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Fig.1 Aerial View - site of proposed community hub building indicated

DESIGN, ACCESS AND PLANNING STATEMENT

Project:

Resubmission of Proposed Community Hub Building and Nature Park

Mampitts Green and Meadow, Mampitts Lane

For

Shaftesbury Town Council

March 2024



1. Site and Surroundings

- 1.1. The site, known as Mampitts Green, is currently laid to grass and broadly level, with a gentle slope down to the east which steepens in the south east corner, with a deep ditch line along the east side. The rest of the site extends beyond this to include a much larger area to the east that takes it up to the SUDS corridor that runs along the eastern edge of the town.



Fig.2 View of Mampitts Green from West approach along Mampitts Lane

- 1.2. It is bounded on the town 'side' by the newly formed Maple Road on north and west sides, whilst along the south runs a substantial outgrown field hedge running along the side of Mampitts Lane, the boundary to the site. The site is divided into two by a former hedge line and ditch with the western part known as Mampitts Green. To the east is open land used temporarily by contractors building the surrounding houses and has now turned to rough grassland.
- 1.3. Both roads are lined with housing with three storey development predominating around the site.
- 1.4. A convenience store lies to the south west where this area now forms a local hub to this new housing development (see fig.4).



Fig.3 View from south side of Mampitts Lane towards site.



Fig.4 Looking across Mampitts Green towards Mampitts Lane - Mampitts Lane Stores indicated.

2. Involvement & Early design

2.1 Shaftesbury Town Council has engaged with the local community in developing the proposals and the design of the space and building has evolved through these. A separate public consultation statement is included in the application documents.

3. Proposal & Design

3.1. USE

It is proposed to build a new community hub building, with first floor office, with an associated public amenity space to the east called Mampitts Meadow. This has been the subject of local consultation. The site will contain a café which can be used as an informal community venue. Parking has been provided along Maple Road allowing for pedestrian access into the park area and for bins to be run out for collection. Bicycle storage is proposed under cover on the south west side of the building adjacent the hub entrance.

3.2. LAYOUT

The position of the proposed building creates a natural end to the built form and pattern of development in this part of Shaftesbury. By positioning the building at the end of the axis created by the widening of the space at the end of Mampitts Lane, this acts as a focal point, terminating the public open space formed by this triangle of land.

The building has been located toward the back of the available land to maintain the important Mampitts Green, seen by local residents as an important part of the street scene.

It was determined early in the design process that the building should not be located on the meadows and open space to the East. This has been identified as an important open space, with potential for rich natural habitat and biodiversity, enhanced by the proposed scheme. It is already well used by local residents for walks and connecting with nature. This land is also predominantly 'fill' from the spoil that resulted from the neighbouring housing development and likely to be very poor ground conditions for the construction of a substantial building.

3.3. FORM

The proposed form is for a 1 ½ storey building, following the general reduction in height of properties from 3 to 2 storey along Mampitts Lane running towards the East and open countryside beyond.

A traditional pitched roofed building matches the local vernacular; while the covered veranda offers shade in summer months to southwest facing windows, and also provides a covered area for seating and community events, with protection from the elements.

3.4. SCALE

The scale of the building is sufficient to provide adequate space for the proposed use, with additional first floor accommodation making best use of the footprint. The overall scale is in keeping with the adjacent properties, with the lower height reflecting the more open nature of the end of the development as it transitions to open countryside.

3.5. LANDSCAPE and TREES

An outline landscape layout plan has been prepared by Aileen Shackell Landscape Design and is appended to this application along with a separate Landscape Design Statement. The area is designed to encompass both improved biodiversity, passive enjoyment and natural play areas for children.

The existing trees have been subject of arboricultural assessment and the report forms part of the submitted scheme. All trees on the site are to be retained and protected as part of the scheme.

3.6. MATERIALS & DETAILING

The selected palette of materials reflects those used in the surrounding development with slate, brick and timber cladding being the principal materials for roof and walls.

Doors and windows will be powder coated aluminium to ensure low maintenance, energy efficiency and recyclable

3.7. ECOLOGY

Ecology surveys of the existing site have been carried out by Darwin Ecology with survey report appended to this application along with a Biodiversity Plan. No protected species were found on the site but appropriate enhancement measures have been proposed in terms of retain some and improving other habitats.

4. Town Planning

Commentary to this resubmission.

4.1 This proposal follows the refusal of planning permission for the earlier submission as follows:-

The proposed layout would result in the urbanisation of the area due to the extent of the uninterrupted liner parking along the sites frontage, which would provide insufficient landscaping, and would fail to make a positive contribution towards the environment, and the appearance of the area, contrary to Policy SFDH5 of the Shaftesbury Neighbourhood Plan, Policy 24 of the North Dorset Local Plan, and the NPPF.

