

The information, recommendations and advice contained in this report are correct as at the date of preparation, which is more than two weeks in advance of the Committee meeting. Because of these time constraints some reports may have been prepared in advance of the final date given for consultee responses or neighbour comment. Any changes or necessary updates to the report will be made orally at the Committee meeting.

Case Officer	Katie Ingram
Application No.	20/00440/RBCRG3
Date Valid	13th August 2020
Expiry date of consultations	15th September 2020
Proposal	Erection of a 'Big Rig' outdoor gym frame near playground and removal of Chestnut Tree
Address	<b>Manor Park Church Hill Aldershot Hampshire</b>
Ward	Manor Park
Applicant	Martin Sterio, Democracy and Community, Rushmoor Borough Council
Recommendation	<b>GRANT</b>

### **Description**

Manor Park is located 600m south of Aldershot Town Centre and is south of the High Street (A232) and comprises 9 hectares of open space with land levels rising up from the High Street to the south western boundary. It is bound by steel railings, and by the High Street to the north east, Church Hill to the south east, Campbell Fields to the south west and St Michaels Road the north west. Most trees are on the perimeter screening it from the street. In the eastern corner of the park is the main pedestrian entrance where there is also the children's adventure playground, the public toilets and some picnic tables. Other facilities include a duck pond to the north, a skate park in the middle of the park, and three Listed Buildings comprising the early 18<sup>th</sup> Century Manor House and stable building and St Michael's Parish Church in the southern corner. The park is in the Manor Park Conservation Area and is designated as an area of Open Space in the Local Plan Policies Map (2019).

The application is seeking planning permission to erect a multi-gym frame which would have a footprint of 5.8m x 7.3m and a maximum height of 2.75m. It would have 7 pieces of fixed outdoor gym equipment around a central monkey bar. It would be of galvanised steel with dark green and grey powder coated paint and surface treatment would be green grass carpeting. It would be sited 30m from the main entrance gate, and 14m west of the children's playground. A chestnut tree would have to be removed as a result of the installation.

## Consultee Responses

Conservation Team	Objection to materials not in keeping with the Conservation Area, equipment should be located on the eastern side of the footpath as the footpath is an historical route [ <i>Officer note: the effect on the conservation area is considered to be limited and outweighed by the public benefit of the enhanced provision of facilities for recreation and physical activity</i> ]
HCC Highways Development Planning	Raises no objection
Environmental Health	Raises no objection
Arboricultural Officer	Raises no objection to removal of tree as it is a Category U tree

## Neighbours notified

In addition to posting two site notices, 318 individual letters of notification were sent to properties surrounding Manor Park.

## Neighbour comments

Ten representations were received objecting to the scheme on the following grounds:

### *Parking*

- Will result in an increase in traffic which will negatively impact residents of Church Hill where parking is a major problem especially on warm days
- Parking in Church Hill is not for residents only whilst it is in St Michael's Road
- There will be no additional parking made available
- There has been considerable increase in cars/visitors/noise driving to manor park until late at night recently
- There will be noticeable increase in parking on the paving by the entrance. Parking here should not be allowed

### *Removal of Tree*

- Can the health of the tree be verified by an expert? [*Officer note: an arboricultural study was subsequently submitted and made publicly available*]
- The tree provides shade and picnics when using the playground
- The tree is in good health and with some care could thrive. The facility should be moved to be one side of it. I support the installation of the gym frame.

### *Impact on amenity*

- Will result in more rubbish, will more bins be installed?
- The area is open and noise will be an issue. Will there be noise buffering for residents of High Street and Church Hill such as that used around the skate park?
- The skate park already generates enough problems such as noise, litter and other disturbances
- This will devalue local properties [*Officer note: this is not a matter material to the determination of a planning application*]

### *Anti-social behaviour*

- Too many youths will hang about it which is already a problem in the skate park
- The unit is likely to become a magnet for groups meeting after dark, are any measures being taken to avoid this?
- There is a major problem with violence in Aldershot and we should be doing more to keep the park safe

### *Other*

- The park should not have any more facilities – there are enough already
- The site is not suitable in terms of safeguarding next to the playground and too many adults will use the gym for reasons other than keeping fit
- Will it be free?
- Has the area near Campbell Fields been considered?

