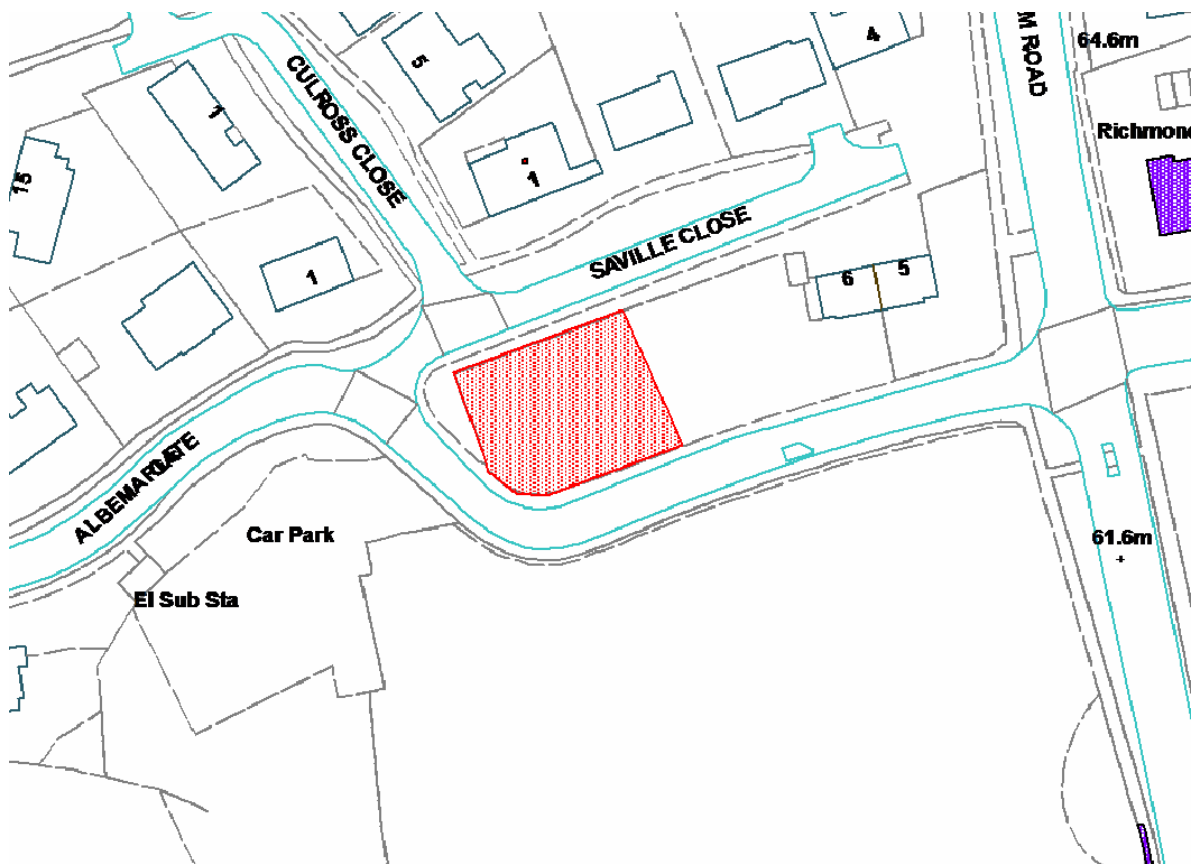


APPLICATION NO: 14/02039/COU	OFFICER: Miss Michelle Payne
DATE REGISTERED: 8th December 2014	DATE OF EXPIRY: 2nd February 2015
WARD: Pittville	PARISH: None
APPLICANT:	Mr Vince Norvill
AGENT:	None
LOCATION:	Land adjacent to 6 Saville Close, Saville Close, Cheltenham
PROPOSAL:	Change of use of land to a community orchard garden, planting 31 fruit trees and the erection of a shed

RECOMMENDATION: Permit



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1. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND PROPOSAL

- 1.1 This application relates to a parcel of land located between Saville Close and Albemarle Gate to the north of the pitch and putt course at Pittville Park, on the western side of Evesham Road. The land is bounded by hedging with an entrance provided from Saville Close.
- 1.2 The site is located at the edge of the Central Conservation Area, within the Pittville Character Area.
- 1.3 The land was formerly part of the garden to no. 6 Saville Close but has been physically separated at some point in the past. Planning permission was granted on two occasions in the 1980's for the erection of a detached dwelling with double garage but neither scheme was implemented.
- 1.4 The application is seeking a material change of use of the land to create a community orchard garden to include the planting of 31no. fruit trees and the erection of a shed.
- 1.5 The application is before planning committee as the land is Council owned. Members will visit the site on planning view.

