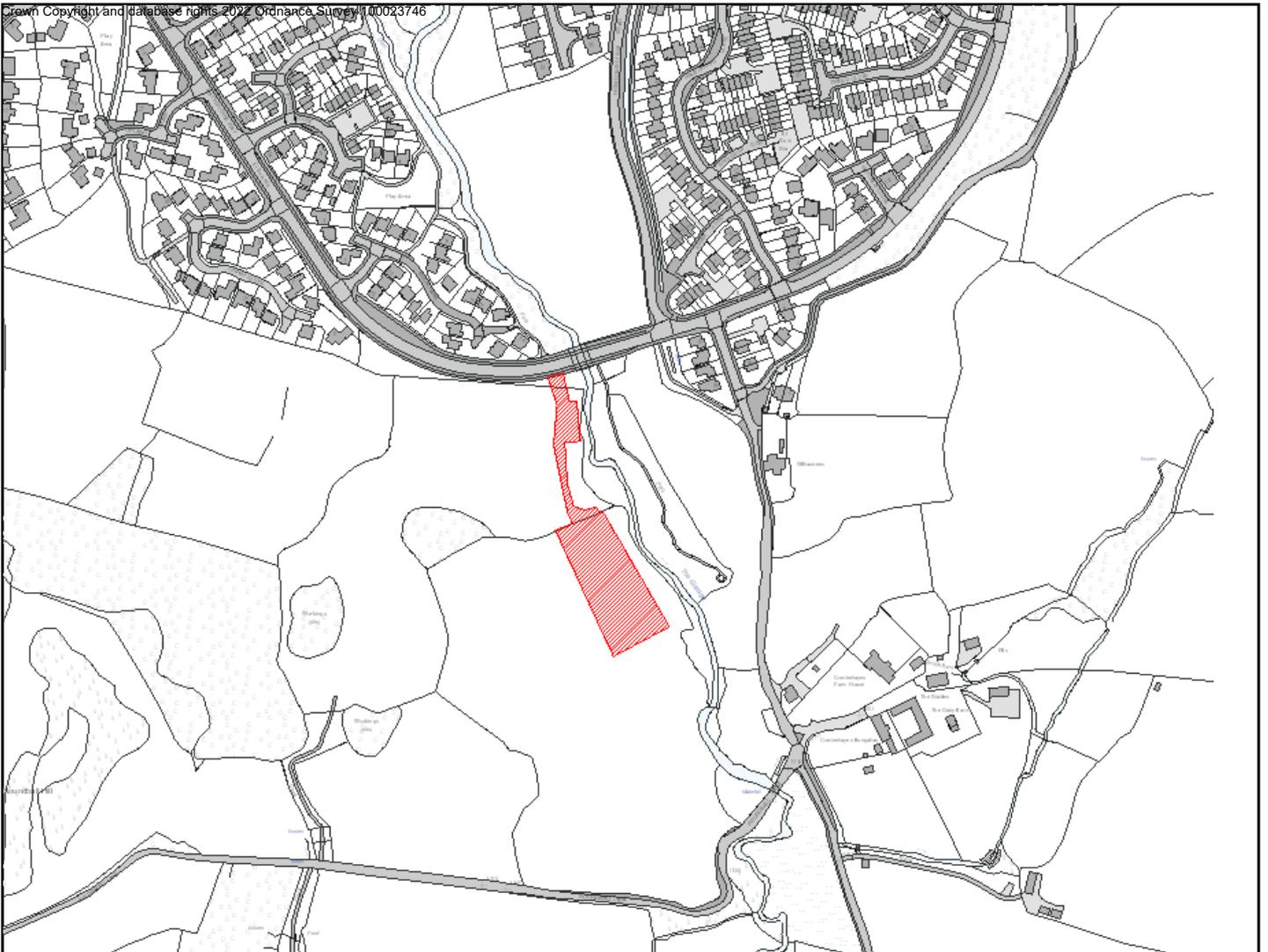
Applicant Mr Stephen Hill

Location Battishorne Way Allotments Battishorne Way
Honiton

Proposal Site layout changes to allotments, landscaping
and erection of sheds on plots



RECOMMENDATION: Approval with conditions



		Committee Date: 30th August 2022
Honiton St Michaels (Honiton)	22/1346/FUL	Target Date: 11.08.2022
Applicant:	Mr Stephen Hill	
Location:	Battishorne Way Allotments Battishorne Way	
Proposal:	Site layout changes to allotments, landscaping and erection of sheds on plots	

RECOMMENDATION: Approval with conditions

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The application is before committee as officers views differ from that of one of the ward members.