## **Policy and determining issues**

The site is a designated area of Open Space in the Local Plan Policies Map and is within the built-up area of Aldershot, and is in the Manor Park Conservation Area. As such Policies SS2 (Spatial Strategy), IN1 (Infrastructure and Community Facilities), IN2 (Transport), HE1 (Heritage), HE1 (Heritage), HE3 (Development within or adjoining a Conservation Area), DE1 (Design in the Built Environment), DE6 (Open Space, Sport and Recreation), DE10 (Pollution), NE2 (Green Infrastructure), NE3 (Trees and Landscaping) and NE4 (Biodiversity) of the Rushmoor Local Plan (2019) are relevant to this application. Also of relevance in the Rushmoor Car and Cycle Parking SPD and national policy in the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) (NPPF).

The main determining issues are the principle of development, impact on the character and appearance of the area with regard to location in Conservation Area, impact on neighbouring amenity, highways and parking considerations, impact on trees and drainage.

## **Commentary**

Principle of development –

Manor Park is designated as an area of Open Space and Policy DE6 (Open Space, Sport and Recreation) of the Local Plan states that ‘the Council will provide high quality and accessible open space and sports facilities to meet a wide range of recreation needs, and development will not be permitted on areas of open space unless the development is for sports and recreation provision the need for which clearly outweighs the loss’.

Paragraph 96 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) (NPPF) states that ‘access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities. Information gained from assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities should be used to determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is needed’.

The Rushmoor Borough Council Healthy Weights Audit (2018) identified the importance of infrastructure in creating healthy communities and the installation of this unit is aligned to the outcomes of that audit, and the Deprivation Strategy and Action Plan which focus on encouraging healthy and green lifestyles and creating healthier and stronger communities and is supported by Policy LN5 (Neighbourhood Deprivation Strategy) of the Local Plan (2019).

Policy IN1 (Infrastructure and Community Facilities) states that development should maximise the efficiency of existing infrastructure and be accessible to all and compatible with the character and needs of the local community.

The gym-frame is a versatile piece of equipment which can provide creative all-body workouts from beginners to advanced users. The location is designed to encourage users of all ages to participate in outdoor recreation and weight bearing exercise, and to encourage interaction in the community. It is hoped that parents and carers whose children may be using the playground will also participate.

The gym frame will be clustered with existing facilities close to the entrance in an accessible location and will have the least impact on the main areas of open space. The surface would be permeable and no separate drainage system would be required.

It is therefore considered that the proposal complies with Policy DE6 and IN2 and the principle of the development in this location is acceptable subject to compliance with other relevant development control criteria.

### **Impact on character and appearance of the area, with regard to the site's location in the Manor Park Conservation Area, and impact on trees –**

Before the arrival of the military in the nineteenth century, the area around Manor Park was the early settlement of Aldershot, and the park was part of the Manor House estate. The heritage significance of the Conservation Area mostly arises from this association and the retained open space. Listed Buildings inside the Conservation Area include the early 18<sup>th</sup> Century Manor House and stables buildings, and St Michaels Parish Church. The houses on Church Hill and nos. 334 to 362 on the High Street are also within the Conservation Area.

The Conservation Officer has raised concerns regarding the siting of the frame on the following grounds:

*'The proposed gym pod is of a standard gym design, as opposed a natural form, such as timber. The location is close to existing development within the park; however it is located within the open parkland, on the west side of the path. This path is an historic route and at present development in this area is located to the east of it. This proposal is located to the west in what is open parkland. The principle of an outdoor gym is welcomed, the design could be altered to accommodate a more natural form, in keeping with the parkland and the location should be relocated to the east of the path'.*

The frame would be clustered with other park facilities, 14m west of an adventure playground, 13m south of the toilet block and next to some picnic tables. It would have a maximum height of 2.7m, and would not be taller than the climbing frame. At its furthest point it would be 20m west of the path, which in the context of the site, is not considered to be a significant encroachment into the open space when considering the public benefit of the enhanced provision of recreation facilities. Other facilities on the western side of the path include picnic tables and four pieces of existing gym equipment.

Outside the park, the frame would only be visible from the vantage point at the junction of Ash Road (A323) and Church Hill looking through the main entrance gate, but as the frame is a metal, open structure with a specifically chosen muted paint colour of dark green its impact on views of open space into the park from here is considered to be acceptable.

