

Notice of Meeting



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Eastern Area Planning Committee Wednesday 28 October 2020 at 6.30pm Written Submissions

Members Interests

Note: If you consider you may have an interest in any Planning Application included on this agenda then please seek early advice from the appropriate officers.

Date of despatch of Agenda: Tuesday, 20 October 2020

FURTHER INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

For further information about this Agenda, or to inspect any background documents referred to in Part I reports, please contact the Planning Team on (01635) 519148

Email: planapps@westberks.gov.uk

Further information, Planning Applications and Minutes are also available on the Council's website at www.westberks.gov.uk

Any queries relating to the Committee should be directed to Stephen Chard / Jessica Bailiss on (01635) 519462/503124 Email: stephen.chard@westberks.gov.uk / jessica.bailiss@westberks.gov.uk



WestBerkshire
C O U N C I L

Agenda - Eastern Area Planning Committee to be held on Wednesday, 28 October 2020
(continued)

To: Councillors Jeremy Cottam, Alan Law (Chairman), Tony Linden, Royce Longton, Ross Mackinnon, Alan Macro (Vice-Chairman), Geoff Mayes, Graham Pask and Joanne Stewart

Substitutes: Councillors Peter Argyle, Graham Bridgman, Owen Jeffery, Nassar Kessell, Richard Somner and Keith Woodhams

Agenda

Part I

Page No.

- (1) **Application No. & Parish: 20/01480/FUL - Glenvale Nurseries, Hungerford Lane, Bradfield Southend** 5 - 18

Proposal: Demolition of existing outbuilding and polytunnels and erection of a building in flexible use for storage or distribution (Use Class B8) and/or for any light industrial process within Use Class E, with associated access track and parking area.

Location: Glenvale Nurseries, Hungerford Lane, Bradfield Southend

Applicant: Mr and Mrs Varley

Recommendation: Delegated to the Head of Development and Planning to grant planning permission subject to conditions.

- (2) **Application No. & Parish: 20/00674/FUL - Land to the South east of Mortimer Station, Station Road, Mortimer** 19 - 34

Proposal: Change of use of land and the construction of a 150 space car park with alterations to the highway, landscaping, and associated works.

Location: Land to the South east of Mortimer Station, Station Road, Mortimer.

Applicant: Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council.

Recommendation: Delegated to the Head of Development and Planning to refuse planning permission



West Berkshire
C O U N C I L

Agenda - Eastern Area Planning Committee to be held on Wednesday, 28 October 2020
(continued)

Background Papers

- (a) The West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026.
- (b) The West Berkshire District Local Plan (Saved Policies September 2007), the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire, the Waste Local Plan for Berkshire and relevant Supplementary Planning Guidance and Documents.
- (c) Any previous planning applications for the site, together with correspondence and report(s) on those applications.
- (d) The case file for the current application comprising plans, application forms, correspondence and case officer's notes.
- (e) The Human Rights Act.

Sarah Clarke
Service Director (Strategy and Governance)

If you require this information in a different format or translation, please contact
Moira Fraser on telephone (01635) 519045.

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Eastern Area Planning Committee

28 October 2020

Written Submissions

Item:	(1)
Application Number:	20/01480/FUL
Location:	Glenvale Nurseries, Hungerford Lane, Bradfield Southend
Proposal:	Demolition of existing outbuilding and polytunnels and erection of a building in flexible use for storage or distribution (Use Class B8) and/or for any light industrial process within Use Class E, with associated access track and parking area.
Applicant:	Mr and Mrs Varley

Submissions received

Bradfield Parish Council	None
Adjoining Bucklebury Parish Council	None
Objectors	Gareth Osborn Jim Forrester Charles Romaine (joint submission on behalf of multiple named objectors) Peter Neal and Rebecca Neal Meg Nelson
Supporters	None
Applicant/ Agent	Duncan and Helen Varley – Applicant Sophie Berry (Reading Agricultural Consultants) - Agent

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Written submission (objector):

Gareth Osborn

I have read with interest the report to the above committee with the recommendation summary

As an objector to the application I have the following observations

The report is well drafted and a fair summary of the objectors views.

