

**4/03550/15/FUL - RETENTION OF SMALL STORAGE CONTAINER ON RECREATION GROUND..  
RECREATION GROUND, MORTIMER HILL, TRING, HP23 5JU.  
APPLICANT: MR CHRIS PRICE.**

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[Case Officer - Tass Amlak]

### **Summary**

The application is recommended for approval. The proposal is for the retention of a container for storage purposes on the recreation ground. Overall it is considered that the proposed development will have no significant impact on the character and appearance of the designated open land. In addition to this the proposal is not considered to result in significant harm to the residential amenities of the neighbouring properties.

### **Site Description**

This site is part of Mortimer Hill Recreation Ground located on Mortimer Hill, Tring. The site falls within an area designated as Open Land.

### **Proposal**

Retention of a small container for storage purposes on the recreation ground.

### Relevant history

4/01487/10/FU RETENTION OF SMALL STORAGE CONTAINER  
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Granted

4/00995/05/FU RETURN SURFACE TO ORIGINAL GROUND CONDITIONS WITH  
L IMPROVEMENTS

Granted  
20/06/2005

4/01884/99/4 REPLACEMENT BRICK STOREHOUSE

Granted  
21/03/2000

### **Referral to Committee**

The application is referred to the Development Control Committee due to the development being located on Council owned land.

### Adopted Core Strategy

CS4,CS12 and CS23

Saved Policies of the DBLP 1991-2011

Policy 116

## **Constraints**

Open Land

## **Representations**

### Tring Town Council

Tring Town Council has no objection to this application

### 5 The Meads

I should like to enter an Appeal against this seemingly retrospective application for planning permission.

The Appeal in no way reflects on the work undertaken by Tring Tornados, nor is it suggested that they have acted in an inappropriate manner. The issue lay with the Estate Department of Dacorum Borough Council and their apparent lack of understanding of their responsibilities.

This leads to the view that this whole project has not been properly assessed by those responsible before allowing the siting of this container. It is suggested that there has been no consideration given to alternatives on offer prior to agreeing the instatement of this football pitch, it has not taken account of any Health & Safety issue, nor has it considered the impact on Public Order offences. Ever increasing in this day and age of cut backs and austerity it has not considered the additional cost implications to the Boroughs finances such approval has had to the detriment of the whole of the Council tax payers it is supposed to represent. Finally no assessment appears to have been made on the attraction such an installation readily affords those prone to acts of vandalism.

The recreation ground was utilised for many, many years for the purpose of football at the week-ends. In the fifty years I have lived in Tring there has never previously been perceived to be a need for such a structure to appear in this particular recreation ground as now proposed. In itself it is unsightly.

A football pitch has not been installed or maintained by Dacorum on this site for a number of years. Prior to its cessation when used regularly, within Tring school which lies adjacent to the field accessed by a gate from the field, are two similar metal containers operated by Dacorum Sports centre. These have provided changing facilities for players and are both equipped with toilet facilities and it is believed a shower. Currently used for storage.

These containers were used for many, many years by teams playing on the recreation ground. In addition to the facilities within the containers, Tring Sports centre itself also has a number of amenities which have previously been used in addition by players.

The facilities in the current proposal whilst described as for storage lack such an all important facilities and the containers within the school site therefore appear to offer a much better all round solution.

Those participating are involved for a minimum of a two hour session within the recreation ground and as has already been observed what are considered to be Public Order offences have occurred by both those taking part and the spectators in the boundary hedgerows. Unfortunately too whilst a rare occurrence, there has been a case of human excrement being deposited behind the recently installed container. Whilst it is not suggested the owners of the container were responsible, such an incident did not occur prior to its appearance and installation. Oh the joys of walking the dog!! These actions are both anti-social and in contravention I believe of the Public Order Act. Use of the school containers would reduce this possibility occurring.

On the subject of vandalism, since its September installation on at least two occasions the container has been subject two acts of vandalism which have left its side very unsightly and badly dented. It is suspected that youths have been attempting to scale the walls for access to the roof. It is only a matter of time before the dreaded graffiti appears. This opportunity did not exist before.

None of the above takes account of the additional financial resources such a reinstatement of the pitch has caused. It might not be immediately obvious but the actual grass pitch area and only the pitch area is cut at more frequent intervals than the remaining areas of the field. This takes Council labour resources and transportation of equipment. At the beginning of the season, the pitch has to be 'set-up- and throughout the white lining takes place at again regular intervals; to achieve both processes take labour resources and require transportation of equipment.