The frame is in a location where you would expect it to be sited and it would increase the activity and vitality level in the park, also an important element of its character. It is considered that on balance the frame would have an acceptable impact on the interest and character of the Manor Park Conservation Area when viewed with the public benefit it would also afford.

The frame would result in the removal of a stand-alone 10m high Chestnut Tree. An arboricultural impact assessment has stated that the tree is in poor health with an estimated lifespan of less than 10 years and its contribution to amenity is therefore not so great to warrant its retention or the repositioning of the gym frame. The Council's arboricultural officer has reviewed the report and raised no objection. There are other mature trees in relative proximity to the application site providing visual amenity and shade. The report recommends the replanting of another tree, and a condition is recommended that the species and location are confirmed in writing prior to the first use of the frame.

It is therefore considered that the proposed development is of an appropriate scale and design which would not detract from the open character of Manor Park and would not fail to preserve the special interest of the Manor Park Conservation Area and in this regard complies with Policies HE1, HE3 and DE1 of the Rushmoor Local Plan (2019).

#### **Impact on neighbouring amenity -**

The gym frame has 7 fixed stations and can be used by a maximum of 15 people at any one time. It is considered that the level of noise arising from users of the frame would not be any higher than the noise created from the existing playground activity. The nearest residential receiver is 65m on Church Hill and High Street.

It is considered that the proposed development would have an acceptable impact on neighbouring amenity by way of noise and disturbance and in this regard the application complies with Policy DE1 and DE10 of the Local Plan (2019).

#### **Parking and highways considerations –**

The scale of the frame is such that it is not considered it would generate significantly more vehicle movements than the existing facilities. The surrounding highway network is well protected from obstructive parking by traffic regulation orders and the park is sited in a relatively central location 650m from Aldershot bus and train station and the town centre. The County Highway Authority have reviewed the application and are satisfied that it would not result in a severe detrimental impact on highway safety or operation. The application would therefore have an acceptable impact on pedestrian and highway safety and would comply with Policy IN2 of the Rushmoor Local Plan (2019) in this regard.

#### **Conclusions –**

The principle of development in the designated Open Space is acceptable and it would have an acceptable impact on the character and special interest of Manor Park and the Conservation Area, on neighbouring amenity and highway safety and would accord with Policies IN1, IN2, HE1, HE3, DE1, DE6, NE2 and NE3 of the Rushmoor Local Plan (2019), the adopted Car and Cycle Parking Standard and the relevant policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (2019).

## Full Recommendation –

**GRANT** planning permission subject to the following conditions and informatives:

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

Reason - As required by 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 permission hereby granted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved drawings:

Location Plan scale 1:1250 Block Plan scale 1:500 HK 8716 00 Elevation Plan  
HK 8716 01 Elevation Plan

Reason - To ensure the development is implemented in accordance with the permission granted

- 3 External materials of the frame will be in accordance with the details in the submitted Design and Access Statement.

Reason - To ensure satisfactory external appearance and impact on the Conservation Area.

- 4 Prior to first occupation or use of the development hereby approved a planting scheme incorporating location and species of replacement tree as suggested in the Arboricultural Report dated 31.08.20 shall be first submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason - To ensure the development makes an adequate contribution to visual amenity.\*

- 5 All planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding season following the occupation of the buildings or the practical completion of the development, whichever is the sooner and shall be so retained.