The officers appraisal summarises our objections very accurately:

6.3 Development is outside a defined settlements, but is permitted subject to allowances where there is identified need - our contention, no demonstrated need

6.6 The site is not within an accessible location. It is remote from local services and public transport - our contention, this is contrary to all policies

6.7 Proposals for industry will be directed to the districts Protected Employment Areas - there is good demand for the protected employment areas and they are sustainable. Support should continue to be prioritised to these identified areas

6.8 The Council will promote existing employment sites - our contention is that the planning designation of the site does not support an industrial use

6.10 New speculative space only - our contention, no proven demand

6.12 Environmentally unsustainable - our contention is this is critical

6.18 TVLEP are said to say that there are not sufficient space for such "affordable units" - unproven as demonstrated by many vacant units in former farm buildings available to let

The comments above are the thrust of our objections

My observations are that there are many other small units particularly within agricultural space - farms within the vicinity. There are many units available within 2 miles of the site. Officers will be able to confirm.

The space will not be "affordable". The applicants will have to put in 100m of roadway to access the site. This infrastructure will make the site very expensive to develop and will as a consequence not provide affordable space to local businesses or alternatively not be commercially viable.

Therefore the presumption that there is demand is flawed by the fact that there is available space in the vicinity and the units are speculative only, they will also be expensive, so do not support the LEP report

Highways Concerns

The design shows the 4 units with roller shutter doors immediately opposite the entrance onto the industrial development. This will leave scope for conflict between vehicles accessing the premises, working in the premises - fork lift trucks - and in particular pedestrian movements. Turning circles within the industrial development are flawed. A van can not turn safely to access the units as the turning circle within the scheme is too tight

I query whether emergency vehicles can circulate within the site.

There should be some proper tracking of turning circles within the industrial areas proving that vehicles can move safely.

The scheme is flawed and the layout is dangerous

Summary - whilst the conditions to the recommendation prepared by the officers will mitigate the impact on residential amenity, and that is very much appreciated, it does not provide justification for a positive decision which is clearly against Council policy

Written submission (objector):

Jim Forrester

To be considered by the Eastern District Planning Committee on Wednesday 28th October 2020.

The latest Planning Application to be lodged by Glenvale Nursery Proprietors, Mr and Mrs Varley, is to be considered for approval at the above meeting.

I attended the planning meeting held on Wednesday 10th April 2019, which decided against the housing development application lodged by Mr. and Mrs. Varley for the site at Glenvale Nurseries.

At the meeting, Councillor Jacques and Councillor Bridgman were concerned that planning and building development consents should be led by the (WBDPS) plans and not ad hoc planning applications or agreements.

They asked the Planning Committee members attending the meeting the following question; 'Are we a planning led Council or do we just respond to ad hoc enquiries?'

The committee attendees agreed that they were and should be planning led.

The plot being applied for at Glenvale was not, and is still not, part of the (WBDPS) plans for development. Indeed, when an application was received by the (WBDPS) to include the Glenvale site on their brown-field register, (WBDPS) declined. On this basis the application for planning permission for the plot is an ad hoc enquiry which is not part of the (WBDPS) development plan and on that basis alone, it should be rejected.

The committee rejected the housing development application based on this principle.

If one considers the form of the current application it has all of the on-site facilities that were part of the original proposal for a multi-house cul-de-sac; namely an access road, street lighting, the necessity to provide a proper sewage system to deal with the four extra toilets, electric car charging facilities and even four double garages. The only thing missing, so far, is the houses.

Whether or not the current application is an attempt to get the Planners to agree to the infrastructure for a future housing development remains to be seen, but the commercial viability of the proposed development is open to many questions. The costs of building, what are no more than the space occupied by four double garages in footprint, when added to all of the infrastructure and compliance costs would push the potential return on investment out to some twenty or more years, assuming an immediate take up of the rentals with no rental gaps in the interim years.

Hard pressed Nursery Owners, as we are constantly reminded that the applicants are, do not usually make such investments.

Refusing this application on the grounds that the site does not form any part of the (WBDPS) plans and putting aside the Planning Officers recommendations, would be the most immediate way to ensure that the AONB is protected and that there would be no protracted arguments about what had been agreed and how applicable these concessions were to other developments.

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Written submission (objectors):

Charles Romaine

(Submitted jointly by neighbours in close proximity to Glenvale: Allayne Amos, Chris Amos, Jim Forrester, Liz Forrester, Gareth Osborn, Julie Osborn, Bryony Romaine, Charles Romaine, Dave Spokes, Julie Spokes, Janet Vaughan, Wayne Vaughan)

Policy ADPP1

- The application site is in open countryside in the AONB, 700m from the nearest settlement, and not in the settlement hierarchy (“Urban Area”, “Rural Services Centre” or “Service Village”).
- The Applicants (and Economic Development consultee) have not provided sufficient grounds for exception to this policy; no real analysis has been provided and stated demand includes “office” and “chiropractor” uses which are not applicable. Proposed is just a “*speculative*” industrial property rental business (Committee Report paragraphs 6.10/6.39).
- The existing mixed-use site will be significantly reduced by the units and the dominating 100m access road, reducing its ability/flexibility to operate as a viable rural business in future, particularly after the Applicants’ ownership.

