

DISTRICT PLANNING COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 25 JANUARY 2011

Councillors Present: Pamela Bale, Brian Bedwell, Paul Bryant, Hilary Cole, Roger Hunneman, Alan Law (Chairman), Royce Longton, Gordon Lundie, Irene Neill, Anthony Stansfeld (Vice-Chairman), Tony Vickers and Keith Woodhams (Substitute) (In place of Keith Lock)

Also Present: Michael Butler (Principal Planning Officer), Derek Carnegie (Team Leader - Development Control), Sarah Clarke (Team Leader - Solicitor), Hazel Evans (Senior Planning Officer), Paul Goddard (Team Leader - Highways Development Control) and Gary Rayner (Development Control Manager), Linda Pye (Principal Policy Officer) and Councillor Julian Swift-Hook

Apologies: Councillor Keith Lock

PART I

4. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11th May 2010 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5. Declarations of Interest

Councillors Tony Vickers, Gordon Lundie and Hilary Cole declared an interest in Agenda Items 4 (1) to (3), but reported that, as their interest was personal and not prejudicial, they determined to remain to take part in the debate and vote on the matter.

Sarah Clarke declared an interest in Agenda Items 4 (1) to (3), but reported that her interest was personal and not prejudicial, and therefore determined that she would remain to provide legal advice to the Committee.

6. Petitions

Councillor Julian Swift-Hook presented a petition to the Committee in respect of Agenda Items 4 (1) to (3) which stated that *"We the undersigned, call upon West Berkshire Council to follow the clear and unambiguous advice of English Heritage, the Council's own Conservation Officer, and the Council's own Planning Officers, and to REFUSE planning permission for the permanent storage of cars on this historic site, a Scheduled Ancient Monument of international significance"*.

Under paragraph 7.3.3 of the Council's Constitution the Chairman advised that he would vary the order of the agenda and consider the petition during the Ward Member presentation on agenda items (1) to (3).

7. Schedule of Planning Applications

7(1) Application No. & Parish: 10/02001/FUL Land at former GAMA site, Greenham Common

(Councillor Tony Vickers declared a personal interest in Agenda items 4(1), 4(2) and 4(3) by virtue of the fact that he was good friends with Councillor Julian Swift-Hook who had campaigned against the applications. However, he had not predetermined the applications and would make a decision based on the evidence presented at the

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meeting. As his interest was personal and not prejudicial he determined to take part in the debate and vote on the matter).

(Councillor Gordon Lundie declared a personal interest in Agenda items 4(1), 4(2) and 4(3) by virtue of the fact that he was the Executive Member for Culture and Leisure. As his interest was personal and not prejudicial he determined to take part in the debate and vote on the matter).

(Councillor Hilary Cole declared a personal interest in Agenda items 4(1), 4(2) and 4(3) by virtue of the fact that she had been lobbied on the applications. As her interest was personal and not prejudicial she determined to take part in the debate and vote on the matter).

(Sarah Clarke declared a personal interest in Agenda items 4(1), 4(2) and 4(3) by virtue of the fact that one of the objectors was known to her. As her interest was personal and not prejudicial she determined that this would not preclude her from providing legal advice to the Committee on the matter).

The Committee considered reports (Agenda items 4(1), 4(2) and 4(3)) concerning Planning Applications 10/02001/FUL, 10/02005/COMIND, and 10/02006/COMIND for the change of use of land to permanent storage of cars (B8) on Site E on the land at the former GAMA site, Greenham Common, the removal of Condition 6 on planning permission reference No. 08/01146/COMIND and the removal of condition 6 on planning permission reference No. 08/01150/COMIND respectively.

The Chairman of the Committee advised that agenda items 4(1), 4(2) and 4(3) would be discussed together due to the fact that they all related to the movement of temporary to permanent car storage. However, the applications would all be voted upon separately and would be minuted as such.

The Chairman of the Committee also proposed that in accordance with paragraph 7.13.4 of the Constitution the total time allowed for speaking should be extended from 5 minutes to 10 minutes for each party due to the fact that all three applications were being considered together. The Committee agreed to this proposal.

The Planning Officer in introducing the report stated that following an Article 25 Direction from the Secretary of State, the Council had been directed to refer the application for possible determination to the Secretary of State should the Committee resolution be one of approval. If the Committee were minded to refuse the application the decision notice could be issued without referral. Greenham Parish Council had been the third party objector who had formally requested the call in and a copy of their letter of 14th January 2011 was attached as an appendix to the Update Sheet.

In accordance with the Council's Constitution, Mr. Tony Forward, Parish Council Representative, Dr. Andrew Brown and Mr. Chris Welch (English Heritage), objectors, Mr. Philip Demonte, supporter, Mr. David Arnold, Mr. Andrew Raven and Mr. Julian Munby (Oxford Archaeology), applicant/agents, addressed the Committee in respect of the three applications.

Mr. Forward in addressing the Committee raised the following points:

- The site was a cold and barren one and it remained basically as it was during operational times where little was to be seen on the ground as the majority of activity was carried out in the bunkers and under ground. Mr. Forward felt that this was the aspect that the scheduling wished to preserve as it would also respect the adjacent common and the Site of Special Scientific Interest within the site;

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- The site was of global significance as it reminded people of the potential cataclysmic end the planet could have had if the Cold War had escalated. The site at Greenham Common had been the first operational facility, with a total of only six in the whole of Europe, and therefore this site was the spearhead of brinkmanship of the Cold War and the only one which was fully operational in the UK;
- As part of the scheduling process the Secretary of State had made it clear to the purchasers the significance of the site and what uses would be permitted and examples of what would not. A letter had been sent to inform purchasers of restrictions on site uses and there were four uses which had been explicitly named as unlikely to obtain permission – wind farms, flammable storage, light industrial and permanent car storage;
- The applicant was now applying for permanent car storage on the site and was advertising the bunkers and extensive underground area as light industrial;
- In around 2003 New Greenham Park and Castle Windows had put in a bid for the use of the site as low key storage in all but one bunker and to retain the ethos of the remainder of the site by perhaps grazing rare breeds. This bid had been costed to provide sufficient funds to maintain the site with services and security which would have been provided from the nearby New Greenham Park;
- The current owner had put in a similar bid with similar promises but had offered considerably more money. However, having won the bid within a year they had decided that they could not achieve what they had promised without some initial funding – hence the temporary planning permission which had reluctantly been granted;
- The applicant had stated that they could not attract a temporary user for the site but just down the road at New Greenham Park such a temporary use for car storage had been set up and there appeared to have been no collaboration with organisations such as New Greenham Park;
- Mr. Forward stated that to bring the storage use into operation the applicant would need to spend £250k on the A339 junction improvements alone which would not be required for the heritage proposed uses. This sum could have been used for the maintenance if a suitable use was found;
- The applications did not provide a guarantee of any of the verbal promises made by the applicant and would not be legally binding on the current owner or on any subsequent purchaser;
- The draft five year policy produced by West Berkshire Council called HEAP explicitly included the GAMA site;
- The site was scheduled as being important but was not considered to be heritage at risk and therefore there was still time to consider the right course of action;
- The applicant had stated that his needs had to be met but Planning Policy PPS5 provided guidance which favoured respecting the terms of the scheduling of the monument and stated quite clearly that the greater the negative impact on the significance of the heritage asset, the greater the benefits that would be needed to justify approval;
- Both English Heritage and the Council's own archaeologist were of the opinion that this application would harm the monument;

