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Date: 24th October 2025

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Dear C

Town and Country Planning Act 1990

Proposed change of use of Gaer Road building to community facility (D2 use class), siting of storage container and associated works

Gaer Road, Newport, NP20 3HW

Planning Portal ref. PP-14431412

Asbri Planning is appointed as planning agent to Hedyn in respect of the above planning application for the proposed change of use of Gaer Road building to community facility (D2 use class), siting of storage container and associated works.

The planning application has been submitted via Planning Portal and the submission documents are listed below:

Document/ Drawing (reference where applicable)	Prepared by
Site Location Plan (LT2508.00.01)	LeTrucco Design
Planning application forms	Asbri Planning
Covering Letter	Asbri Planning
Biodiversity Enhancement and Green Infrastructure Statement	Asbri Planning
Existing Works (LT2508.04.01)	LeTrucco Design
Proposed Works (LT2508.04.02)	LeTrucco Design

In addition, the relevant fee of £460 has been paid to the Council via Planning Portal.

Background

'Men Sheds' are about social connections and friendship building through the pursuit of practical interests like making and mending. These sheds typically attract older men but all demographics are encouraged, with some even having younger members and women too. This due to them primarily being in place to combat the negative impacts of loneliness and isolation, particularly for older men who are less likely to have a network of friends to share personal concerns about health and personal worries They are typically empty offices, portable cabin's, warehouses and garages and also have an emphasis on community projects too.

The vacant building is located within a brownfield parcel of land, which is currently used within a car park. The building was originally categorised as a B2/B8 industrial/storage use, due to it being used as a garage and adjacent storage. It is understood that the site has not have been in use since 2010 as it was put forward to Hedyn (Newport City Homes at the time) for purchase. The purchase of the site from Newport City Council took place officially on the 1st of November 2024. This makes it an ideal location for a 'Men Shed' as it is currently redundant. The site has good transport links which is crucial, given the demographic which will be travelling to

the site will primarily be of retirement age. For those travelling by car, there is also adequate parking provision given the surrounding site's use as a car park.

Site Description

The existing building is a vacant garage building with former B2/B8 industrial/storage Use. It is located within a brownfield parcel of land which is used as a car park. It is within a primarily residential area with housing to the west along Gaer Park drive and to the north along Highfield Road. The residential nature of the area makes it an ideal and accessible location for the community use of the 'Men Shed'.

The site is located within the community of Gaer and within 2.25km of Newport City Centre which has an array of uses including retail, food and drink and community facilities. In terms of facilities within a walking distance of the site, these are as follows:

- Gaer Community Centre – 318m to the south east
- Church of St Martin in the Gaer – 260m to the south east
- Gaer Clinic – 115m to the north
- The coffee house – 320m to the north west
- Gaer Medical Centre – 160m to the south east
- Beau Belle Hairdressers – 320m to south
- The Gaer Stores – 320m to the south
- Londis – 320m to the north

In respect of public transport, the site is well connected with the Clinc bus stop being located 120m away along Gaer Road. This stop offers an array of regular services heading towards both Newport and Caerphilly.

Given its location with immediate access to ample facilities and public transport provision, the site lies in an inherently sustainable location.

A review of Natural Resources Wales' Flood Map for Planning indicates that the land to the east of the edge of the site falls within Flood Zone 2 for flooding by surface water and small watercourses. It should be emphasised however that the building itself and access is not within a flood zone.