The site is not in sole agricultural use or a farm

- The site is “*mixed-use*”:
 - (a) horticultural
 - (b) retail
 - (c) wholesale commercial

as concluded by an inspector on 26/10/17 (APP/W0340/X/16/3165648), who stated:

“the unchallenged evidence is that up to 50% of the business comprises the sourcing and provision of plants to commercial operators As a matter of fact therefore the dominant activity at Glenvale is to provide a service to commercial operators. The provision of goods for sale, display or service to visiting members of the public is a steadily decreasing element of the business, whilst the nursery element, ... appears to have remained relatively static.”

- The Inspector’s analysis confirms that (a) horticultural plant nursery (agriculture) plays a lesser role compared with (b) retail and (c) wholesale commercial together.
- Therefore, rather than Local Plan Policy ENV16 Farm Diversification and CS10 Rural Economy, Policy CS9 is of most relevance and should therefore be afforded greatest weight.

Policy CS9

- Paragraph 3.4 of the Committee Report states, “*Early engagement between the case officer and the agent resulted in the description being amended to remove B1 from the proposal scheme. The reasons for this was due to potential conflict with policy CS9.*” It is not clear why CS9 is now thought to be complied with by having light industrial use under new class E when it was not thought to be so under old class B1. Moving the proposed development just a few metres North in the revised site plan has not materially changed the impact on the residential amenity.
- Contrary to Policy CS9(a), industrial units at the Southern end of the Glenvale site are not compatible with uses in the area (residential dwellings in a tranquil environment abutting Bucklebury Common, in open countryside and the AONB) and the potential impacts, particularly noise.
- Glenvale’s main business activities, generating the typical background noise, have always been conducted at the Northern part of Glenvale (shop, car park, lorries unloading). At residences in the South (over 80m away), these background noise levels have always been perceived to be low. Temporary structures (polytunnels) used for horticulture are proposed to be replaced with a permanent building undertaking light industrial activities and a 100m access road, with the consequential adverse impact on the residential amenity.

Written submission (objector):

Peter Neal and Rebecca Neal

The basis of our objection has always been to protect the residential amenity at Bracken House. We are particularly concerned about the impact of noise on our property caused by activities at the adjacent proposed scheme. For this reason, we commissioned a noise survey from Stewart Michael Associates, a professional acoustic consultant. This survey concluded that “dependant on the type and intensity of the proposed commercial development adjacent to the site, noise generating activities would result in a **significant adverse impact**.”

While the recent change in use within the application from B2 to light industrial reduces the impact on our residential amenity which is welcomed, there are no such protections relating to the B8 use. This lack of protection, the absence of any consideration of the matter by the Applicant and the limited engagement on this subject on the part of the Council to date are causes of concern to us. We ask that the Council has due regard to our concern and imposes additional restrictions.

We note that the Case Officer concludes in the final paragraph of the Noise section within her report:

In its revised form, the proposed uses are considered to be compatible with existing uses on and adjoining the site in terms of noise and disturbance, subject to the recommended conditions.

We do not think that it is appropriate to draw this conclusion without understanding the existing baseline noise levels, knowing how the units are to be used and the intensity of this use which will in turn influence how much noise they will generate. For this reason, we request that noise conditions be imposed on the units.

Following advice from Stuart Michael Associates, we understand that it is standard practice for an applicant seeking planning permission for B8 use in close proximity to residential uses to undertake a Noise Impact Assessment, following which the Council can then consider the findings, and then impose noise restrictions if applicable. We are further advised that in the unusual circumstance that a Noise Impact Assessment is not provided by an applicant for B8 use, the Council can still impose noise restrictions. We note that the Applicant has not undertaken an NIA. In the absence of any NIA, following advice from Stuart Michael Associates, we request that the following conditions be imposed on the B8/Class E use units:

“Noise generated from the site should not exceed the British Standard and WHO guideline levels of 35 dB (LAeq,T) in living rooms and bedrooms (resting conditions) during the daytime to protect existing residents amenity. External noise levels should not exceed 50 dB during the daytime to maintain existing private amenity to adjacent residences in accordance with British Standards and WHO Guidelines.”

