

<b>REFERENCE NUMBER:</b> 24/501322/FULL		
<b>APPLICATION PROPOSAL:</b> Removal and replacement of an existing storage container		
<b>ADDRESS:</b> Container Cobtree Manor Park Forstal Road Aylesford Kent		
<b>RECOMMENDATION:</b> <b>GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION subject to conditions.</b>		
<b>SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION:</b> The proposed development is acceptable regarding the relevant provisions of the Development Plan, the NPPF and all other material considerations such as are relevant.		
<b>REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE:</b> Maidstone Borough Council is the applicant.		
<b>WARD:</b> Boxley	<b>PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL:</b> Boxley	<b>APPLICANT:</b> Ms. D. Turner <b>AGENT:</b> Andrew Wells Planning & Design
<b>CASE OFFICER:</b> Gautham Jayakumar	<b>VALIDATION DATE:</b> 24/04/24	<b>DECISION DUE DATE:</b> 27/06/24 (EOT)
<b>ADVERTISED AS A DEPARTURE:</b> No		

### **Relevant Planning History**

12/1644: Installation of a new play area as shown on site Location Plans and Block Plans received 6th September 2012, Proposed Elevations numbered A 1/1 received 13th September 2012, Design and Access Statement and Application Form received 6th September 2012.  
Permitted. 01/11/2012

06/2266: Formation of a new independent access to the existing disabled toilet facility separating the public toilet from the food kiosk entrance lobby as shown on drawings numbered 7612 / 1a and 1b, site plan and design and access statement received on 13/12/06.  
Permitted. 01/02/2007

74/0496: Use of land as leisure/recreation area as amended by agents memorandum of 17/10/75, by memorandum of 12/5/76 and attached layout no. 5, by drawing received on 30/9/76 and by memorandum of 16/5/77.  
Permitted. 08/09/1977

### **Pre-application advice**

23/504360/PAMEET: Pre - Application Telephone/Office Meeting - To replace container in disrepair with a new container. Closed.

## **MAIN REPORT**

### **1. DESCRIPTION OF SITE**

1.01 The application site lies within the countryside and consists of public park land, known as Cobtree Manor Park, on the east side of the village of Aylesford. The park is positioned to the north side of Forstal Road, with its main entrance and car park accessed directly off the highway.

- 1.02 An existing storage container is located within the grounds of the park, to the west of the main entrance car park area, behind the park's Visitor Centre. This storage container would be removed in favour of the proposed. The storage container is placed on mowed grassland and surrounded by mature trees.
- 1.03 The existing storage container is a green, metal shipping container, with a single, pedestrian entrance door having been fitted into its east elevation, facing the car park. The original, full-height, metal double doors, on the north elevation, are secured by padlock. An electrical power supply has been installed to service the unit.

## 2. PROPOSAL

- 2.01 The proposal relates to the replacement of the existing storage container within Cobtree Manor Park with a new storage container at the same location as existing.
- 2.02 The existing unit is proposed to be replaced due to corrosion which has led to water seeping through into the unit (Image 1). The new unit will be used as a storage space for the Maidstone Council's Park Rangers, similar to the previous unit before the corrosion began and the container became unusable. The previous unit was also used as part office; however, the new unit would only be used for storage.



*Image 1: Visible corrosion on the existing unit.*

- 2.03 The proposed new container will be positioned in the same location and oriented in the same direction as the existing unit and will be exactly the same size and height. Double pedestrian doors will be located on the east elevation, with full height doors on the north elevation. The existing electrical power supply will be retained and used to service the new container.
- 2.04 The new container will be clad with horizontal, rough-sawn, natural timber planks, with dark grey metal, vandal-proof, double pedestrian doors on its east elevation and full-height timber clad doors on the north elevation (Image 2).

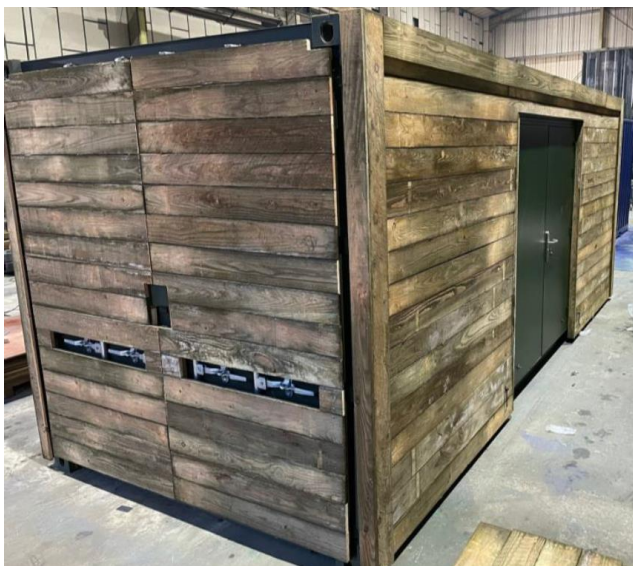


Image 2: Design and materials of the proposed container unit.