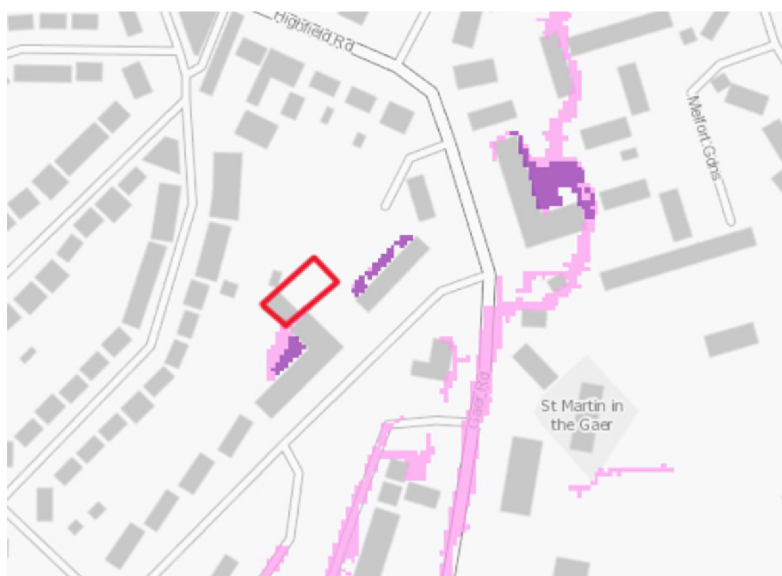


Figure 1: Flood Map for Planning

A review of the Coal Authority's Interactive Map shows the site is not located within a Coal Mining Area. The map should be used for indicative purposes only; however, it is likely that a Coal Mining Risk Assessment will not be required to accompany any future planning application at the site.

A review of Cadw's historical map confirms there are no Listed Buildings or Scheduled Monuments within the site boundary or within close approximation to the site. There are also no Registered Parks and Gardens, World Heritage Sites or Registered Historic Landscapes. The closest historical asset is a Registered Park and Garden 300m to the north of the site.

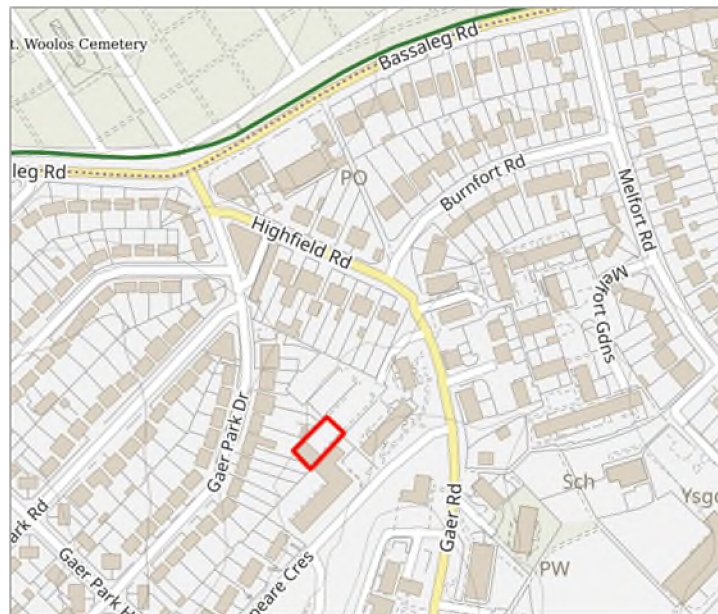


Figure 2: Cadw Historical Mapping

Following a review of both Ordnance Survey mapping and NCC Public Rights of Way Map, it can be evaluated that there are no public rights of way across or close by to the site.

Planning History

A review of NCC's planning application search found the below application of relevance to the site due to its close proximity:

Ref	Description	Decision	Date
20/0476	RETENTION AND COMPLETION OF SINGLE STOREY REAR EXTENSION AND CONSTRUCTION OF ASSOCIATED RAISED PATIO	Granted with Conditions	Thu 13 Aug 2020

Pre-application discussions



Figure 3: NCC Planning Application Search Map

A pre-application enquiry was sent to Newport Council via email on the 5th of August 2025. The enquiry was registered on the 15th of August and details of the case officer being C [REDACTED] and the reference [REDACTED] were received on the 27th of August. A pre-application meeting was held on the 7th of October with Asbri Planning, the applicants at Hedyn and the case officer [REDACTED]

The main points of the meeting surrounded compliance with Policy EM3 and highway's concerns regarding access to the site. Discussions were also had regarding the need for a Green Infrastructure Statement which is proportionate to the scheme. Given the small scale of the development, it was evaluated that only minor mitigation measures like the integration of bird and bat boxes would be necessary.