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Written submission (objector):

Meg Nelson

It would be negligent for WBC to approve new Class B8 storage and distribution and B1 light industry uses in proximity to x5 dwellings (as close as 20m), without even assessing what the potential noise impact would be, or attaching tighter conditions which appropriately control noise levels on site. It would be outrageous.

WBC's Local Plan Policy CS9 directs Class B8 uses to '*Protected Employment Areas*' well away from residences, for good reason. Policy CS9 part (a) could not be clearer, '*The location of **any** B2 and B8 uses should be in areas with good access to major road/freight route networks, and should not conflict with surrounding uses.*' (my emphasis) Clearly the site is neither a '*Protected Employment Area*' nor a designated '*employment site*' nor '*suitably located*.' The proposals for B8 use are contrary to the development plan in principle.

The question I come back to is 'Why did WBC fail to request a Noise Impact Assessment (NIA) of the applicant?' This information is essential to making an informed decision about potentially noisy uses. Without it, the application should not even have been registered as valid. As the applicant's submission is silent in this regard; no technical acoustic information was ever presented or scoped at pre-application stage with Environmental Health, it is therefore not possible for WBC to appraise the scheme against relevant statutory development plan policies which protect residential amenity; ADPP5, OVS.6 Noise Pollution (which contains detailed criteria), ENV16 and the provisions in NPPF (including paragraph 180).

In seeking a fair and competent assessment of this application, I would request Committee moves to continue this case and request the missing further information (NIA) from the applicant forthwith. The material in front of you is insufficient for you to make an informed decision on. How can you be satisfied residential amenity will not be adversely affected? I see no evidence or analysis. Alternatively, the application should be refused on these grounds.

If still minded to approve, I submit the following. Merely 1 sentence of the case officer's report appraises the B8 use in respect of noise and pollution specifically, at paragraph 6.36. However if approved, the use could be intensified and some occupiers in distribution, by their very nature may use the site frequently and run a much more intensive operation (with unlimited vehicular movements / beeping fork lift trucks) than WBC Planning and Highways have allowed for. I therefore request the following additional conditions are attached:

- None of the internal walls between the x4 units may be removed without prior approval of WBC.
- Noise generated from the site should not exceed the British Standard and WHO guideline levels of 35 dB (L_{Aeq,T}) in living rooms and bedrooms (resting conditions) during the daytime to protect existing residents amenity.
- External noise levels should not exceed 50 dB during the daytime to maintain existing private amenity to adjacent residences in accordance with British Standards and WHO Guidelines.

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Statement of support in respect of application 20/01480/FUL at Glenvale Nurseries from Applicants (Helen and Duncan Varley) and Agent (Sophie Berry of Reading Agricultural Consultants) to be read to Planning Committee on 28th October 2020.

Glenvale Nurseries has traded in this rural location for over 40 years. The applicants have owned Glenvale Nurseries for over 16 years and have experienced a considerable decline in turnover over the last 7 years, and even more so during the current pandemic. There is an obvious need to diversify the existing business through more efficient use of the application site. You will be aware of previous unsuccessful applications which sought a solution through housing. The loss of a rural business was previously resisted by the committee and this encouraged the applicants, who are determined for their business to survive, to proceed with the current proposal to diversify the existing use.

The current proposal for the creation of units for rental will not only supplement the income of Glenvale Nurseries but it will meet an evidenced demand for the shortfall of such units in the area, whilst giving the rural economy a much needed boost during this uncertain time. Such diversification is supported by both national and local policy.

Gabrielle Mancini, West Berkshire Council Economic Development Officer, has been supportive of the proposal and encouraged use of the Thames Valley Hub, who has provided days of expertise to assist the applicants in developing their proposal. They have also been successful in attracting the support of the Rural Payments Agency, who encourage diversification of rural businesses in this area through the creation of units, such as those proposed, through the allocation of European funds. The ultimate success of the funding application relies on whether planning permission is granted today and, with the UK leaving the EU, this is the last round of funding available.

Previously, it was considered that a house in the car park would be too prominent. The current proposal therefore logically seeks to replace buildings that are present already on the site which, through more efficient use of land, means Glenvale Nurseries is able to continue trading.