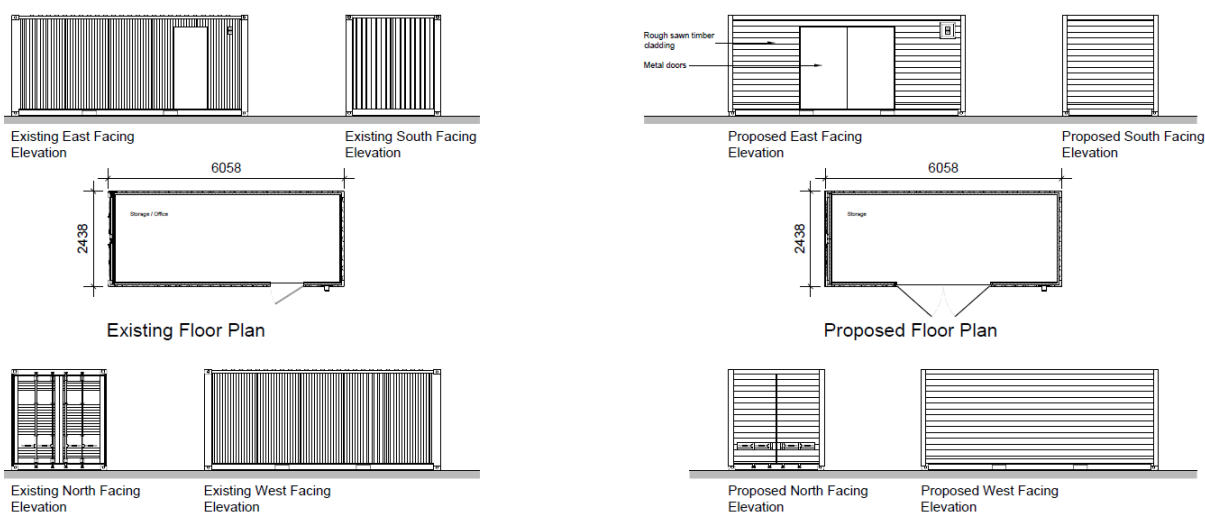


Image 3: Comparison between existing and proposed container

### 3. POLICY AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Maidstone Borough Local Plan Review (2021 – 2038)  
Policy LPRSP9 – Development in the Countryside  
Policy LPRSP15 – Principles of Good Design  
Policy LPRQ&D4 – Design principles in the countryside

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):  
National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG):

### 4. LOCAL REPRESENTATIONS

#### Local Residents:

4.01 No comments or objections from consulted neighbours or local residents.

## 5. CONSULTATIONS

### Parish Council

Boxley Parish Council were consulted; however, did not provide any comments.

### Network Rail Southern

Commented that having reviewed the application they had no comments to make on it.

### KCC Minerals

Commented that they had no land-won minerals or waste management capacity safeguarding objections or comments to make regarding this application.

## 6. APPRAISAL

6.01 The key issues are:

- Impact on character and appearance of the area
- Other

### **Character and Appearance**

6.02 The proposal relates to the replacement of an existing container unit with a new container unit which is of the same dimensions, form, at the same location and orientation as the existing unit. The only visual difference between the existing and the proposed would be its appearance due to the change of material.

6.03 The proposed container unit would be clad with horizontal, rough-sawn, natural timber planks which would pose a similar appearance to the existing material used in the Visitor Centre. The change in material from existing green metal to timber cladding would significantly improve the visual quality of the unit as the new materials would match the materials of the Visitor centre and be in keeping with the character and appearance of the area.

6.04 The proposal would also replace the existing container which is unsightly and somewhat deteriorated with a container that would appear more natural in appearance and appropriate within its surroundings.

6.05 Considering that the scale, form and location of the unit would be same as the existing container with the visual quality improved, the proposal would be acceptable in terms of its impact on the character and appearance of the area.

### **Other Matters**

6.06 The use of the new container would be ancillary to the use of the wider site as public open space.

6.07 Within the pre-application advise letter the case officer had recommended the incorporation of ecological enhancement measures such as bug hotels, bird boxes etc. to be placed upon the container or on the land surrounding it. The submitted plans do not contain any ecological enhancements; therefore, a condition will be imposed requiring ecological enhancements to be provided to compensate for the operational loss of the development.

6.08 The applicant has identified that in relation to the proposal, no underground works would be carried out and the existing electrical supply will be retained for the new

container. Considering this, I am satisfied that no harm would be caused by the proposal on nearby trees.

## **PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY**

Due regard has been had to the Public Sector Equality Duty, as set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. It is considered that the application proposals would not undermine objectives of the Duty.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

- 7.01 To summarise, the proposed replacement container would be an improvement on the existing container unit in terms of visual quality and better associate with the Visitor Centre due to the materials being proposed. The proposal would not lead to harm to the landscape or surrounding trees.
- 7.02 Overall, the proposed development is considered to accord with the current policy and guidance.

## **8. RECOMMENDATION**

### **GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION subject to the following conditions**

with delegated powers to the Head of Planning and Development to be able to settle or amend any necessary planning conditions and/or informatives in line with the matters set out in the recommendation and as resolved by the Planning Committee:

#### **CONDITIONS:**

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission;  
  
Reason: In accordance with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:  
  
Drawing no. PL 759 01 Proposed Site Plan  
  
Drawing no. PL 759 03 Rev A Existing And Proposed Plans And Elevations  
  
Application Form  
  
All received on 25 Mar 2024  
  
Reason: To clarify which plans have been approved.
- 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the container hereby permitted shall be as indicated on the approved Application Form;  
  
Reason: To ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development.
- 4) The use of the container hereby approved shall not commence until details of a scheme for the enhancement of ecology on the site have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall consist of the enhancement of ecology through the provision within the site curtilage such as bird boxes, bat boxes, bug hotels, log piles, wildflower planting and hedgehog corridors. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details

prior to first use of the container and all features shall be maintained and retained thereafter.

Reason: To enhance the ecology and biodiversity on the site in the future.

NB: For full details of all papers submitted with this application please refer to the relevant Public Access pages on the council's website.