2. CONSTRAINTS AND RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

Constraints:

Residents Association
Conservation Area

Relevant Planning History:

None

3. POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

Adopted Local Plan Policies

CP 1 Sustainable development
CP 3 Sustainable environment

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework

4. CONSULTATIONS

Contaminated Land Officer

4th December 2014

No comment.

Gloucestershire Centre for Environmental Records

11th December 2014

Report available to view on line.

Tree Officer

21st January 2015

The Tree Section welcomes this proposed development. Previously the land was underused and this project should not only diversify ecology and improve the tree heritage of the area but should also help strengthen social bonds within the local community.

It is imperative that all recommendations of Glos Orchard Group are acted upon as described so as to ensure maximum return of amenity and produce from the trees.

5. PUBLICITY AND REPRESENTATIONS

- 5.1 Letters of notification were sent out to nine neighbouring properties. In addition, a site notice was posted and an advert published in the Gloucestershire Echo. One representation has been received from a local resident in full support of the proposal.

6. OFFICER COMMENTS

- 6.1 The supporting information submitted by the applicant sets out that local residents within a one mile radius of the site have been working on 'The Albemarle Orchard Garden' for the last 18 months. The local community was given the opportunity to come up with an alternative use for the land that could benefit the community, following strong local objection to a decision by the Council's Asset and Property Committee to sell the land for development.
- 6.2 Following a successful application to the Community Pride Award, the group have been awarded funds to help set up and maintain the orchard, and a detailed 10 year management plan has been drawn up. It is anticipated that a 5 year lease on the land will be agreed initially.
- 6.3 31no. trees will be planted in a circular design, consisting of 10no. plum trees, 4no. pear trees, 16no. apple trees and 1no. quince tree. In addition, seating benches, log piles for insects and wildlife, a water bowser and a shed are proposed within the site. The management and maintenance of the orchard will be volunteer led by local residents
- 6.4 A document published by the Department for Communities and Local Government in 2011 entitled 'Community orchards: How to guide' identifies the benefits that green spaces such as orchards and community gardens can bring to the local community, recognising that such facilities are excellent in bringing people for community activities such as Apple Days; annual celebrations of apples and orchards, held throughout the UK in October. It also acknowledges that community orchards can be used as an educational resource by local school and children, and that they provide the opportunity for everyone to learn new skills.
- 6.5 The applicant's supporting information echoes this, and sets out that local schools and a local scout group have already shown an interest in the orchard and *"are all keen to get involved with learning horticultural skills and helping develop the biodiversity of the orchard. The garden will be open to the public [and] we will hold apple days and other community events throughout the year once the orchard is established."*
- 6.6 Overall, the creation of the community orchard will help to improve biodiversity within the area and provide opportunities to bring the local community together. As such the recommendation is to permit the application.

7. CONDITIONS

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of five years from the date of this permission.
Reason: To accord 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.

INFORMATIVE

- 1 In accordance with the requirements of The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Amendment No. 2) Order 2012 and the provisions of the NPPF, the Local Planning Authority adopts a positive and proactive approach to dealing with planning applications and where possible, will seek solutions to any problems that arise when dealing with a planning application with the aim of fostering the delivery of sustainable development.

At the heart of this positive and proactive approach is the authority's pre-application advice service for all types of development. Further to this however, the authority publishes guidance on the Council's website on how to submit planning applications and provides full and up-to-date information in relation to planning applications to enable the applicant, and other interested parties, to track progress.

In this instance, having had regard to all material considerations, the application constitutes sustainable development and has therefore been approved in a timely manner.