Every effort has been made to be respectful to the surrounding area and neighbours and all requests made by the Council, including removing B1, adjusting the building position, hours of operation and changes to the vehicle access have all been met positively.

Prospective tenants, complement the existing operation and include landscapers, gardeners, and a beauty product business. Currently trades using Glenvale, load vehicles daily from the polytunnels on an unrestricted basis. Any permission granted will be restricted to ensure no adverse harm to neighbouring amenity.

The committee wished to avoid the loss of the existing business and the applicants are hopeful that members will therefore recognise the need to diversify in this way, especially in the current economic climate, where rural businesses are struggling to survive, and give the applicants and their prospective tenants a chance to adapt to current circumstances and thrive.

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Eastern Area Planning Committee

28 October 2020

Written Submissions

Item:	(2)
Application Number:	20/00674/FUL
Location:	Land To The South East, Mortimer Station, Station Road, Mortimer
Proposal:	Change of use of land and the construction of a 150 space car park with alterations to the highway, landscaping, and associated works
Applicant:	Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council

Submissions received

Parish Council	Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council
Adjoining Parish Council	None
Objectors	J & R Clatworthy Chris Bridges M & G Developments Mr D A Rootham
Supporters	Tom Pierpoint (Great Western Railway)
Applicant/ Agent	Katherine Miles (Pro Vision) – Agent

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APPLICATION NUMBER: 20/00674/FUL

PROPOSAL: Change of use of land and the construction of a 150 space car park with alterations

to the highway, landscaping, and associated works

SITE: Land To The South East, Mortimer Station, Station Road, Mortimer

SMPC fully supports this application for an additional 150 space car-park at Mortimer Station. The application derives from the strong local wish for increased station parking, evidenced over a long period with full support from GWR and Englefield Estate.

This is an adopted Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) project. In the NDP questionnaire 1006 people (92%) endorsed station car-park enlargement. This was the highest single response in a lengthy questionnaire resulting in Policy IS3 :“extension to the station car-parking will be promoted and encouraged”. SMPC is fulfilling the wishes of the community in this application.

Our Statement of Community Involvement shows we involve Mortimer residents in line with the Localism Act 2011. The Community Needs survey 2018 attracted 494 responses with overwhelming support for increased and improved station parking:

- 410 (83%) - current parking provision poor or very poor
- 377 (76%) - would travel by train more if parking more accessible
- 438 (87%) - train use would increase with improved parking

Note the survey was only carried out within Mortimer, probably capturing a third of the possible catchment of Mortimer station. The survey did not account for the 110 new homes since granted permission.

Analysis of the results establishes the need for 150 new parking spaces which is endorsed by GWR.

West Berks Core Strategy 2012 - Area Delivery Plan P6 Identifies “poor transport connections of the East Kennet Valley” ... “improvement to the accessibility of Mortimer Railway station will be sought, for example through enhancements to the road bridge. This will be taken forward through partnership working”. This application is clearly consistent with this WBC policy so, please, can we see some partnership?

Increasing capacity at Mortimer station also supports CS13 – “Improve travel choice and facilitate sustainable travel particularly... between... main urban areas and rural service centres”. Mortimer is a Rural Service Centre.

The parking shortage has led to dangerous parking along Grazeley Road (up to 25 cars) eroding verges and along The Street towards St. Mary’s School exacerbating significant dropoff/pickup issues, generating continued complaints to SMPC and WBC.

The village centre is over a mile from the station with no public transport link. The steep hill means walking to and from the station is impossible for many. This project will maximise the number and condition of those able to travel by rail. Of course, some disabled will still not be able to travel alone. But the new arrangements will allow for anyone to be dropped off and picked up on both sides, a great improvement.

SMPC would not put forward proposals significantly detrimental to our landscape. We are confident that the extensive planting proposed will within a short time result in the car-park being largely invisible from all directions. Car-park lighting will be exclusively low-level, motion-activated and not obtrusive elsewhere. We note that the WBC landscaping consultant is based in Cumbria and did not visit the site whereas ours is local and did.

SMPC urges councillors to support this application to give Mortimer residents what they have strongly requested.