The comment raised at committee is noted. In response the applicant has amended the site layout to further break up the row of road side parking by introducing a further bay of planting along the highway edge along with more indicative tree planting at the northern end. The building has also been shifted slightly further back on the site to enlarge the area known as Mampitts Green area.

It is to be emphasized that this approach to parking is acceptable on highway safety grounds and meets the highway authority parking standard and that by providing parking and building in this way the great part of the site can be dedicated to uninterrupted amenity land available to local residents for their future enjoyment.

- 4.2 In regard of alleged urbanisation it should be noted that this scheme results in about 10% or 550sq.m. more amenity area available to the public than that recently approved under ref P/FUL/2023/05314.
- 4.3 The management of the parking is a moot point but has not been raised by the highway authority as a highway safety concern. As a community hub at the centre of the eastward expansion of the town, it is sited in close proximity to what is likely to be most of its potential users. Most users would therefore be expected to walk or cycle to the hub. With any potential conflict between residents and hub users wanting to park, drop-down bollards can be put in place and managed by the hub manager.
- 4.4 Notwithstanding, during the working day pressure for on road parking is greatly reduced and evening uses will be well established and so local residents will be aware of the use pattern. As a community facility it is expected that use of the car park for hall users will be respected by that same community.

Planning Policies - principle of development

- 4.5 The site has long formed part of the plan for the eastern expansion of the town. Originally the need for an allocation of land for a community hall was identified in the 2007 planning permission granted on appeal at para.163 of the decision letter, with a financial contribution set out in the associated Section 106 legal agreement which identified the land (at schedule 2 and 8).
- 4.6 Under Policy 18 (n) Shaftesbury of the following North Dorset Local Plan of January 2016, the provision of a new community hall was set out for new social infrastructure to support growth. The explanatory memoranda at para 8.125 states the need for a new hall had been identified to serve the whole of Shaftesbury but predominantly to meet the needs of an incoming population.
- 4.7 Finally the Shaftesbury Neighbourhood Plan 2019-31 under Policy SFCL 1 states:-
- “New community facilities, will be strongly supported, particularly in the eastern area of the town, where they meet the identified needs of the community and are in line with the wider provisions of this Neighbourhood Plan.
- 4.8 So the site for the facility has long been identified in the plans for the area, along with what was intended to be an associated recreation area, although originally intended as allotments.

Planning Policies - detailed considerations.

- 4.9 These are listed in the Local Plan:-
- Policy 3 - Climate Change
 - Policy 4 - Natural Environment
 - Policy 22 - Renewable and Low Carbon Energy
 - Policy 23 - Parking
 - Policy 24 - Design
 - Policy 25 - Amenity

Shaftesbury Neighbourhood Plan
Green Infrastructure - Policy SFG12 and SFG13

Climate Change & Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

- 4.10 The building is located within the community it will serve and thus be accessible to all residents on foot or bicycle and without the need to travel by car.
- 4.11 Passive Solar Design – Orientation. The south east and southwest elevations will benefit from the effects of passive solar heat gain. The building is orientated west-east which will avoid excessive solar gain that will also see it front on to the public domain and survey the park land to the east. The veranda feature along the western side will also provide passive shading to the café.
- 4.12 It is proposed that the building will be heated (space and hot water) by an energy efficient air source heat pump system.
- 4.13 Solar panels will be incorporated into the roof to reduce reliance on imported energy, providing a source of electricity generation on site.
- 4.14 Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems - All surface water from roofs will be directed into a dedicated soakaway on site to minimise the impact of surface water run-off.
- 4.15 Natural Lighting - Large areas of glazing and rooflights will allow natural light to filter through the building reducing the need for artificial lighting. All artificial lighting will utilise LED technology for its superior energy efficiency.
- 4.16 Ventilation - The buildings are provided with openable windows to all areas to allow good natural ventilation. Mechanical ventilation will be provided in those areas as required under the building regulations.
- 4.17 Materials - Locally sourced or natural materials will be used wherever possible.
- 4.18 Labour - Local labour will be used where possible in order to reduce travelling costs.
- 4.19 Embodied Energy - Materials used in the construction will have low embodied energy and be recyclable wherever possible.



Fig.5 View of site of proposed 'natural park' looking east.



Fig.6 View of outgrown hedgerow to be retained on southern boundary.