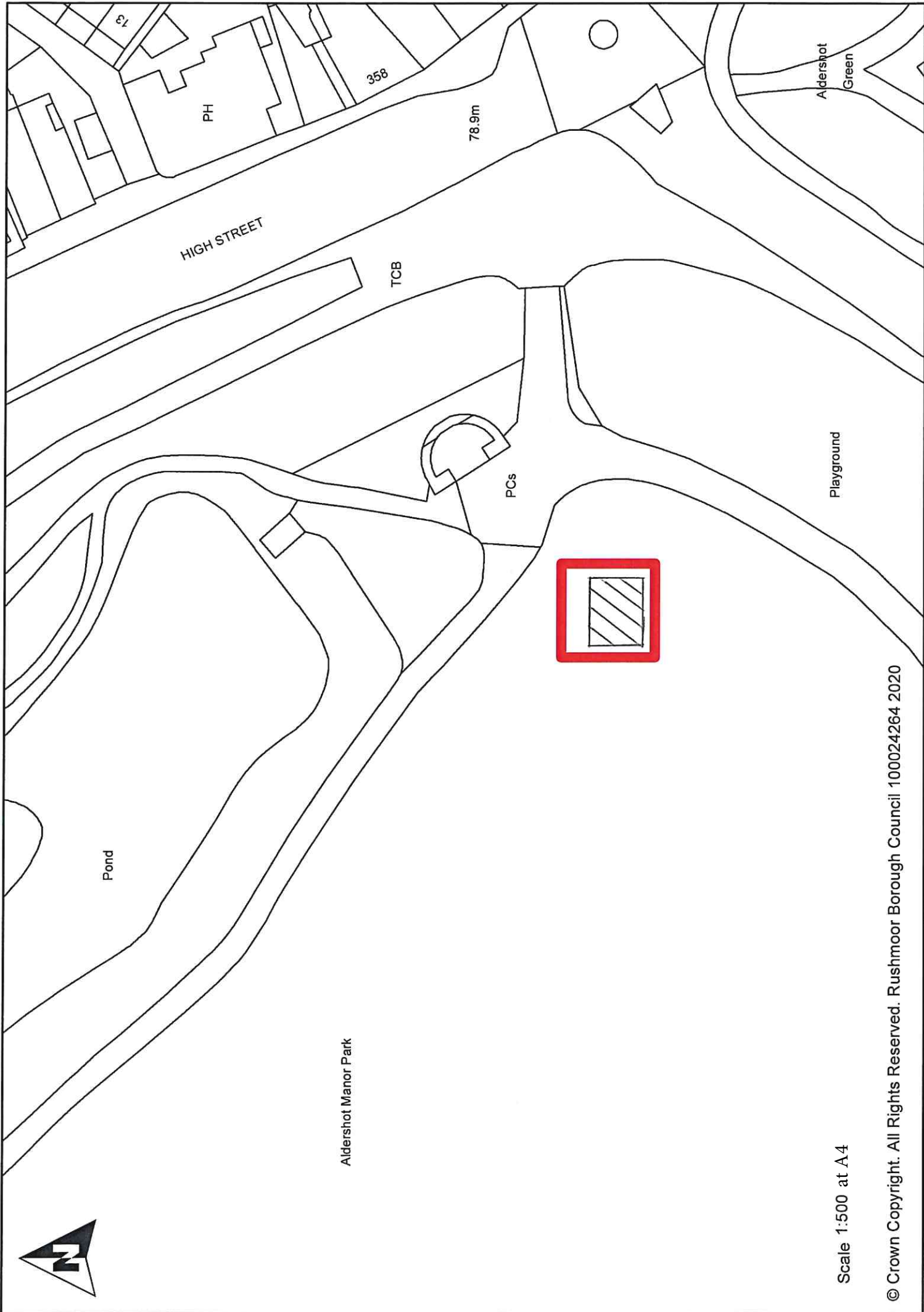
Reason -To ensure the development makes an adequate contribution to visual amenity.

## INFORMATIVES

- 1 **INFORMATIVE - REASONS FOR APPROVAL-** The Council has granted permission because the principle of development in the designated Open Space is acceptable and the development would have an acceptable impact on the character and special interest of Manor Park and the Conservation Area, on neighbouring amenity and highway safety and would accord with Policies IN1, IN2, HE1, HE3, DE1, DE6, NE2 and NE3 of the Rushmoor Local Plan (2019), the adopted Car and Cycle Parking Standards and the relevant policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (2019).

It is therefore considered that subject to compliance with the attached conditions, and taking into account all other material planning considerations, including the provisions of the development plan, the proposal would be acceptable. This also includes a consideration of whether the decision to grant permission is compatible with the Human Rights Act 1998.