Written submission (objector):

J & R Clatworthy

1. We agree that station parking needs to be improved but this application, with its choice of green field site and involving changes to the highway and to a listed bridge, all damaging to the rural environment, is not a solution.
2. A number of supporters suggest the lack of sufficient parking spaces at Mortimer has resulted in their "having to drive to Reading", thereby increasing their carbon footprint and conflicting with West Berkshire Environment Strategy. For those genuinely concerned about their personal carbon footprint Mere oak Park & Ride offers a solution. Rail travellers have no right to a parking space to suit their personal convenience. The proposed car park would increase the volume of traffic to and through Mortimer and on feeder roads and would significantly damage the environment.
3. We object to the applicants attempt to justify their plans by claiming they provide Accessibility for disabled and other mobility compromised people. We note there have been no letters of support for the proposal from people identifying themselves as disabled. We note that WBC Highways say the "the proposed gradient in places and the footway design over the existing bridge make the proposed footway unsuitable for pedestrians including disabled persons and adversely affects road safety." We have lifelong experience of disabled people and their needs. Councillor Bridgman who supports the application states in written reply to another objector "My view is that some (disabled) access is better than none". Most disabled people we have met over the last seven decades would NOT agree with this view. Most would prefer to travel the extra miles to Green Park station, which will have SAFE disabled facilities, instead of struggling and risking their lives with the applicants UNSAFE offerings at Mortimer.
4. The Highways Response to the recent "technical note" purporting to justify the proposed number of spaces, shows figures and calculations are seriously flawed. The figures for the likely use of increased parking availability by people from surrounding villages has no scientific basis and is based on mere crystal ball gazing. Highways careful, generous estimate is that a maximum of 76 additional parking spaces would suffice.
5. While GWR have to date expressed support for the application and have indicated they would fund the project, recent Government announcements about removal of rail franchises now call into question GWR's ability to do so. Particularly given the ongoing Covid-19 situation.
6. We note SMPC has
 - (a) still not offered any explanation for their determined, exclusive adherence to the original site previously refused planning permission nor for why they failed to reveal to residents that there was and still is an alternative site,
 - (b) not acknowledged that their entire proposal is contrary to the declared aims of the Mortimer NDP as clearly detailed in a letter submitted by another objector,
 - (c) not provided specific details of their proposals for lighting either in the car park or on the approach to it, both of which have serious implications for Mortimer's "dark skies" and for nearby residents.

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Written submission (objector):

Chris Bridges CEnv, P.Agric (MIAgrM)

Resident 30 years and former Parish Councillor for Beech Hill 18 years

Since the first application back in 2007 for 100 car parking spaces at Mortimer Station, I have supported meaningful additional parking but not where previous planning applications have suggested on what is currently a green field (productive agricultural land) site and outside the village envelope.

The road safety aspect of this application would be a disaster waiting to happen with two entrances either side of a high crest in the centre of the bridge which gives no view of oncoming traffic. This is to be managed by introducing a traffic light system. What is this going to do with up to 200 cars per hour passing at peak times along Station Road (WBC figures) with traffic trying to enter or exit the two car parking areas? With regard to the pedestrian footpath common sense needs to be considered for those either in a wheelchair or pushing a buggy say with other children in tow.

The current coronavirus has made the Government sit up and reassess the way we will be working in the future. High on the agenda will be travel, the need to reduce the carbon footprint by having more of us working from home and conducting meetings via the Internet. Forward thinking companies and businesses are already successfully doing this.

The Government is encouraging more people to walk and cycle, for this to happen safely, there needs to be some major work done on local and wider infrastructure allowing pedestrians and cyclists to do this safely.

Much money has been spent in areas such as Thatcham with bespoke cycle routes, surely it would be more sensible for SMPC to engage with WBC staff in designing and commissioning cycle routes and footpaths. SMPC's proposed scheme will encourage car usage, by drawing in from a larger catchment area putting even more strain on the country roads which is damaging the rural environment.

Local authorities need to create a sustainable transport system connecting local villages and communities with their nearest railway stations and/or with Mere Oak Park and Ride

Why not extend the existing car park for a trial period by entering into an agreement with the owners of Jewells Yard, to test if parking increases and to reveal how many travellers are prepared to pay the parking fee to park? This would be a way forward of utilising a current brownfield site and maybe some of the land adjoining which is of low agricultural use rather than have an urban car park being used for five days a week at the very most. The greenfield site proposed will need floodlighting and CCTV cameras, is this not contrary to Stratfield Mortimer's vote not to have street lighting in the village. Why is it right to impose this on some residents?

I concur with WBC Planning Officer supported by WBC Highways Department recommendations against this application for change of use of land. I would expect WBC Councillors of the planning committee to support and endorse their WBC Officers views and proactively plan for the future.