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- PPS5 also stated that “local planning authorities should require the applicant to provide evidence that other potential owners or users of the site had been sought through appropriate marketing and that reasonable endeavours had been made to seek grant funding for the heritage asset’s conservation and to find charitable or public authorities willing to take on the heritage asset;
- Substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, including scheduled monuments, should be wholly exceptional;
- Mr. Forward stated that although this site was not ancient history it was very poignant of recent history and reminded us of what might have been and the efforts of those who had fought and won freedom in the face of tyranny and adversity;
- History was not made overnight but was a vital part of the country’s heritage no matter how recent and Mr. Forward felt that the monument should not be compromised to satisfy the apparent commercial failure to honour the commitment made to the Secretary of State at the time of the purchase of the site.

Members queried whether a different owner of the site would still require the roadworks to be undertaken or whether an alternative access would be provided across the Common. Mr. Forward responded that the access would still be via Brackenhurst Lane and that improvements to the junction would not be required for the current temporary permission or for a Museum.

Councillor Brian Bedwell noted that Greenham Parish Council had not attended the Western Area Planning Committee on 8th December 2010 when the application was first considered. Mr. Forward stated that a full mandate was required by the Parish Council in order to appoint a member to speak at a Planning Committee and due to tight timescales that had not been possible. Councillor Bedwell felt that this was an issue which would have been experienced by the majority of Parish Councils at various times.

Councillor Paul Bryant stated that this site was a scheduled ancient monument and over the years the site had become overgrown. He felt that funding had to be identified in order to maintain it otherwise the site would decay further. It was considered that temporary commercial use was not viable but it was necessary to fully investigate all options to show that funding had been sought for the protection of this heritage asset.

Dr. Andrew Brown and Mr. Chris Welch (English Heritage) in addressing the Committee raised the following points:

- Dr. Brown was the English Heritage Regional Director for the South East and he stressed the importance that English Heritage attached to the site;
- This was the first time that English Heritage had addressed the Planning Committee on this issue. English Heritage were Government advisors whose role was to give objective and rational advice on applications which affected heritage sites and where it was necessary to balance operational demands against the protection of the environment;
- English Heritage felt that it was necessary to ask three questions:
Was the GAMA site important?
Were the proposals harmful?
What would happen instead?
- In answer to question one – following a survey 30 sites had been given statutory protection following the Cold War. However, the GAMA site at Greenham Common

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had been considered to be an iconic site during the final stages of the Cold War and had therefore been designated as a scheduled monument. This signalled that it was a site of national and international importance and the asset was under the stewardship of West Berkshire Council to maintain and protect;

- Dr. Brown confirmed that English Heritage had supported the use of the land for car storage but only on a temporary basis. The temporary use would have allowed the owners of the site to raise capital from the commercial sector to enhance the site. The use of the site for permanent car storage would diminish how the site was viewed in the future and would undermine the character of the bunkers;
- In respect of the vision for the site it was felt that this was a potential flagship heritage site for the country. No other site within the United Kingdom had the global reach of Greenham Common and it was therefore an excellent location for a Cold War Museum. The maintenance costs could be offset by allowing an income generating use on the site but only if that use was not harmful to the character and appearance of the site. English Heritage would gladly work closely with the applicant to look at the best way of operating the site;
- English Heritage considered that the scheme would cause substantial harm to the monument and was therefore clearly contrary to Policy HE9.1 and 2 in PPS5 as no wholly exceptional case had been promoted to allow the new use in question;
- Policy PPS5 set out a range of criteria which should be met before applications causing substantial harm to a monument might be allowed in principle and English Heritage felt that none of the criteria were satisfied in this case and therefore the application should be refused.

Members queried the fact that if there was no harm to the site for a 10 year permission what would be the harm for a permanent permission. English Heritage felt that the temporary permission would be harmful but that this would be worthwhile if capital could be raised to prevent the site from deteriorating or to fund the Cold War Museum. In other words, there would be an element of short term pain for long term gain.

Councillor Anthony Stansfeld queried whether English Heritage was offering to pay to look after the site and what the implications were of not looking after it. He also had concerns in respect of health and safety on the site. Mr. Welch confirmed that the site as a whole had been scheduled as a monument and all the infrastructure within the fence was of equal importance. It was the responsibility of the owner to fund the maintenance of the site but English Heritage could assist the owner via a Management Agreement which would identify a low key way to make the site viable. English Heritage managed around 400 sites and were used to challenges. The sensible way to ensure the safety of the site was by risk management rather than restricting entrance to the area.

Councillor Keith Woodhams queried whether by supporting a ten year temporary use this had set a dangerous precedent for the permanent use of the site for car storage. Dr. Brown responded that English Heritage had shown flexibility in working with the owners of the site in an attempt to raise capital. However, when the site was originally marketed in 2003 one of the specific uses that was identified as being unlikely to be acceptable was permanent car storage. Therefore the present owners would have been fully aware of this prior to purchasing the site in question.

Councillor Roger Hunneman asked English Heritage what advice had been given to the applicants. Dr. Brown confirmed that there had been a long exchange of correspondence/discussions between 2005 to 2009 until those discussions had ceased to be productive. E-mail exchanges had subsequently taken place on a monthly basis

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where various options had been explored and boundary lines had been drawn. A Heritage Lottery grant had been explored but the owners had not been willing to put the site into public ownership which would have enabled them to access such grants.

Councillor Alan Law asked the representatives from English Heritage why they had not attended the Western Area Planning Committee meeting in December 2010 if they were so passionate about the site at Greenham Common. Dr. Brown responded that English Heritage had to trust local authorities to make sound and balanced judgements as it was not possible for representatives to attend every Planning meeting.