Natural Environment

- 4.20. The site lies within the eastward expansion of Shaftesbury housing and is surrounded on three sides by development. The AONB lies some 350m to further the east. The site is not a nationally or local designated site of environmental interest. The hub building will be screened from the east by the retained ash trees running along the former hedgerow.
- 4.21. Both the building site and grassland to the east have been subject to ecological surveys and the reports and form part of the submitted scheme. Floral interest was identified in the outgrown hedge and trees with the grasses that have regenerated on the land since levelling. Flora interest was confined to the habitats provided by the hedge and trees and the grasses over the site.
- 4.22. The trees have been subject of arboricultural assessment and the report forms part of the submitted scheme. All trees on the site are to be retained and protected as part of the scheme.
- 4.23. The results of the arboricultural and ecology surveys have informed the landscape scheme whereby the trees and hedgerow are retained and other areas within the meadow are designated as to encourage different types of flora and fauna which will be perpetuated through appropriate management and maintenance.
- 4.24. Generally the proposal satisfies the Shaftesbury Neighbourhood Plan policies. The proposal is to create a new public amenity area where the area has long been allocated and envisaged for this type of use and will ensure the rural landscape is drawn into the settlement and allow public access through it linking to the SUDS corridor, already an established walking route. The scheme also ensures retention of the trees and hedges around the site with the landscape scheme designed to improve biodiversity on the site.

Access and Parking

- 4.25. The site is central to the new communities living on the eastern side of Shaftesbury, with the idea that it is generally accessible without the need to drive by car.
- 4.26. The principal use of the building, whilst being for community use, is intended to accommodate a community café for that purpose. So whilst the overall use would be within Use Class F2, it does incorporate a café use of around 120sq.m. but the space itself is specifically as a meeting place.
- 4.27. At first floor an office use is proposed of about 70sq.m.
- 4.28. On this basis, using the Dorset Council non-residential parking guidance the following is calculated:
Café - 8 + 2 for staff = 10
Office - 3
Total - 13
- 4.29. The scheme proposes to incorporate 1 disabled space, giving in a total of 15no. spaces overall.
- 4.30. Some 6 cycle spaces under cover are also included to encourage a more healthy mode of transport.

- 4.31. Parking is shown directly off the highway to make best use of space to where a self-contained car park would take too much of the area designated as amenity land for local residents. Maple Road is a residential service road and has a 20mph design speed and has low traffic speeds as a result.
- 4.32. Management of the spaces, if required, could be provided through use of drop-down bollards as mentioned above. This would be managed by the building manager. It is to be expected that once the hub is open its pattern of use will be well known to local residents such that parking conflict will be avoided through self-regulation in the interests of the whole community. However although not mentioned by the highway authority as necessary, this element could be conditioned if the local planning authority feel it reasonable.

Design

- 4.33. See above.

Amenity

- 4.34. The proposal is not for a hall but a meeting place, primarily for the local community. This avoids the noisier and later evening events often associated with a normal hall use. This is reflected in the internal design where there is a first floor that results in a low ceiling height at ground floor. This makes it unsuited for entertainment events.
- 4.35. Initially the café plans to open from 8am – 6pm x 5 days a week, moving to some evening openings for supper clubs, community events, Friday night specials for teenagers and similar. Shorter hours may operate during the winter months and longer hours in the Summer.
- 4.36. The first floor will be available for letting. This is envisaged as a shared office space/ hot-desking/ professional and inspiring shared workspace that will to support agile and hybrid working
- 4.37. which will assist in the viability of maintaining the community hub building and amenity land. Access will be through a single shared entrance into the building.
- 4.38. The provision of on-site parking for the facility will help ensure parking by hub users does not interfere with local residents parking.
- 4.39. The site is already well lit with street lighting meaning no additional external floodlight lighting will be required. Any external lighting would be restricted to localised down lights around the entrance to ensure safety and would be triggered by movement detectors.

5. Summary

- 5.1. The site has long been allocated for community and amenity use as part of the East expansion of Shaftesbury.
- 5.2. The site is divided either side of an old hedge line with a number of trees.
- 5.3. The proposal seeks to erect a community building on the land to the west known as Mampitts Green, retaining an open space for regular community use.
- 5.4. The building will house a community café with office space over to assist with viability of running the building.
- 5.5. The area to the east is a much larger area to be dedicated to accessible amenity meadow land and natural play areas that will enhance biodiversity and link to the surrounding rural landscape and paths along the SUDS corridor.

- 5.6. The proposal is to serve the needs of the local community in providing both a venue as a meeting place and recreation.
- 5.7. The venue will provide parking to ensure the building is properly serviced but minimizes land taken so as to ensure maximisation of the meadow land without interruption by buildings and parking for a public park.

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