The application site is located to the south side of Honiton, outside of the defined built-up area boundary and within the designated East Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Gissage runs to the east of the site and there is a belt of mature tree planting between this and the site.

The proposal seeks amendments to a scheme approved under an earlier application (18/1513/FUL) for, '*Provision of access track, parking and turning areas and drainage in association with use of land as allotments*'. That scheme has now been implemented but within a slightly increased site area to accommodate a revised layout and additional plots. The current application seeks retention of those amendments and in addition permission is sought for the erection of sheds on each plot and amendments to the approved landscaping scheme.

The principle of the provision of allotments on the site and associated infrastructure has already been accepted and the slight increase in the site area to accommodate additional plots does not raise any additional concerns or issues.

In relation to the proposed changes to the landscaping this seeks to remove the requirement for tree planting within the bank to the west side of the access drive with concerns over safety cited as justification. However, such planting was required to compensate for any long term loss or damage to trees that may have been caused by the construction of the access track and as such the requirement for this is still considered to be necessary.

In relation to the provision of sheds on the allotment plots, these are likely to give rise to some additional landscape and visual impact but are small scale structures which would be visually contained within the site, in-keeping with its character and where additional landscape planting to the boundaries of the site could mitigate their impact, to an acceptable degree, in due course.

On this basis and subject to the conditions set out below the proposals are considered to be acceptable and are recommended for approval subject to the conditions set out below.

CONSULTATIONS

Local Consultations

Parish/Town Council

Members RESOLVED unanimously not to comment on the application.

Honiton St Michaels - Cllr Mike Allen

I object to the numerical extent of proposed application for erection of up to 36 sheds proposed to be built within an AONB area. This is excessive and detrimental to the landscape. It is contrary to the original concept on which permission for these plots was originally given, which was to arrange good access and water but avoid sheds onsite

All 36 plots have now been allocated and a majority of plot holders. have requested permission from the applicant to erect a shed on their individual plots for storage purposes.

As the site is in the AONB, exceptions to planning policy would be needed if planning permission is required for the erection of up to 36 sheds. The applicant is seeking permission for a standard size shed - 8ft x 6ft to be erected, if required, by plot holders. It is stated that all plot holders will need to apply to the applicant for an agreement to erect a shed in accordance with the planning grant received.

Honiton St Michaels - Cllr Phil Twiss

I support this application, but would emphasise that all sheds should not be permanent structures and of a uniform construction style, using similar and appropriate materials, suitable for use in the East Devon AONB

Other Representations

1 no. representation received raising the following objections:

- Impact of shed on the AONB
- Some allotments already storing materials for sheds in anticipation of permission

4 no. representation received expressing support on the basis that:

- Sheds are a necessary part of allotments and needed to store equipment
- Site only seen by a few dog walkers
- Missed opportunity without sheds

Technical Consultations

EDDC Trees

The proposed changes to landscaping scheme to remove the condition to plant trees along the access track is not supported: the site is adjacent to a woodland strip following The Gissage stream, so leaf fall will already be an occurrence from these trees anyway. Leaf fall is a natural, seasonal in nature and therefore only potentially an issue for a short period of time; furthermore the removal of leaves if necessary can be part of general maintenance of the site. It is also considered that due to the nature of an allotment being outside, one would expect that residents would be appropriately attired to undertake outdoor activities where the ground is likely to be uneven and potentially slippery.

PLANNING HISTORY

Reference	Description	Decision	Date
18/1513/FUL	Provision of access track, parking and turning areas and drainage in association with use of land as allotments.	Approval with conditions	23.10.2018
21/3055/VAR	Variation to conditions 2 (approved plans) and 3 (landscaping) of application 18/1513/FUL to allow for an amended layout and landscaping details	Withdrawn	03.05.2022

POLICIES

Adopted East Devon Local Plan 2013-2031 Policies Strategy 7 (Development in the Countryside)

Strategy 3 (Sustainable Development)

Strategy 46 (Landscape Conservation and Enhancement and AONBs)

Strategy 23 (Development at Honiton)

D1 (Design and Local Distinctiveness)

D2 (Landscape Requirements)

D3 (Trees and Development Sites)

EN5 (Wildlife Habitats and Features)

EN13 (Development on High Quality Agricultural Land)

RC2 (New Open Space, Sports Facilities and Parks)

TC2 (Accessibility of New Development)

TC7 (Adequacy of Road Network and Site Access)