Mr. Demonte in addressing the Committee raised the following points:

- Mr. Demonte was an American veteran who had arrived at Greenham Common in May 1988 and had been one of the last Americans to leave the site;
- Mr. Demonte stated that the local authority had had a chance to do something with the Base when the Ministry of Defence had handed over the site in September 1992;
- Greenham Common was not associated with the local area as there were no plaques on the site stating that it was of historical interest or which recognised the heroism which had been shown by the American Air Force;
- In 1991 the site had been opened up to help disadvantaged children;
- The GAMA site had been designed to withstand a nuclear blast;
- There was support both from this country and abroad for a Cold War Museum on the site which would create jobs for the area.

Mr. Arnold, Mr. Raven and Mr. Munby (Oxford Archaeology), in addressing the Committee raised the following points:

- Mr. Raven reported that the applicants required a degree of income in order to fund the maintenance of the site;
- It was noted from the update sheet that the Council's Countryside Section had provided an estimated cost figure of £3k for the annual maintenance of the GAMA site (excluding security). Information had been provided by the applicant's agents which indicated that if a 24 hour security cover were to be provided on the site this would cost in the region of £300k per annum;
- English Heritage had not found any alternative uses for the site over the last three years and indeed the applicant had written to English Heritage on 10th December 2010 to ascertain whether there had been any other marketing opportunities or grants available but they had not responded to date;
- The ten year temporary permission for car storage had been granted to allow the applicant to look at alternative uses but to date no alternatives had been identified and no indication had been given by the local authority or English Heritage as to where else they could look;
- Mr. Raven stated that PPS5 provided that consent could be granted if no alternative uses could be found and it was therefore felt that the criteria could be met;
- Mr. Munby recognised that this was an important site and it had not been purchased as a development opportunity;
- The applicant believed that the maintenance of the site was an important issue but felt that some areas within the site were more important than others. The bunkers were visible from outside the fence and this was a key part of the site. Other areas were not

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such a prime part of the site and it was felt that the storage of cars on these areas would create a low level imposition on the site which would not cause permanent damage. This use would provide a realistic income stream which would be used to protect and maintain the site.

Councillor Keith Woodhams queried why the applicant had not researched the costs of maintenance and security of the site prior to purchase to ensure that it was affordable. When the applicant had purchased the site English Heritage had been aware that it was proposed to use the site for car storage on a temporary basis. The applicant had run the site for eight years now and was well aware of what the site could and could not be used for. The representative from English Heritage had not been on the site for at least six years. Mr. Raven advised that it was proposed to store approximately 6,000 cars on the site as a result of the three applications and a condition of any permission would mean that the applicant would be required to agree the layout of the site with the local authority. If the site was not used for the storage of cars then it could be used for storage of other materials but there was a restriction on road access for B1 or B8 use. The access restricted the volume of car/vehicle movements. The applicant had tried to find a commercial use of the site which would have the least impact but which would also attract a significant income stream to provide funding for maintenance.

Members queried the figures provided for the maintenance of the site and asked what the daily number of vehicle movements would be if there were 6,000 cars stored on the site. The Planning Officer clarified that the total cost might be in the region of £350k per annum and this figure encompassed the maintenance and security of the site. However no actual evidence to substantiate this figure had been provided by the applicants despite Officer requests. Mr. Raven advised that there would be a maximum of 20 vehicle movements per day but that would include a car transporter.

Councillor Pamela Bale asked for clarification on the bodies which had been approached for funding and what their response had been. The applicant confirmed that he had looked at the requirements of the Heritage Lottery Fund and the National Trust, New Greenham Park and Greenham Common Trust had all been approached for funding. However, charities were often willing to provide a one-off payment but would not fund an annual income. The Heritage Lottery Fund had not been approached as clear criteria of what they would and would not fund was set out on the website. Research had shown that grants would not be available for the GAMA site and only charitable bodies could apply for certain funding.

Councillor Tony Vickers referred to several e-mails he had received after a Western Area Planning Committee a number of years ago and wondered what had been done since to engage with local Members to try and obtain their support. The applicant confirmed that if a permanent permission was obtained for the storage of cars then the next application which would need to be considered at a Planning Committee would be for a Museum building.

Councillor Hilary Cole noted that there had been no uptake for the temporary permission for the storage of cars on the site and she queried whether a customer had been identified for the permanent permission. The applicant confirmed that there had been a very strong interest and a letter of intent had been received.

It was queried why a 10 year temporary permission had not provided a viable income. Mr. Raven responded that there was uncertainty around what would happen after the 10 year period and how the Museum could be maintained after that date. With a permanent permission assurances about the long term position of the site would be clearer. Councillor Anthony Stansfeld stated that what was worrying was the word "permanent"

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and he asked for clarification as to what would be considered as a viable period. This would at least give the authority some security that the use could be changed after that period but would also allow the applicant sufficient time to come up with alternative uses.

Councillor Julian Swift-Hook, as Ward Member, submitted a petition which stated that *"We, the undersigned, call upon West Berkshire Council to follow the clear and unambiguous advice of English Heritage, the Council's own Conservation Officer, and the Council's own Planning Officers, and to REFUSE planning permission for the permanent storage of cars on this historic site, a Scheduled Ancient Monument of international significance."* The petition contained 542 signatories with 237 of those from West Berkshire postcodes. The remainder were from the rest of the UK and some from further afield in other countries which reinforced the international significance of this site.

Councillor Swift-Hook advised the Committee that the site was the only fully operational cruise missile base in the UK, Molesworth being active but not fully operational. It was also the focus of the single longest anti-nuclear protest in the country during the 1980s and many local residents had supported the Women's Peace Camp during that period. Many of the legal battles that had been pursued were key in returning Greenham Common to public ownership and returning much of the area to public open space. Councillor Swift-Hook concluded that the redundant base was unique and accordingly should be provided with the highest protection which was why it had been scheduled by English Heritage in March 2003. It was important to keep the site as close to its original condition as possible and this was why it was not considered appropriate to cover the site with cars. He queried why the current owner of the site had not recognised all that had happened on the site in some way. The attendance of English Heritage at this Committee meeting was key as it was a public body which had statutory powers to prevent historic monuments being destroyed by commercial ventures.