Proposals

The proposed development consists of a change of use from Use Class B2/B8 (Industrial/Storage Use) to a D2 Use Class (Assembly and Leisure) for the use of a 'Men Shed' of the building on Gaer Road. The internal layout of the building is set to remain the same, despite the change of the garages into menshed workshops. The new layout is set to provide 5 car parking spaces, a storage container for wood storage to the east of the building and possible planter locations for workers use. In terms of green infrastructure enhancement, one surface mounted bat box on the southern elevation is proposed, along with a surface mounted bird/swift box on the northeastern elevation.

The proposed 'Men Shed' is intended to be a space which promotes positive mental health by combatting loneliness and isolation. It is aimed at older men in particular as they are less likely to have a network of friends to share personal concerns about health and other worries.

Planning Policy Context

The planning policy framework for the determination of the change of use application is provided by the content and scope of National Planning Policy, which is contained within Future Wales (2040), the twelfth edition of Planning Policy Wales (PPW) and its associated Technical Advice Notes (TANs), together with the Local Planning Policy and its supplementary planning guidance.

Planning Policy Wales

Planning Policy Wales (PPW) Edition 12 was published in February 2024 and last updated in July 2024. The primary objective of PPW is to ensure that the planning system contributes towards the delivery of sustainable development and improves the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, as required by the Planning (Wales) Act 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Paragraph 4.4.1 relates to community facilities and states:

“Community buildings and spaces provide an important focus for sustaining communities and their well-being... Community facilities contribute to a sense of place which is important to the health, well-being and amenity of local communities and their existence is often a key element in creating viable and sustainable places.”

Technical Advice Notes

PPW is supported by 19 Technical Advice Notes (TANs) which provide more detailed guidance on a variety of issues. In respect of this application, the following TANs are considered relevant:

- Technical Advice Note 12: Design (2016)
- Technical Advice Note 18: Transport (2007)
- Technical Advice Note 23: Economic Development (2014)

National Development Framework: Future Wales – The National Plan 2040

The National Development Framework: Future Wales – the National Plan 2040 was published on 24th February 2021. ‘Future Wales’ sets out the Welsh Government’s strategy for addressing key national priorities through the planning system, including sustaining and developing a vibrant economy; achieving decarbonisation and climate resilience; developing strong ecosystems; and improving the health and well-being of our communities.

Policy 2 relates to shaping urban growth and regeneration in terms of strategic placemaking. The policy suggests a set of strategic placemaking principles that urban growth and regeneration should be based on, one of which is surrounding ‘creating a rich mix of uses’.

Local Planning Policy Context

The development plan for the purposes of Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 is the adopted Local Development Plan (LDP) which forms the statutory framework for the development and use of land within the Newport City Council Authority. The LDP was adopted in January 2015.

The site lies within the settlement boundary for Newport City Council. As such, is in an area where development is generally permitted. The following policies are considered the most relevant to the application:

Policy Reference	Relating to
<i>Strategic Policies</i>	
SP1	Sustainability
SP2	Health
SP12	Community Facilities
SP13	Planning Obligations

<i>General Policies</i>	
GP1	General Development Principles – Climate Change
GP2	General Development Principles – General Amenity
GP4	General Development Principles – Highways and Accessibility
GP5	General Development Principles – Natural Environment
GP6	General Development Principles – Quality of Design
<i>Environmental Policies</i>	
CE1	Routeways, Corridors and Gateways
<i>Employment Policies</i>	
EM3	Alternative uses of Employment Land
<i>Transport Policies</i>	
T4	Parking
<i>Community Facilities and Other Infrastructure</i>	
CF12	Protection of Existing Community Facilities

Policy EM3 Alternative uses of Employment Land is of most significance to the proposal given its former use of a garage. The policy wording is as follows:

"DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS PROMOTING ALTERNATIVE USES ON EXISTING EMPLOYMENT SITES WILL BE RESISTED UNLESS:

- i) THE SITE HAS BEEN MARKETING UNSUCCESSFULLY FOR EMPLOYMENT PURPOSES FOR A MINIMUM OF 12 MONTHS;*
- ii) THERE REMAINS A SUFFICIENT RANGE AND CHOICE OF EMPLOYMENT LAND AND PREMISES TO MEET LDP REQUIREMENTS AND LOCAL DEMAND;*
- iii) THE DEVELOPMENT HAS NO ADVERSE IMPACT ON EXISTING OR ALLOCATED EMPLOYMENT SITES;*
- iv) THE DEVELOPMENT HAS NO ADVERSE IMPACT ON AMENITY OR THE ENVIRONMENT."*