TC9 (Parking Provision in New Development)

Government Planning Documents

National Planning Practice Guidance

NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework 2021)

Site Location and Description

The application is located to the east side of adjoining agricultural fields located to the south side of Honiton on the edge of but outside the built-up area boundary of the town. The northern field is accessed over a broad landscaped verge from Battishorne Way and via an existing field gate. The field is laid to pasture and slopes up steadily from west to east. A gravelled access track has been cut into the slope running south from Battishorne Way to the southern field. Running along the western boundary of the field is a belt of mature trees and beyond this The Gissage, the stream that bisects the town north to south, on the other side of the stream is the Honiton Bottom Community Nature Reserve. There is a further mature Oak within the field to the west of the access track. The southern boundary of the field is formed by a native hedge, a gap in the southeast corner of the field connects to the adjoining field. The second field is similarly bounded by trees/hedges along its eastern boundary, with The Gissage beyond. This field is similarly laid to pasture but is more level at its eastern side where an area of land has been enclosed with post and rail fencing and allotments laid out.

The site lies in open countryside designated as Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and on agricultural land classed as undifferentiated grade 3 land. Land to the east of the site immediately adjacent to The Gissage, but outside of the site, falls within High/Medium Risk Flood Zones.

Proposed Development

The application follows on from application 18/1513/FUL and seeks amendments and additions to that permission as set out below. Application 21/3055/VAR sought some of the changes now proposed including changes to the allotment layout, however, as an extension to the site area was proposed this could not be considered under that application type.

The current application seeks approval for the following:

1. Retention of the alternative allotment layout to that approved under application 18/1513/FUL. The revised layout includes an extension to the site area to

accommodate an additional 6 no. plots and reconfiguration of those already approved.

2. Changes to the landscaping scheme approved, as part of 18/1513/FUL, to remove the requirement for the planting of trees within the hedgebank to be created on the west side of the access track.
3. Addition of allotment sheds to each of the plots with approval sought for sheds of a standard size and appearance.

ANALYSIS

The provision of allotments is supported in principle under policy RC2 of the East Devon Local Plan (2013-2031) and subject to a number of criteria being met including that, *'They do not unduly affect the character and appearance of the area and the visual and physical amenities enjoyed by adjoining residential areas.'*

Permission already exists for the development of the allotments and the access to the highway is not proposed to change, as such the main issue for consideration is any impact on the character and appearance of the area and wider landscape as a result of the proposed changes.

The site lies adjacent to existing agricultural fields within the East Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and where great weight needs to be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty. Strategy 46 of the Local Plan reflects guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework in this regard.

Battishorne Way to the north of the site marks the boundary between the town and the surrounding countryside, the distinction between the two is marked. The north side of the road is urban/suburban in character and the land to the south rural. However, as was noted on the previous approval there are pockets of residential development on the south side of the road as well as other leisure/open space uses, on this basis, the development proposed at the time was found to be acceptable.

Taking the proposed variations in turn, the internal changes to the site allotment layout and the slight extension to the south of the approved area are considered to be acceptable and would not, on its own, give rise to any harmful additional impact. The approved scheme included the provision of a native hedge to the southwest and southeast sides of this area and this still forms part of the current proposals and could be controlled by a suitably worded condition.

There is a belt of tree planting along the eastern boundary of the site as well as individual specimens within the northern field and in the hedgerow between the two fields. At the time of the original application it was noted that along the route of the proposed access there were exposed tree roots indicating that the RPA (Root Protection Area) of trees to the east of the site extended into this area. The Council's tree officer therefore raised concern with regards to potential harm to and/or effect on the longevity of existing trees on site due to excavation to create the access track. Options were explored at the time to re-route this track but these were found to be likely to result in more impact and as such, the access route was maintained as proposed. However, additional tree planting was secured to provide compensatory

planting for any harm arising and to ensure that in the long term no net loss of trees of amenity value would occur. The development was therefore found to be acceptable in relation to policy D3 of the Local Plan. The proposal to now remove the previously agreed tree planting is put forward on the basis of concerns that provision of trees immediately adjacent to the track would lead to overshadowing of the track and cause this to become slippery and dangerous in wet weather.

The Council's arboricultural officer has objected to the removal of the requirement for additional tree planting. Officers are not convinced that the concerns of the Town Council with regards to the presence of trees making the track dangerous would come to bear given the nature and speed of traffic and finished surfacing of the track. Furthermore whilst at present there are no signs of damage to existing trees to the east any harm caused through the construction of the track may take some time to become apparent. It is therefore considered that the requirement for some additional tree planting should remain, this can however be required as part of a wider landscaping condition.