Councillor Swift-Hook queried who actually owned the site, Mr. Arnold or Flying A Services. The applicant argued that permission should be granted for the permanent storage of cars on the site in order to provide a Cold War Museum. Councillor Swift-Hook was of the opinion that the applicant had applied for permanent permission as he was running out of money and this was not a planning consideration. The applicant had bought the site with the full knowledge of what was and what was not allowed on the site. There had been others bidding for the site at the time, such as Greenham Common Trust, and the maintenance and security of the site was clearly an issue which the owner of the site could no longer fund. The Cold War Museum was an aspiration for the site but was not actually a reality. Councillor Swift-Hook referred to Aviation Heritage which was a company that had been owned by Mr. Arnold's father and he questioned the integrity and commercial track record of the company. The Chairman of the Committee and the Council's Solicitor advised Councillor Swift-Hook that the points raised previously were not a planning matter which was relevant to the application and should therefore be disregarded. Councillor Swift-Hook apologised and stated that his comments were not meant to be a personal attack on anyone, however, the key issue was that Members might possibly be swayed by empty promises and issues which were not related to planning. There was nothing to bind the applicant to maintain the site or to provide a museum and therefore there could be no realistic expectation that the museum would be delivered in the future. If the applicant was unable to get the temporary car storage off the ground then Councillor Swift-Hook felt that Greenham Common Trust would be open to an approach to maintain the site as had originally been proposed.

Councillor Swift-Hook advised that the applicant would be able to sell the site to another commercial user at any time after permanent permission for car storage had been granted. The applicant ran an aviation heritage business and Councillor Swift-Hook could

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therefore not understand why a museum on the GAMA site could not be funded from that. Councillor Swift-Hook stated that he would love to see a Cold War museum on the site but not at any cost.

In response to a query the Planning Officer advised that Scheduled Monument Consent would be required for any additional areas of hardstanding. The applicant was waiting to see if planning permission was granted before applying for that consent. Councillor Swift-Hook confirmed that at the site visit the applicant had pointed out the additional areas which would need to be hardstanding.

Councillor Royce Longton queried to what extent maintenance costs were a planning issue. The Planning Officer confirmed that they were a valid material consideration as the future integrity of the monument was a material consideration.

It was noted that the temporary permission had a life span of 10 years and Members queried whether that time was already running. The Planning Officer confirmed that the 10 year period would only commence when the permission was implemented but the temporary permission would lapse in September 2011. Councillor Paul Bryant queried what the conditions had been on the original application. The Planning Officer confirmed that there was a list of suggested conditions and apologised for not including them on the Update Sheet. Councillor Tony Vickers queried whether there had been a condition in respect of screening around the site. The Planning Officer advised that he could not recall a specific condition in respect of screening although there had been one around landscaping.

Councillor Brian Bedwell noted that the Parish Council had referred to letters from the Secretary of State and he asked if the Council had had copies of those letters. The Planning Officer confirmed that the letters did exist and would have been advisories on the sale of the land. There was no date on the letter but it did set out the uses of the site that the Secretary of State considered would be unsuitable such as a wind farm, light Industrial use, permanent car storage or storage of flammable materials within the shelters.

Councillor Keith Woodhams queried whether consideration had been given to including a condition in respect of floodlighting of the secure area. The Planning Officer advised that if planning permission were to be granted then there would be an expectation that CCTV and floodlighting should be provided. The Planning Officer also confirmed that if planning permission was granted then it would not be a personal consent and that Councillor Swift-Hook had been correct that the applicant could sell the site with no obligation to build a museum. In response to a query it was clarified that extending the temporary permission to a period of say 25 years would in effect be classified as a permanent consent.

Councillor Brian Bedwell felt that the Council had a duty to protect such a valuable site. The idea of storing 6,000 cars on the site was ridiculous and transporters would be in and out of the site all day using a country lane which was totally inappropriate. He therefore proposed that the Committee should support the Officers' recommendation of refusal. Councillor Royce Longton seconded the proposal as he too felt that this site was totally inappropriate for the storage of such a large number of cars on a permanent basis. Councillor Keith Woodhams referred to page 65 of the report and in particular paragraph 6.2.2 which stated that English Heritage maintained that an indefinite use on the site would cause substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset.

Councillor Anthony Stansfeld felt that the whole of Greenham Common was an historic site and hardly any of it had been preserved. The GAMA site was particularly historic and would be there in perpetuity and Councillor Stansfeld was concerned that the site would

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fall into disrepair and would be under threat of vandalism if the site was not maintained or secured. This would be the risk if the permission was not granted as there was no substantive revenue funding forthcoming. The bunkers themselves were a major health and safety issue as they had vertical drops straight onto concrete which could be a danger to children. If the Council were not careful then they would be left with the maintenance and security of the site which it could not afford in the current climate.

Councillor Gordon Lundie confirmed that he was the Portfolio Holder for heritage and recognised that the site had a level of significance both locally and nationally. He had recently taken his children to see this Cold War site and felt that it would be a shame if other people could not do the same thing in the future. There had been a number of casualties as a result of the Cold War but there was currently no monument to mark the loss of life as a result of the war. Councillor Lundie agreed that something needed to be done to provide an income stream in order to maintain the site but the proposal for a permanent use of the site for car storage was an issue. He felt that the applicant was genuine in his intentions but that it was necessary to work with the Council to try and find an alternative solution.

Councillor Alan Law agreed that this site had a significant heritage importance and many people would like to see a museum but the key issue was how that was achieved. The Committee would need to judge the application before them against the planning policies but Councillor Law felt that this application was contrary to a number of Council policies such as PPS5 and Policy ENV38 in the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991 to 2006 Saved Policies 2007 and Policy BE6 in the South East Plan 2009, and should therefore be rejected.

During the course of considering the application a motion to support the Officer's recommendation of refusal was proposed by Councillor Brian Bedwell and seconded by Councillor Royce Longton. The motion was carried by 10 votes to 2. Councillor Anthony Stansfeld asked for his vote not to support the motion to be recorded.

The District Planning Committee resolved to **REFUSE** the planning application as submitted for the following reason:

The GAMA site comprises a Scheduled Monument of national significance in relation to the Cold War era. It is also located adjacent to the Greenham and Crookham Commons which is a substantial countryside and open recreational asset for the District and its population. The open storage of cars on site E on a permanent basis would not only be harmful to the understanding and visual setting of the monument, to its overall serious detriment, but also to the setting of the adjacent Common and its users again to the detriment of the overall enjoyment of that countryside asset. Accordingly the application is clearly contrary to the advice in PPS5, policy ENV38 in the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991 to 2006 Saved Policies 2007 and policy BE6 in the South East Plan 2009, and so should be rejected.