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M&G Developments – Spoken Representation for Planning Committee 28.10.2020

Ref. 20/00674/FUL

Thank you for this opportunity to submit a representation. Members have previously received a lobby pack from M&G detailing our involvement in putting forward the logical alternative site for the Station Car Park extension.

At last Committee, Counsellor Bridgeman spoke at length in support of the Parish-led application. A good advocate but we respectfully submit that the issue here is not about skilful advocacy, but what is best for the residents of Stratfield Mortimer.

What is proposed amounts to a gross intrusion into open countryside, blighted by the many issues set out in the Case Officers Recommendation for Refusal, **not least of which are Highway Safety issues.** It is **telling** that an application in similar form has previously been refused both at Committee and by the Planning Inspectorate.

Given the history, it **beggars belief** that the Parish Council have **not** properly engaged with us despite having been aware of our alternative for many years. This failure is **in breach** of the Neighbourhood Plan which sets out an obligation to **investigate options** for increasing Station parking. **No such investigation has openly taken place.** Neither M&G, the landowner, nor our Planning Consultant have been contacted.

M&G have reached out to the Parish Council on **multiple occasions** only to be rebuffed. In frustration, 12 months ago we attended a Parish Council meeting as members of the public in order to raise our alternative. Subsequently we were approached by residents concerned about the Parish Council scheme, one of which was a member of the Parish Council who offered support **only to be ‘silenced’ and forbidden from engaging with us.** Whilst fully aware of our alternative the Parish continued **without review** and lodged their application.

In March, the Parish Council and GWR indicated that their application would be withdrawn **if** M&G agreed terms with GWR. M&G with significant investment in time and expense agreed detailed terms with GWR for a 35-year Lease. The Parish subsequently reneged and refused to withdraw their application. GWR advise us that our site offers a **far superior alternative**, as evidenced by agreeing Lease terms.

M&G's proposal is superior in **policy, technical and deliverability terms.** It **does not** require public funding, nor does it involve extensive works to either the highway nor the Grade II Listed road bridge. It does not sit in open countryside. Rather, it is an extension to the existing station car park and **surely is the obvious choice.**

The complexity of the Application site calls in to question its viability and whether it will be constructed in the foreseeable future. For obvious reasons M&G has been reluctant to lodge a competing planning application whilst a Parish Council application remains undetermined. **The M&G site is deliverable in a short timeframe.** PreApp advice has been sought. Architects drawings prepared. Preliminary investigations have taken place and **specialist contractors** have priced construction.

History will not judge the present custodians of the Parish well if they **neglect** the obvious car park solution in favour of a **‘carbuncle’** on the side of the village.

499 words

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Written submission (objector):

Mr D A Rootham

I am writing to you because of my concern with the proposal of the car park and in relation to the volume of traffic. If this proposal goes ahead how will my delivery vehicles be able to park outside my gate. If it becomes difficult maybe they won't be able to.

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23 October 2020

Planning
West Berkshire Council

By Email

To whom it may concern,

Great Western Railway

Milford House
1 Milford Street
Swindon, SN1 1HL

GWR.com

APPLICATION NUMBER: 20/00674/FUL

PROPOSAL: Change of use of land and the construction of a 150 space car park with alterations to the highway, landscaping, and associated works

SITE: Land To The South East, Mortimer Station, Station Road, Mortimer

Since 2005, Mortimer Station has seen significantly lower growth in passenger numbers than the industry average. Existing car parking at the station is at capacity, with rail users parking on-street near the station. These factors strongly suggest the lack of available parking is suppressing growth in rail use and limiting the station's role in the local transport network.

GWR continue to pursue a car park expansion at Mortimer station. To summarise from my previous letter:

- GWR consider that the 2018 Community Survey demonstrates there is significant suppressed demand for rail travel in the catchment of Mortimer station, sufficient to justify the 150-space additional car park.
- Since 2004/5 passenger use of Mortimer station increased by just 3%, compared to 95% across the industry and 39% growth at Bramley.
- There are comparable GWR stations where expanding car parks close to capacity has unlocked suppressed growth e.g. Kingham: 125 more spaces increased passenger numbers by 47%.
- Recently introduced additional services on the Reading to Basingstoke line and the introduction of 4-car trains to replace the existing 2 and 3 car trains, provide additional passenger capacity.