Finally, in relation to the addition of allotment sheds to each plot this has the potential to give rise to additional landscape and visual impact through adding such suburban structures into the AONB landscape. However, it was acknowledged in the officer delegated report at the time of the original application that whilst no provision for allotment sheds was made, at that time, that these would undoubtedly be required. The Town Council advised on the previous application that they might seek to erect sheds under permitted development rights, were they considered to not require planning permission. In the event, permission is now sought for identical timber sheds on all of the plots and in the positions indicated on the site layout plan, showing these around the periphery of the site. It is understood that it would be up to individual plot holders to seek the consent of the Town Council to erect a shed and therefore not necessarily all of the plots would apply for this. Were planning approval to be granted however, this would allow for such an eventuality.

Although the provision of sheds on the plots would increase the landscape impact of the allotment site, there are a number of factors that are considered to reduce the impact to an acceptable degree. Firstly, the allotment site sits at the lower end of the field on a relatively level area of ground and where screening is provided from the east by the existing treeline. Additionally, to the southwest and southeast boundaries it is proposed to plant a deciduous hedge, this in time would provide further screening of the sheds, albeit there are limited public rights of way affording views of the site from these directions. Finally, the sheds themselves would be viewed in conjunction with the existing allotment site, which is visually distinct from the adjoining field and where they are shown to utilise recessive materials such that their impact would be reduced. Consideration could also be given to controlling the future colour/treatment of the sheds in order that their impact remains minimal. However, as plot holders would need to separately apply to the applicant (The Town Council) for permission to erect a shed on their plot control over the finished appearance of these may best be left to the Town Council.

CONCLUSION

This proposal relates to changes and additions to an existing approved allotment scheme which was brought forward to help meet a longstanding demand in the town. It is understood that there remains a long waiting list in the town for allotments and as such the additional plots proposed as part of the current scheme would be welcomed.

The existing site does have some impact on the character and appearance of the area but with the further landscaping proposed its impacts can be ameliorated to an acceptable degree such that overall the impact would be limited and would be outweighed by the social/health benefits that would arise from the proposed allotment use. In this regard, chapter 8 of the NPPF seeks to support development that encourages healthy and safe communities and where allotments are recognised as promoting both a healthy and active lifestyle as well as fostering a sense of community. The economic benefits of the proposal would be limited. Overall the proposal would provide additional facilities in support of the allotments and where any additional landscape impact can be mitigated by conditions. The proposal is supported subject to the conditions set out below.

RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans listed at the end of this decision notice.
(Reason - For the avoidance of doubt.)
2. Notwithstanding the details indicatively shown on the drawings hereby approved and prior to the erection of any of the sheds hereby approved, a landscaping scheme shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority; such a scheme to include:
 - The planting of a native hedgerow atop the bank to the west side of the access track and to include for some native hedgerow trees (details to include species mix, planting layout, size and no. of hedge plants and size, species and location of trees)
 - The planting of a native hedgerow to the southwest and southeast boundaries of the allotment area (details to include species mix, planting layout, size and no. of plants)

The landscaping scheme shall be carried out in the first planting season following approval of the planting details unless any alternative phasing of the landscaping is previously agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The landscaping shall be maintained for a period of 5 years. Any trees or other plants which die during this period shall be replaced during the next planting season with specimens of the same size and species unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

(Reason - To ensure that the details are planned and considered at an early stage in the interests of amenity, to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the area and to ensure that there is no net loss in the quality of trees resulting from the development in accordance with Policies D1 - Design

and Local Distinctiveness, D2 - Landscape Requirements and D3 - Trees and Development Sites of the Adopted East Devon Local Plan 2013 -2031.)

NOTE FOR APPLICANT

Informative: Confirmation - No CIL Liability

This Informative confirms that this development is not liable to a CIL charge.

Any queries regarding CIL, please telephone 01395 571585 or email cil@eastdevon.gov.uk.

Informative:

In accordance with the aims of Article 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 East Devon District Council works proactively with applicants to resolve all relevant planning concerns; however, in this case the application was deemed acceptable as submitted.

Plans relating to this application:

	Location Plan		16.06.22
1064/03 A	Proposed Plans	Combined	16.06.22
1064/02 B	Proposed Site Plan		08.07.22

List of Background Papers

Application file, consultations and policy documents referred to in the report.