7(2) Application No. & Parish: 10/02005/COMIND Land at former GAMA site, Greenham Common

(Councillor Tony Vickers declared a personal interest in Agenda items 4(1), 4(2) and 4(3) by virtue of the fact that he was good friends with Councillor Julian Swift-Hook who had campaigned against the applications. However, he had not predetermined the applications and would make a decision based on the evidence presented at the meeting. As his interest was personal and not prejudicial he determined to take part in the debate and vote on the matter).

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(Councillor Gordon Lundie declared a personal interest in Agenda items 4(1), 4(2) and 4(3) by virtue of the fact that he was the Executive Member for Culture and Leisure. As his interest was personal and not prejudicial he determined to take part in the debate and vote on the matter).

(Councillor Hilary Cole declared a personal interest in Agenda items 4(1), 4(2) and 4(3) by virtue of the fact that she had been lobbied on the applications. As her interest was personal and not prejudicial she determined to take part in the debate and vote on the matter).

(Sarah Clarke declared a personal interest in Agenda items 4(1), 4(2) and 4(3) by virtue of the fact that one of the objectors was known to her. As her interest was personal and not prejudicial she determined that this would not preclude her from providing legal advice to the Committee on the matter).

A motion to support the Officer's recommendation of refusal for application number 10/02005/COMIND was proposed by Councillor Brian Bedwell and seconded by Councillor Royce Longton. The motion was carried by 10 votes to 2. Councillor Anthony Stansfeld asked for his vote not to support the motion to be recorded.

The District Planning Committee resolved to **REFUSE** the planning application as submitted for the following reason:

The GAMA site comprises a Scheduled Monument of national significance in relation to the Cold War era. It is also located adjacent to the Greenham and Crookham Commons which is a substantial countryside and open recreational asset for the District and its population. The open storage of cars on site C on a permanent basis would not only be harmful to the understanding and visual setting of the monument, to its overall serious detriment, but also to the setting of the adjacent Common and its users again to the detriment of the overall enjoyment of that countryside asset. Accordingly the application is clearly contrary to the advice in PPS5, policy ENV38 in the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991 to 2006 Saved Policies 2007 and policy BE6 in the South East Plan 2009, and so should be rejected.

7(3) Application No. & Parish: 10/02006/COMIND Land at former GAMA site, Greenham Common

(Councillor Tony Vickers declared a personal interest in Agenda items 4(1), 4(2) and 4(3) by virtue of the fact that he was good friends with Councillor Julian Swift-Hook who had campaigned against the applications. However, he had not predetermined the applications and would make a decision based on the evidence presented at the meeting. As his interest was personal and not prejudicial he determined to take part in the debate and vote on the matter).

(Councillor Gordon Lundie declared a personal interest in Agenda items 4(1), 4(2) and 4(3) by virtue of the fact that he was the Executive Member for Culture and Leisure. As his interest was personal and not prejudicial he determined to take part in the debate and vote on the matter).

(Councillor Hilary Cole declared a personal interest in Agenda items 4(1), 4(2) and 4(3) by virtue of the fact that she had been lobbied on the applications. As her interest was personal and not prejudicial she determined to take part in the debate and vote on the matter).

(Sarah Clarke declared a personal interest in Agenda items 4(1), 4(2) and 4(3) by virtue of the fact that one of the objectors was known to her. As her interest was personal and

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not prejudicial she determined that this would not preclude her from providing legal advice to the Committee on the matter).

A motion to support the Officer's recommendation of refusal for application number 10/02006/COMIND was proposed by Councillor Brian Bedwell and seconded by Councillor Royce Longton. The motion was carried by 10 votes to 2. Councillor Anthony Stansfeld asked for his vote not to support the motion to be recorded.

The District Planning Committee resolved to **REFUSE** the planning application as submitted for the following reason:

The GAMA site comprises a Scheduled Monument of national significance in relation to the Cold War era. It is also located adjacent to the Greenham and Crookham Commons which is a substantial countryside and open recreational asset for the District and its population. The open storage of cars on site S on a permanent basis would not only be harmful to the understanding and visual setting of the monument, to its overall serious detriment, but also to the setting of the adjacent Common and its users again to the detriment of the overall enjoyment of that countryside asset. Accordingly the application is clearly contrary to the advice in PPS5, policy ENV38 in the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991 to 2006 Saved Policies 2007 and policy BE6 in the South East Plan 2009, and so should be rejected.

7(4) Application No. & Parish: 10/02090/FULD Trunkwell Farm, Beech Hill Road, Beech Hill, Reading

The Committee considered a report (Agenda Item 4(4)) concerning Planning Application 10/02090/FULD in respect of the replacement of the existing barn with a barn-style dwelling and conversion of existing traditional brick and timber cart house to provide ancillary accommodation. Demolition of remaining barns and outbuilding.

In accordance with the Council's Constitution, Mr. Robert Walton, applicant, addressed the Committee on this application.

The Planning Officer advised that the applicant had wanted to amend the description of the application but had not done so as this would have required further consultation.

Mr. Walton in addressing the Committee raised the following points:

- Mr. Walton thanked the Committee for attending the site visit;
- Mr. Walton confirmed that he had lived in Beech Hill for 20 years and ran and owned Trunkwell House. He had also had a public house in the area in the past and the village was therefore important to him;
- Mr. Walton stated that he had bought the farm in 2007 within the intention of living and retiring in it;
- The site had been purchased from THRIVE who were a charity that worked with children in horticulture. Mr. Walton had worked closely with THRIVE and confirmed that they were supportive of the application;
- Many of the outbuildings were derelict and a number of rats could often be seen in the gardens;
- The current application had arisen following a site visit from the Planning Officer who had advised that the cart shed should be retained and that the American barn should be redeveloped;

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- The proposed development would not result in any additional dwellings/buildings on the site;
- The proposed application would tidy up what was a current blot on the landscape and the nearest footpath was at least 500m away and was therefore not close.

Members queried whether the barn which it was proposed to demolish had been used as a residential premises. Mr. Walton stated that there were three old barns on the site. The barn which had been used for residential purposes had been demolished in 1970 and the American barn had then been erected on the same site. The Planning Officer confirmed that there was no evidence of residential use of any of the barns/outbuildings.