A far more cost effective and sensible approach to this whole issue of containers, toilets, additional grass cutting and white lining is as follows.

Use Pound Meadow. For many years Pound Meadow boasted two full size football pitches. The one nearer the town fell into disuse some time ago although one of the original steel goal posts remains in situ. Use this area for Tring Tornadoes and not the Mortimer Hill recreation ground.

The advantages of this are many. This meadow has its own purpose built sports pavilion with full facilities including toilets. It is submitted that not only would there be an improvement in the Labour element involved in the additional grass cutting and white linings at two sites, Pound Meadow and Mortimer Hill recreation ground, but a reduction in transportation costs would also be achieved. Instead of being in two separate locations, by a combination on one site the additional grass cutting and white lining could be undertaken at one and the same time. This is not a front line service and any savings which could be made should be made for the benefit of the whole community. It is irresponsible to do otherwise.

If the Tornadoes insist on their separate storage, then the rear of the pavilion would appear to offer the ideal solution leaving the recreation ground free of this unsightly structure.

There is more near-by parking available.

Finally I feel the Council may be seen to albeit unwittingly, become involved in the sensitive area of discrimination if approval is given for the permanent siting of this container.

The recreation land at Mortimer Hill recreation ground is not owned by but is leased by Dacorum Council from Tring Charities who also own and operate the adjoining allotments. This aspect also seems to have been from the consideration by those within the Estates Department.

Tring Charities have a very clear policy of not allowing any sheds, green houses or storage facilities within the allotment area. I think if this storage container is allowed to remain, it could quite easily be seen as discriminatory to the allotment holders who are barred from having an equally needed storage facility.

There are much more suitable amenities, and cost effective solutions on offer than to approve the use of this proposed container.

Finally I would draw attention to the lack of display to the public of the normal planning 'Orange Notice. Despite first raising this on the 11th January and again on the 29th January, nothing whatsoever has been received from any persons within the Planning Department.

An acknowledgement of this Appeal would be welcomed.

### **Considerations**

The site lies in the Urban Area of Tring in an area designated as Open Land. Policy CS4 supports the provision of social and community uses. Policy CS12 seeks to ensure quality of design.

In open land areas the primary planning purpose is to maintain the generally open character. Saved Policy 116 of the DBLP 1991-2011 supports the provision of ancillary buildings and works subject to the consideration of the impact on the open land setting/character and integrity of the area.

Policy CS23 generally supports the provision and improvement of community facilities. It is considered that existing storage container is acceptable in principle and would not have a significant impact on the character/setting and integrity of this area of designated open land.

### Effect on Streetscene

The storage container is not be visible from the highway and thus will have no impact on the street scene as such. However, its appearance will be visible to the general public using the recreation ground and thus it is important to minimise its impact in terms of appearance.

The storage container has been painted green in an attempt to help it assimilate into its surroundings and has no significant impact. The requirement for secure storage on the site is supported in principle and given that the container is of a reasonable scale and well situated within the site to reduce its prominence, it is not considered to have an adverse impact on the sites openness.

Concerns have been raised in relation to the potential of vandalism. It is true to say the building will be unoccupied for large periods and the potential for vandalism does exist.

That is why the building's materials are robust with steel doors and no windows. However just because vandalism exists is not a reason to not improve facilities for the benefit of the community. Comments are awaited from the Crime Prevention officer regarding the concerns raised.

#### Effect on Amenity of Neighbours

The storage container is set away from the rear gardens of the neighbouring properties 10-12 Brookfield Close and as such the proposal is not considered to be harmful to the amenities of these neighbouring properties.

#### **Conclusions**

The proposed development is acceptable and would support the recreational/sporting use of this area of open land. The proposal would not have an adverse impact on the appearance of the street scene or the character and appearance of this area of designated open land. There would be no significant adverse impacts on neighbouring properties. In addition, the proposal would not have an impact on highway and pedestrian safety. The proposal is therefore in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, Policies CS4, CS12, CS23 of the Core Strategy and Policy 116 of the saved DBLP 1991-2011.

**RECOMMENDATION** - That planning permission be **GRANTED** for the reasons referred to above and subject to the following conditions:

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

Reason: To comply with the requirements of Section 91 (1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 (1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans/documents:**

**Site Photos**  
**Location Plan**

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

#### NOTE 1: ARTICLE 35 STATEMENT

Planning permission has been granted for this proposal. Discussion with the applicant to seek an acceptable solution was not necessary in this instance.

The Council has therefore acted pro-actively in line with the requirements of the Framework (paragraphs 186 and 187) and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England)

(Amendment No. 2) Order 2015.