Regarding the Case Officer's report:

- The number of car parking spaces at Newbury and Theale stations, referred to as comparable to those proposed for Mortimer, are incorrect. Upon completion of the Market Street development, Newbury station will have 460 spaces, not 200 with Theale increasing to just over 300 spaces, not 215. 201 spaces at Mortimer would not, therefore, put the station on par with Newbury and Theale. Being over a mile from the center of Mortimer, the station increases the relative need for car and cycle parking.

- The case officer's report also refers to station passenger numbers, which I quoted in my previous letter to demonstrate that growth in passenger numbers at Mortimer has been considerably less than the industry average over the last 15 years. The ORR station usage estimates are publicly available at <https://dataportal.orr.gov.uk/statistics/usage/estimates-of-station-usage/>, which can be used to verify the statements summarized above.
- In 6.24 the report disputes that a lack of car parking is constraining use of the railway. Kingham and Hanborough, however, are clear examples of car park capacity constraining demand and the lack of passenger growth at Mortimer along with the full car park indicate that it is a similar scenario.
- Section 6.51 refers to lighting and CCTV. GWR seeks to meet the Park Mark standard for our car parks to ensure passengers safety. The GWR Design Guide specifies that *consideration must be made to minimise light pollution for neighbouring properties* and that *8M lighting columns are the maximum height*, not the standard height. Through the next stages of project design, GWR and SMPC would develop a lighting and CCTV design that is appropriate for the environment and therefore we maintain that an appropriate design can be secured by condition.

GWR continues to support expanded car parking provision at Mortimer station and believe the 150-space expansion is justified, not only by the existing suppressed demand but also to meet future growth.

Yours faithfully



Tom Pierpoint
Commercial Development Director

**20/00674/FUL - Land to the South east of Mortimer Station,
Station Road, Mortimer**

Proposal: Change of use of land and the construction of a 150-space car park with alterations to the highway, landscaping, and associated works



Committee Submission on behalf of Applicant

Officers accept the need for 76 additional spaces but would not support development due to landscape concerns. Officers have no solution to meet the need despite clear policy support:

- Core Strategy Policy ADDP6: *"Improvements to the accessibility of Mortimer railway station will be sought... This will be taken forward through partnership working."*
- Local Transport Plan Paragraph 6.6.5: *"the Council will...improve car parking at rail stations in the area".*

SMPC commenced work on its NDP in 2015. The single biggest issue for the community was the lack of car-parking at Mortimer Station raised by 92% or 1006 respondents leading to Policy IS3 which supports the expansion of the car-park at the Station.

An independent survey in Mortimer demonstrated overwhelmingly that at least 150 more spaces were needed. GWR fully support this 150-space proposal because:

- Rail travel from Mortimer (currently 175,000 annual journeys and only 51 spaces) is being significantly suppressed by parking limitations.
- Similar rural stations have greater parking capacity and have seen a growth in rail travel as a result.

In August Officers stated that: ***"the commercial needs of the operator becomes a material consideration, as does the needs of Mortimer residents"***.

The Council has approved 110 homes in Mortimer and more than 250 in Burghfield. Approved Travel Plans promote use of Mortimer station, further increasing demand. 17% of survey respondents were daily users equating to at least 146 daily users from these new homes alone.

MereOak is useful for off-peak journeys to Reading etc but there are delays up to 30minutes for traffic from Mortimer/Burghfield at rush-hour and is no help for passengers to Basingstoke.

Even if Grazeley ever goes ahead, GWR state that with the opening of Green Park station there will be no station built at Grazeley.

A pedestrian footpath over the road-bridge is proposed. Manual for Streets states gradients should *"ideally be no more than 5%, although topography or other circumstances may make this difficult to achieve"*. The inclusive mobility standards state *"an 8% slope is the maximum that may be used"*. This footpath is an improvement to accessibility over a relatively short distance and within the tolerances of guidance. The kerb height of 125mm can be provided.

A landscaping scheme will minimise the visual effect of the car-park. Existing hedgerow will be maintained at a height not less than 3.5metres. The car-park will be almost invisible from the road and there are no public footpaths from which walkers could see it. The car-park is well screened from the station by dense existing trees and hedging along the back of the Basingstoke platform. The landscaping is now within the red line.

SMPC has worked closely with GWR and Englefield Estate (the landowner) to procure the studies and reports on Need, Landscape, Highways, Drainage, Trees, and Ecology to deal with concerns of West Berkshire planners.

The Council states it supports sustainable travel initiatives – the need for the development outweighs any harm and the Committee should support this application to fulfil the NDP objective and wishes of the community.