Councillor Mollie Lock, as Ward Member, advised that the site had had planning permission an extant planning permission for the replacement of the existing farmhouse and the demolition of farm buildings to the east of the access road. The current application was to demolish all disused buildings apart from the cart shed. This would be used as ancillary accommodation and would be linked to the new barn type building. Councillor Lock felt that this application would enhance what could be considered as a dangerous site. The applicant was the owner of nearby Trunkwell House and he wanted to live and retire close to the area. The Parish Council had raised no objections and indeed supported the proposal.

Councillor Lock referred to paragraphs 6.1.2 and 6.1.3 of the report in respect of sustainability where it was considered that the site was not in a sustainable location. Councillor Lock felt that this argument could be made against and apply to any diversification of farms in rural areas. This application site was on the edge of the village adjacent to Trunkwell House which was a successful hotel venue in a country lane where a nearby house had recently been refurbished. Councillor Lock believed that by granting approval to the application it would enhance what was a derelict site and would enable the owner to live close to Trunkwell House which provided employment to local residents.

In considering the above application Members queried the fact that if this proposal was unsustainable then this had to be the case for the other properties within the village. The Planning Officer referred to previous planning applications a number of which had been approved. However, the current application needed to be considered under ENV.20 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan which related to proposals for the redevelopment of existing buildings in the countryside. As well as the requirement for the proposal to be in a sustainable location a number of criteria would need to be met. Criteria (a) stated that the redevelopment should have no greater impact (in terms of the size and bulk of buildings or site coverage) than the existing development. Although it was proposed that a number of barns would be removed, the proposed new dwelling would be built roughly on the footprint of the large steel framed open sided barn which was on the west of the site. The proposed building, although barn like in shape, would be over a metre taller and had large areas of glazing which would mean that the building would be prominent in the landscape and would be out of keeping in a rural location. The Planning Officer felt that this was a rebuild and not simply a conversion. In respect of farm diversification that only occurred if the original use of the site continued. This site was not a farm now as the majority of the buildings were derelict and abandoned. However, the site was still considered as agricultural in planning terms. The Planning Officer advised that the recommendation made by Officers was a clear decision for refusal rather than an on-balance decision due to the fact that it was contrary to a number of Council policies.

Some Members felt that the proposed dwelling was well designed and would sit well in the countryside. The site was an eyesore as it was derelict but the fact that the owner

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had let the site run down into a state of disrepair was not a valid planning reason to grant permission for an application.

Councillor Hilary Cole commented that both Western and Eastern Area Planning Committees considered similar applications on a regular basis. Any application in any small village could be considered to be unsustainable and few applications would meet all the prescribed criteria. She felt that on balance the proposed application would not harm the character of the area and should therefore be approved. Councillor Anthony Stansfeld agreed that there were inconsistencies between applications and he felt that the rules should be changed to encourage localism. Where Parish Councils were in support of an application then it should be allowed. Councillor Tony Vickers, whilst sympathising with the Officers' views, stated that there was a local connection with the applicant and he felt that the proposal would improve the locality and would not be harmful to the countryside.

Councillor Keith Woodhams queried whether if this application were to be approved by the Committee would this set a precedent for future applications. The Planning Officer confirmed that as it had been considered by the District Planning Committee it would mean that it would set a precedent across the whole district. There were a large number of untidy and derelict barns across the district and there was a real possibility that there would be an increase in the number of similar types of application. Councillor Brian Bedwell noted Officers' comments but reminded the Committee that each application should be considered on its own merits.

Councillor Alan Law referred to the appeal decision which had been circulated with the Update Sheet and felt that it might add to even more confusion if this application were to be allowed. He suggested that it might be a better course of action to look at the Council's policies ENV.19 and ENV.20 as soon as possible. Councillor Pamela Bale stated that the derelict state of the site was the responsibility of the owner. Each application should be considered on its own merits but the Local Plan and the Council's own policies should be taken into account when making a decision as otherwise there would be no certainty for developers in respect of the planning framework which should be followed. Councillor Pamela Bale proposed that the Committee should support the Officer recommendation for refusal. This motion was seconded by Councillor Keith Woodhams. Following a vote the motion fell by 4 votes to 7.

An alternative motion was therefore proposed by Councillor Irene Neill for approval of the application and was seconded by Councillor Paul Bryant. The motion was carried by 7 votes to 4.

RESOLVED that the Head of Planning and Countryside be authorised to grant planning permission subject to the following conditions and the completion of a S106 agreement within two months to secure relevant contributions:

Conditions:

- 1 The development shall be started within three years from the date of this permission and implemented strictly in accordance with the approved plans.

Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to review the desirability of the development against Policy OVS2 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991 - 2006 Saved Policies 2007 should it not be started within a reasonable time.

- 2 The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with drawing title numbers AP.0201; AP.0202; AP.0203; AP.0204; AP.0205; P 0100Rev AAP.0300; P.0102; AP.200; and P.0103 received on 9th September 2010, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

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Reason: To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the submitted details assessed against National, Regional and Local Planning Policy.

- 3 No development shall commence on site until samples of the materials to be used in the proposed development have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This condition shall apply irrespective of any indications as to the details that may have been submitted with the application, and shall where necessary include the submission of samples of glass, plastic and mortar materials. Thereafter the materials used in the development shall be in accordance with the approved samples.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity in accordance with Policy OVS2 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991 - 2006 Saved Policies 2007.

- 4 No development or other operations shall commence on site until a scheme of fencing and other means of enclosure to be erected on the site is submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and no buildings shall be occupied before the fencing and other means of enclosure have been erected to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: The fencing and other means of enclosure are essential elements in the detailed design of this development and the application is not accompanied by sufficient details to enable the Local Planning Authority to give proper consideration to these matters in accordance with Policy OVS2 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991 -2006 Saved Policies 2007.

- 5 No development shall commence on site until a scheme for the means of treatment of the hard surfaced areas of the site is submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. No building shall be occupied before the hard surfaced areas have been constructed in accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity, in accordance with Policy OVS.2 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991 - 2006 Saved Policies 2007.

- 6 No development or other operations shall commence on site until a detailed scheme of landscaping for the site is submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include schedules of plants noting species, plant sizes and proposed numbers/densities, an implementation programme and details of written specifications including cultivation and other operations involving tree, shrub and grass establishment. The scheme shall ensure;

- a) Completion of the approved landscape scheme within the first planting season following completion of development.
- b) Any trees shrubs or plants that die or become seriously damaged within five years of this development shall be replaced in the following year by plants of the same size and species.

Reason: To ensure the implementation of a satisfactory scheme of landscaping in accordance with the objectives of Policies OVS2 (a & b) and OVS 3 (b) of the West Berkshire District Local Plan Saved Policies 2007.

