HPK/2010/0566

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PROPOSED ALLOTMENTS AT ROMAN GARDENS, GAMESLEY

PLANNING APPLICATION – OCTOBER 2010

SUPPORTING STATEMENT

The Site

The site is an enclosed community garden developed about 10 years ago for the local community with the assistance of external funding from the Countryside Agency and other funding bodies (Doorstop Green Project).

Most of the area is given over to shrub beds, trees, formal paths and regularly mown grass and is fully enclosed with bow top and other types of metal fencing.

The proposed allotments would fit into the northern section of the existing Roman Gardens, an area currently under used and consisting of mown grass and some young standard trees.

There are existing pedestrian and maintenance access gates off Melandra Castle Road. If permission for allotments were granted a new fence and access gate would be installed.

The site is within open country planning designation and the south western quarter is also covered by an archaeological planning designation associated with the Roman Fort called Melandra Castle.

History

The land at Roman Gardens is owned by High Peak Borough Council but managed by Gamesley Residents Associations. As part if the original agreement High Peak Borough Council granted Gamesley Residents Association permission to use and be responsible for the land for the purpose of informal recreation, play, a place for local community events and other lawful purposes for the benefit of the community.

In 2009 Gamesley Residents Association approached the Council with a view to creating public allotments somewhere in the Gamesley area. Following an audit of suitable sites Roman Gardens was chosen as the preferred site.

The Council has been working with Gamesley Residents Association who are willing to take over the management of the site if planning permission is granted and a lease agreement can be finalised.

A provisional layout has been devised with room for up to 10 small plots. It is envisaged that when the site is handed over to Gamesley Residents Association their members would want to erect sheds, greenhouses, poly-tunnels and other structures and features to facilitate the site's use as an allotment. The intention is that such development will be controlled by the terms of the allotment constitution and rules and by any planning conditions applied to this application.

Biodiversity & Trees

Most of the proposed site is regularly mown amenity grassland and therefore there are no anticipated negative impacts on biodiversity of the area. The use of the land for allotments is likely to introduce new habitats and species.

Some of the existing standard trees to the east of the proposed site would need to be removed to facilitate the creation of the allotments and the proposal is to transplant these to other sites in the locality.

Use of the Allotments

The use of the allotments is described within the draft Management Agreement and Rules for the site (copy appended).

Specific rules set out that the site is to be used for horticulture and gardening.

In particular, rules are included which define the type of structures, materials and designs, which are to be permitted (subject to planning approval) on the site.

Transport Issues

As part of the draft Management Agreement a majority of allotment tenants (80%) must live within 1 mile of the allotment site, therefore encouraging walking to the site.

The allotments will generate some additional traffic during their construction phase but following this it is anticipated that the necessity to use vehicles will be minimal.

There is some roadside parking on Melandra Castle Road and the nearby car park for Melandra Castle Roman Fort is underused and could serve as an alternative parking area.

Under the terms of the Management Agreement, control of access to the site will become the responsibility of the Gamesley Residents Association.

Proposed site layout

The provision of allotments dates back to the Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908 which placed a duty on local authorities to provide sufficient allotments, according to demand. Allotments sizes were traditionally based on the area of land needed to cultivate sufficient food for a family of four for one year. This was assessed as an area of 10 square rods, equal to 253m^2.

Many councils report that the traditional 10 square rod allotment is too large for modern requirements and they have divided their plots to provide twice the number of 5 square rod allotments, each equal to 126.5m^2.

The proposed site layout shown in drawing no. 1727/1b provides the maximum number of allotments possible at the Gamesley site whilst addressing specific site issues.

The layout provides 10 allotment plots of various sizes, from 98m2 to 138m2, and is designed to compliment the existing layout of the Community Gardens.

The existing footpaths and decorative features are not affected by the proposed layout and it is hoped that the development of allotments may encourage increased use of the public (southern) area of the site.

The existing standard trees in the eastern part of the site will be transplanted to other local sites.

There is a public sewer passing through the site at a depth of 2.8m and whilst the sewer will not be affected by the allotment development, the water company retains the right to access to the sewer for maintenance and renewal purposes. Given that access to this section of the sewer can be gained via manholes outside the site, there is little likelihood of disturbance of the site for sewer works.

Summary

The development of the Gamesley site will help to address the demand for allotments in the Glossopdale area whilst tidying up an under-used area of Council land. The site is already allocated for community use and the development of public allotments compliments this.

The use of a Management Agreement will ensure that the allotments are managed in a standardised, controlled manner and in accordance with the terms of any planning conditions applied to this application.