Policy SP12 Community Facilities is of relevance to the proposal given its community use. The policy ultimately encourages the development of new community facilities. The policy states:

"THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW COMMUNITY FACILITIES IN SUSTAINABLE LOCATIONS WILL BE ENCOURAGED INCLUDING:

- i) PLACES OF WORSHIP AND CHURCH HALLS, CEMETERIES, COMMUNITY CENTRES, HEALTH CENTRES, DAY NURSERIES, CLINICS AND CONSULTING ROOMS;*
- ii) MUSEUMS, PUBLIC HALLS, LIBRARIES, ART GALLERIES, EXHIBITION HALLS, EDUCATION AND TRAINING CENTRES;*
- iii) CINEMAS, MUSIC AND CONCERT HALLS, THEATRES, DANCE AND SPORT HALLS, SWIMMING BATHS, SKATING RINKS, GYMNASIUMS;*
- iv) OUTDOOR AND INDOOR SPORT AND LEISURE USES INCLUDING ALLOTMENTS AND COMMUNITY/ CITY GARDENS. DEVELOPMENT THAT AFFECTS EXISTING COMMUNITY FACILITIES SHOULD BE DESIGNED TO RETAIN OR ENHANCE ESSENTIAL FACILITIES"*

Paragraph 9.50 of Policy CF12 Protection of Existing Community Facilities acts in favour of this development as it states, *"The re-use of existing buildings is also a potential source of increasing provision of community facilities there will be a presumption in favour of the reuse of redundant community buildings in preference to demolition and redevelopment."*

General Policy GP1 outlines that development proposals should *'be designed to reuse or recycle existing construction materials present on the site'*. Due to the proposal reusing an existing building as a change of use,

this is relevant. Policy GP2 also stresses the importance of proposals not having an adverse effect on neighbouring amenities in terms of a number of factors like air quality and privacy.

Policy SP2 Health is of relevance to the proposal in terms of maximising positive contributions to health and well-being as the policy states:

"DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS SHOULD SEEK TO MAXIMISE THEIR POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO HEALTH AND WELL-BEING, AND MINIMISE ANY NEGATIVE EFFECTS BY BEING LOCATED IN THE MOST SUSTAINABLE LOCATIONS, CLOSE TO PUBLIC TRANSPORT LINKS AND PROVIDING EFFICIENT WALKING AND CYCLING ROUTES AND OTHER GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE AS PART OF DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES."

Supplementary Planning Guidance

The following Supplementary Planning Guidance documents adopted by Newport City Council are considered to be of relevance to the proposed development:

- Planning Obligations SPG
- Parking Standards SPG

Material Considerations

The key planning considerations that would arise from the proposed change of use development are of follows:

- The principle of development in terms of land use policy and sustainable development
- The impact of alternative use of employment land
- Access and parking
- Biodiversity

Principle of Development

The site is situated within the settlement boundary for the area meaning that the principle of development is generally acceptable. The site is well connected in terms of sustainable transport, making it an ideal location for a community facility. Policy 2 of Future Wales promotes placemaking as creating a mix of uses, in which this proposal does by being located within a primarily residential area. The close proximity to public transport links also means compliance is met with Policy SP2 (Health) of the LDP.

The existing building is currently vacant since the previous garage use ending. The proposal will therefore make use of an otherwise vacant property which is supported by criterion ii) of Policy SP1 (Sustainability).

Whilst a 'Men shed' does not fall within one of community facilities listed in Policy SP12 (Community Facilities), the list is not exhaustive and it is considered that there is general Planning Policy support for developments of this nature.

Given that the site was formerly occupied by a garage and adjacent storage a pertinent policy to consider is Policy EM3 (Alternative Uses of Employment Land).