- 7 No development (including site clearance and any other preparatory works) shall commence on site until a scheme for the protection of trees to be retained is submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such a scheme shall include a plan showing the location of the protective fencing, and

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shall specify the type of protective fencing, all in accordance with B.S.5837:2005. Such fencing shall be erected prior to any development works taking place and at least 2 working days notice shall be given to the Local Planning Authority that it has been erected. It shall be maintained and retained for the full duration of works or until such time as agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. No activities or storage of materials whatsoever shall take place within the protected areas without the prior written agreement of the Local Planning Authority.

Note: The protective fencing should be as specified at Chapter 9 and detailed in figure 2 of B.S.5837:2005.

Reason: To ensure the enhancement of the development by the retention of existing trees and natural features during the construction phase in accordance with Policy OVS 2b of West Berkshire Local Plan 1991 - 2006 Saved Policies 2007.

- 8 The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied until the buildings which are scheduled for demolition are demolished and removed from the site.

Reason: In the interests of amenity in accordance with Policy OVS.2 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 Saved Policies 2007.

- 9 No development shall commence on site until details of floor levels in relation to existing and proposed ground levels are submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved levels.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory relationship between the proposed building and the adjacent land in accordance with Policy OVS2 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991 - 2006 Saved Policies 2007

- 10 The garage/home office created from the cartshed shall be used only as an integral part of the existing dwelling, and for residential purposes incidental to the enjoyment of the occupiers of the dwelling. It shall not be used as a separate dwelling unit, and no separate curtilage shall be created. The car port shall be retained for the parking of cars and no trade, business or commercial enterprise of any kind whatsoever shall be carried on, in or from the converted cartshed.

Reason: The creation of a separate unit of accommodation is inappropriate for the site, and a commercial use of the site would be detrimental to the amenity of the area, in accordance with Policy OVS2 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991 - 2006 Saved Policies 2007.

- 11 No development shall commence until the applicants have submitted to the Local Planning Authority a scheme of works, or other steps as may be necessary to minimise the effects of dust from the development. Development shall not commence until written approval has been given by the Local Planning Authority to any such scheme of works.

Reason: In the interests of amenities of neighbouring occupiers in accordance with Policy OVS.2 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 Saved Policies 2007.

- 12 No development shall commence until an investigation and risk assessment, in addition to any assessment provided with the planning application, have been completed in accordance with a scheme to assess the nature and extent of any contamination on the site, whether or not it originates on the site. The contents of the scheme are subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority.

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The investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken by competent persons and a written report of the findings must be produced. The written report is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority. The report of the findings must include:

- (i) a survey of the extent, scale and nature of contamination;
- (ii) an assessment of the potential risks to:
 - human health,
 - property (existing or proposed) including buildings, crops, livestock, pets, woodland and service lines and pipes,
 - adjoining land,
 - groundwaters and surface waters,
 - ecological systems,
 - archeological sites and ancient monuments;
- (iii) an appraisal of remedial options, and proposal of the preferred option(s).

This must be conducted in accordance with DEFRA and the Environment Agency's Model Procedures for the Management of Land Contamination, CLR 11.

Reason: To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors in accordance with Policy OVS.5 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 Saved Policies 2007.

- 13 Should contamination exist on the site no development shall commence until a detailed remediation scheme to bring the site to a condition suitable for the intended use by removing unacceptable risks to human health, buildings and other property and the natural and historical environment has been prepared, and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme must include all works to be undertaken, proposed remediation objectives and remediation criteria, timetable of works and site management procedures. The scheme must ensure that the site will not qualify as contaminated land under Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 in relation to the intended use of the land after remediation.

Reason: To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors in accordance with Policy OVS.5 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 Saved Policies 2007.

- 14 No development, other than that required to carry out remediation, shall commence until the approved remediation scheme has been carried out in accordance with its terms unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Local Planning Authority must be given two weeks written notification of commencement of the remediation scheme works. Following completion of measures identified in the approved remediation scheme, a verification report that demonstrates the effectiveness of the remediation carried

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out must be produced, and is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors in accordance with Policy OVS.5 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 Saved Policies 2007.

- 15 In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development that was not previously identified it must be reported in writing immediately to the Local Planning Authority. An investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of condition 12, and where remediation is necessary a remediation scheme must be prepared in accordance with the requirements of condition 13, which is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority. Following completion of measures identified in the approved remediation scheme a verification report must be prepared, which is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority in accordance with condition 14.

Reason: To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors in accordance with Policy OVS.5 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 Saved Policies 2007.

- 16 A monitoring and maintenance scheme to include monitoring the long-term effectiveness of the proposed remediation over a period of years (to be agreed with the LPA), and the provision of reports on the same must be prepared, both of which are subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority. Following completion of the measures identified in that scheme and when the remediation objectives have been achieved, reports that demonstrate the effectiveness of the monitoring and maintenance carried out must be produced, and submitted to the Local Planning Authority. This must be conducted in accordance with DEFRA and the Environment Agency's Model Procedures for the Management of Land Contamination, CLR 11.

Reason: To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors in accordance with Policy OVS.5 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 Saved Policies 2007.

- 17 No development (including demolition) shall commence on site until the surveys outlined in the conclusions and recommendations section of the letter from AA Environmental LLP referenced 103133/ARB and dated 6th August 2010 have been undertaken and appropriate mitigation measures detailed and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The approved bat mitigation measures shall be implemented in accordance with the approved programme.