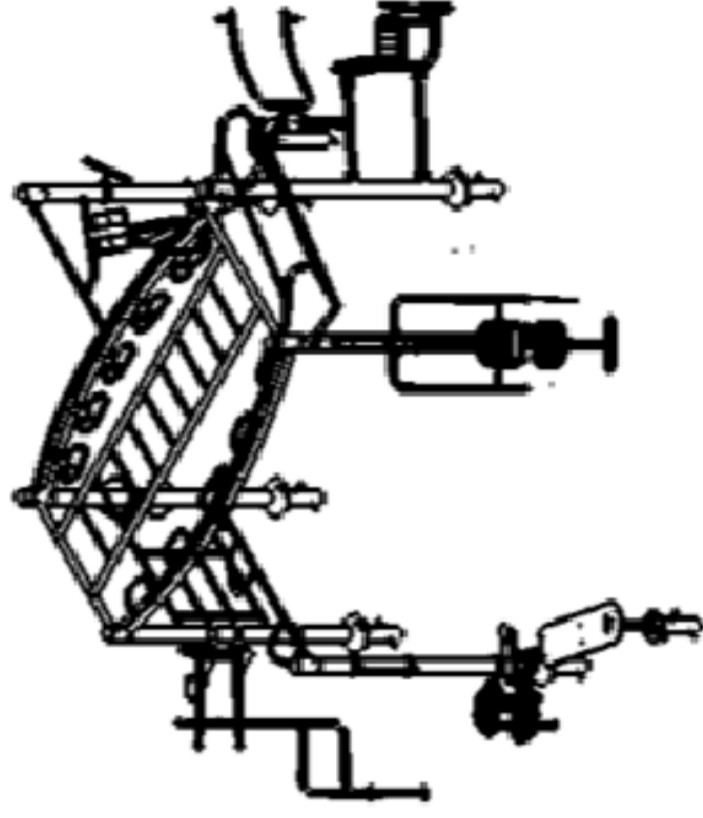
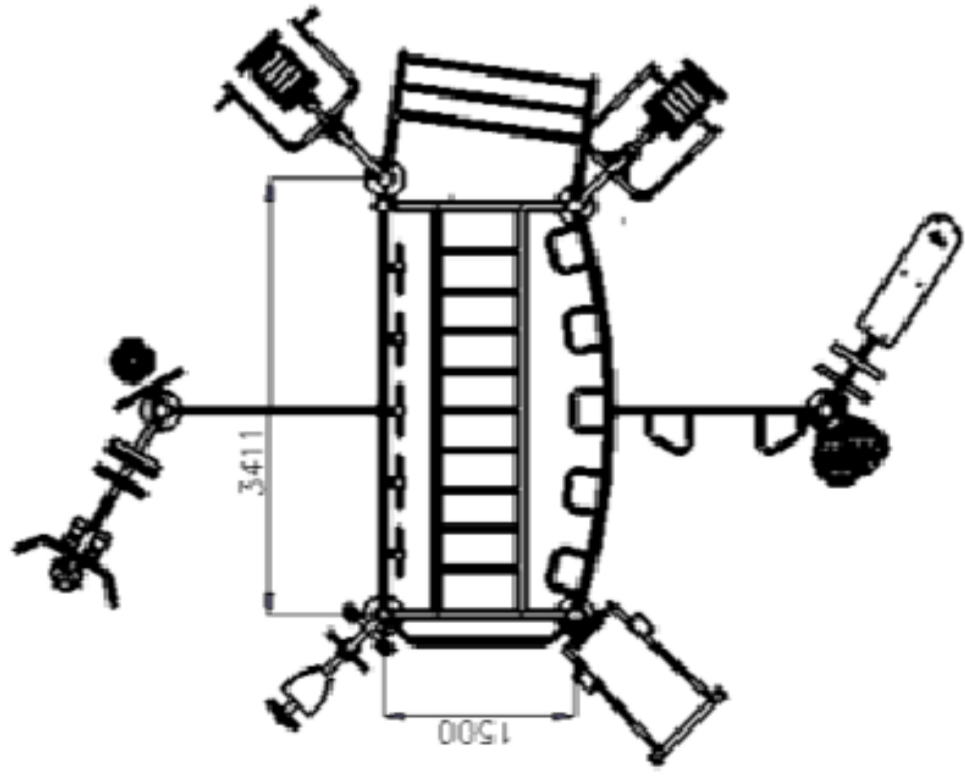
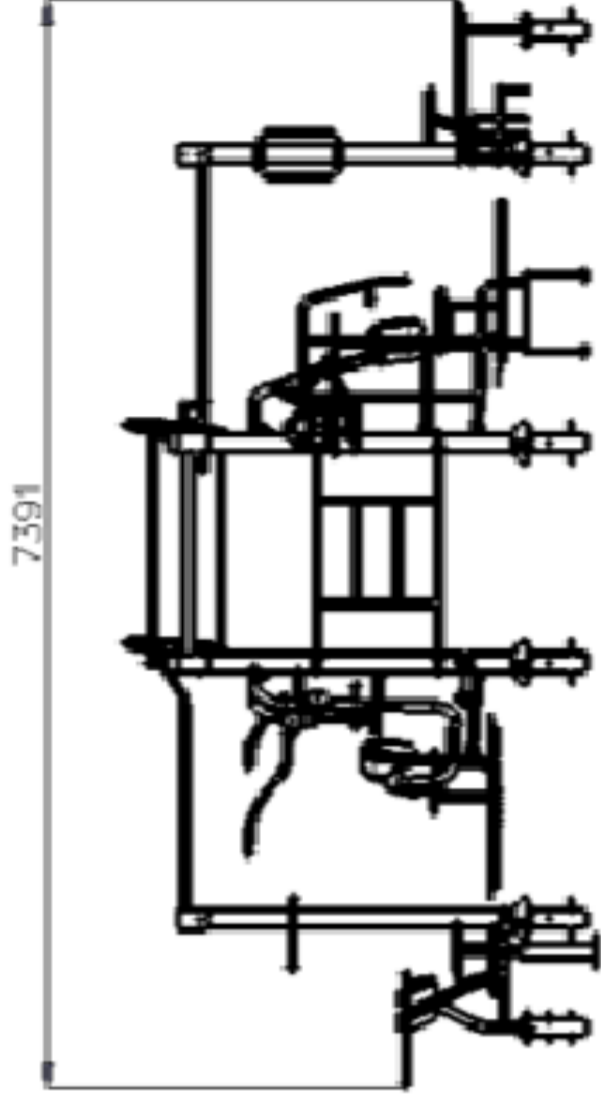
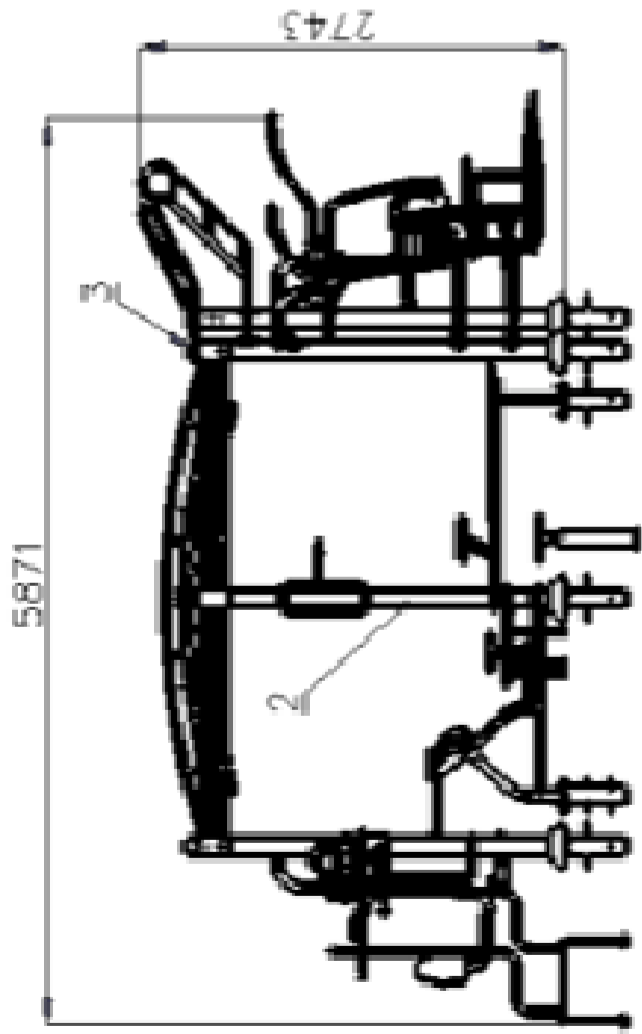
- 2 INFORMATIVE – The Local Planning Authority’s commitment to working with the applicants in a positive and proactive way is demonstrated by its offer of pre-application discussion to all, and assistance in the validation and determination of applications through the provision of clear guidance regarding necessary supporting information or amendments both before and after submission, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework.



Scale 1:500 at A4

© Crown Copyright. All Rights Reserved. Rushmoor Borough Council 100024264 2020





Big Rig	
Plans	
DRWG	HK-8716-00
REV	~