Alternative Use of Employment Land

Due to the site comprising of a change of use on employment land, Policy EM3 (Alternative uses of Employment Land) is of particular relevance to the application. As aforementioned, the site was purchased by Hedyn from Newport City Council in November 2024 following a significant potential period of vacancy of 14 years. It has therefore served no economic purpose for some time and conversion to a 'Men shed' represents a more efficient and beneficial use of the building to serve the community. Criterion i) of Policy EM3 requests evidence of the site being marketed for a minimum of 12 months. Newport City Council were the previous owners of the site whilst it

was vacant for a potential period of 14 years. Given that Hedyn purchased the site with the intention of converting to a 'Men Shed', no marketing details for the site to be sold for employment purposes are available to the applicant. Notwithstanding, it is considered that the vacancy of the site whilst under Newport City Council ownership for a significant period of time when it was considered to be surplus to requirement, represents a material consideration in the assessment of the application.

Criterion ii) requires that sufficient range and choice of employment land and premises to meet LDP requirements and local demand remain following the establishment of an alternative use. The building measures just 118m² in extent whilst Policies EM1 (Employment Land Allocations) and EM2 (Newport Docks) make provision for up to 378 hectares of employment allocation. Consequently, it is considered that there remains sufficient range and choice of employment land following the conversion of the site to community use in accordance with criterion ii).

The site does not lie within a wider employment/industrial site. As such, its conversion would not result in an adverse impact on existing or allocated employment sites in compliance with criterion iii).

It is considered that the proposed development would result in a betterment in respect of the impact on the amenity or environment given that a 'Men Shed' represents potentially less obtrusive use than an B2 industrial use in what is a predominantly residential area. Furthermore, if it continues to remain vacant then the building could fall into a state of disrepair which would be to the detriment of the visual amenity of the area. The development is therefore considered to be in accordance with the fourth and final criterion of policy EM3 (Alternative uses of Employment Land) of the adopted LDP.

Access and Parking

The access to the site has been raised as a concern within pre-application discussions given its width. It is key to note that the current use of the site is classed as Industrial, which attracts larger vehicles and is known to generate increased traffic. From a review of historical google street view imagery, it can be seen that the site has previously been accessed by large vehicles. The prevailing use of the site as industrial which would not require any planning application to be reinstated therefore represents an established fall back position in respect of the type of vehicular traffic generated by the existing use. The proposed use of a community facility (use class D2) can be thought to attract less larger vehicles and less traffic than the current industrial use.

It is also key to outline that the main demographic for which this development is aimed at consists of the retired community. The likelihood of this demographic accessing this site by large vehicles is very low. The proposed development would therefore result in a betterment in respect of the likely vehicular types that would be accessing the site. This would therefore align with the criteria set out in Policy GP4 which ensures that safe and suitable access arrangements are provided.

In terms of parking, the development will provide 5 car parking spaces which will be designated to the 'Menshed'. Gaer would most likely fall into 'Zone 4: Suburban or Near Urban' in terms of parking standards which is a 'smaller settlement offering a range of local facilities'. The type of development does not fall neatly into one of the categories of development contained in the parking standards, but 5 spaces are proposed, which is considered to be a sufficient amount for the operational needs of the facility. The development is therefore considered to be acceptable in respect of parking in accordance with policy T4.

Biodiversity

The development will have no adverse impact on the natural environment. Bird and bat boxes will be fitted to the building, meaning compliance with Policy GP5 (General Development Principles – Natural Environment) from the LDP will be met by encouraging biodiversity and ecological connectivity. Given the nature of the proposal as 'Men Shed', it is the aspiration for the bat and bird boxes to be constructed by users on site.

Conclusion

The site is considered to offer the potential for the aforementioned change of use which is compliant with national and local planning policy. In particular, prevailing development plan policy and material considerations support the principle of bringing a vacant, under-utilised building back into beneficial use. The site will make use of an otherwise redundant building. In addition to this, it lies within a highly sustainable and accessible area with immediate access to public transport facilities which will reduce reliance on the private car.

It can be said that the proposed use will deliver positive impacts for the wider community whilst being in a sustainable location.

I trust that the submitted documents allow the application to be validated and look forward to receiving details of the application reference number and target determination date. If you have any queries in the meantime, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