Reason: To ensure the protection of protected species and in accordance with Policy ENV9A of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 Saved Policies 2007 and Planning Policy Guidance Note 9

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- 18 No external lights shall be operated on site which illuminate the access/egress points to any bat roosts established by the approved bat mitigation plan.
- Reason: To ensure the protection of protected species and in accordance with Policy ENV9A of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 Saved Policies 2007 and Planning Policy Guidance Note 9.
- 19 The approved bat mitigation measures shall be monitored at 1 and 3 years after their implementation and the Local Planning Authority shall be supplied with reports about this monitoring within 1 month of each monitoring visit. in accordance with Policy ENV9A of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 Saved Policies 2007 and Planning Policy Statement 9.
- Reason: To assess the effectiveness of the approved mitigation scheme and ensure the mitigation measures are maintained in the future to ensure the protection of a protected species in accordance with Policy ENV9A of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 Saved Policies 2007.
- 20 No works (including demolition) shall commence on site until a detailed Great Crested Newt mitigation plan and implementation programme has been supplied to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The approved plan shall be implemented in full, in accordance with the approved plan and implementation programme.
- Reason: To ensure the protection of protected species and in accordance with Policy ENV9A of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 Saved Policies 2007.
- 21 No demolition/ site works/ development shall take place within the application area until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of building recording in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Planning Authority.
- Reason: To ensure that an adequate record is made of these farm buildings of historic interest in accordance with Policy PPS5.
- 22 No development shall commence until details of the external lighting to be used in the areas around the proposed buildings have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter no building shall be occupied until the external lighting has been installed in accordance with the approved details.
- Reason: The Local Planning Authority wish to be satisfied that these details are satisfactory, having regard to the setting of the development in accordance with Policy OVS2 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 Saved Policies 2007
- 23 Irrespective of the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or any subsequent revision), no additions or extensions to the dwelling shall be built or ancillary buildings or structures erected within the curtilage, unless permission in writing has been granted by the Local Planning Authority on an application made for the purpose.
- Reason: To prevent the overdevelopment of the site and to prevent inappropriate alterations to the barn in this rural location in accordance with Policy CC6 of the South East Plan 2009 and Policy OVS2 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 Saved Policies 2007.

7(5) Application No. & Parish: 10/01948/HOUSE Wyncrest, Kintbury

The Committee considered a report (Agenda Item 4(5)) concerning Planning Application 10/01948/HOUSE in respect of the conversion and extension of a garage to provide living accommodation.

In accordance with the Council's Constitution, Mr. Caspar Williams and Mr. Richard New, applicant/agent, addressed the Committee on this application.

Mr. Williams in addressing the Committee raised the following points:

- The principle part of the proposed accommodation was for a home/office use as both Mr. & Mrs. Williams were self employed;
- Inkpen did not have a large settlement boundary but was located in a settled area;
- Although the proposal represented a 167% increase on the original dwelling Mr. Williams felt that policies were far from clear and he had examples of planning decisions made on appeal which were over the 100% mark;
- The proposed extension was well designed and Mr. Williams had no clear understanding of why it would have a negative impact on the local countryside;
- There were other examples of similar extensions in the local area;
- Mr. Williams stated that the original house had been quite small and he felt that the proposed extension would fit in with the surrounding area without contravening planning policies;

In response to a query the Planning Officer clarified that although the increase in footprint was limited the volume would increase considerably. The double garage was currently 52 square metres with a proposed increase of 86 square metres. Overall this would result in an increase on the whole plot of 167% in volume from the original dwelling. The floor area was primarily focused on in planning policy but the volume would also come into play.

Councillor Anthony Stansfeld stated that if the current dwelling was demolished the Council would likely give permission for a larger property on the site. Councillor Stansfeld could recall a number of instances where this had happened in Inkpen. Any new application for a replacement dwelling would take into account permitted development rights and incorporate that into any planning permission.

Councillor Anthony Stansfeld, as Ward Member, noted Planning Policy ENV.24 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan, which was the key development plan policy for establishing the principle of development. It stated that the extension of existing dwellings in the countryside would be permitted subject to certain criteria. One of these criteria was that the proposed development would not result in an extended dwelling disproportionate in size to the original. Councillor Stansfeld was of the opinion that the proposed extension to a modern house would not be disproportionate to the size of the plot. The site was well screened and the proposed development had the support of the Parish Council. Councillor Stansfeld therefore felt that this proposal would not harm the character of the area and should therefore be supported.

In considering the above application Members queried whether the approval of this application would set a dangerous precedent. The Planning Officer confirmed that it would set a precedent. West Berkshire had a significant number of houses within Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) where the owners would like to extend the property. The AONB demanded additional protection and therefore extensions to the

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lower range of the SPG band were restricted. To go beyond that would set a dangerous precedent.

Members asked what would be allowed as a replacement on the site if the current dwelling was demolished. The Planning Officer was of the opinion that it would be unlikely that anything bigger would be allowed to be rebuilt on the site.

Councillor Irene Neill referred to a recent appeal decision in respect of a dwelling at Tutts Clump which was for a similar proposal and it was allowed by the Inspector. Members expressed the need to be consistent across the district when considering applications against this policy and felt that further consideration should be given as to whether the policy was appropriate in each location.

In response to a query in respect of the floor area the Planning Officer confirmed that there was a 65% increase over and above the 1982 consent. This application was a 25% increase on the existing. When all the extensions to the property had been added up it came to the 167% increase.

Councillor Alan Law advised that when he had been briefed on the proposed application and he had read the report there appeared to be two areas of principle in respect of the planning policy. The absolute size – the policy stated that the size of the original house should be taken into consideration; and creeping – the policy limited the number of times that a property could be extended. Councillor Law asked the Committee to take that into consideration when making a decision.

Councillor Anthony Stansfeld proposed a motion for approval of the application with conditions and this was seconded by Councillor Tony Vickers. Following a vote the motion was lost by 3 votes to 6.

An alternative motion was therefore proposed by Councillor Keith Woodhams for refusal of the application and was seconded by Councillor Paul Bryant. The motion was carried by 6 votes to 3.

Councillor Anthony Stansfeld asked the Development Control Manager to go around his Ward to look at the number of houses which had been demolished and replaced by larger dwellings.

Councillor Roger Hunneman agreed that the policy was very opaque as it was unclear whether it referred to floor area or volume and it was felt that clarification on that aspect was required. The Planning Officer stated that the AONB was a key central part of the Core Strategy and therefore the ENV policies would need to be reviewed at a later stage. In the meantime, the Inspectors' decisions would determine whether the policies were upheld or not.

RESOLVED that the Head of Planning and Countryside be authorised to refuse planning permission for the following reasons:

1. The application site is located outside any designated settlement boundary and within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The existing dwelling has already been substantially extended. The proposed garage extension would increase the size of the dwelling by approximately 53% (in terms of floor space) over the existing dwelling and a total of 167% over the original dwelling. It would therefore further increase the amount of physical intrusion within this sensitive location and result in an extended dwelling disproportionate in size to the original, contrary to Policy ENV.24 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan (Saved Policies 2007).
2. The proposed garage extensions are not subservient to the original house and would significantly add to the domination of the original house by extensions. The proposal

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fails to demonstrate high quality design and is therefore contrary to the provision of policy OVS.2 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan (Saved Policies 2007), the general guidance of design contained in PPS 1 and the specific guidance on the design of extension contained in West Berkshire Council's 'Quality Design' SPD.