

**DISTRICT PLANNING COMMITTEE  
ON 25 JANUARY 2011**

**UPDATE REPORT**

<b>Item No:</b>	<b>(1)</b>	<b>Application No:</b>	<b>10/02002/FUL</b>	<b>Page No.</b>	<b>3</b>
	<b>(2)</b>		<b>10/02005/COMIND</b>		<b>31</b>
	<b>(3)</b>		<b>10/02006/COMIND</b>		<b>57</b>

**Site:** Former GAMA Site, Greenham Common, Basingstoke Road, Greenham, Thatcham

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**Planning Officer Presenting:** Michael Butler

**Member Presenting:**

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**Parish Representative speaking:** Tony Forward

**Objector(s) speaking:** Dr Andrew Brown - English Heritage  
Chris Welch – English Heritage  
Philip Demonte

**Support(s) speaking:** N/A

**Applicant/Agent speaking:** David Arnold  
Andrew Raven  
Julian Munby – Oxford Archaeology

**Ward Member(s):** Councillor Swift-Hook  
Councillor Drummond

**Update Information:**

Members will probably now know that following an Article 25 Direction from the Secretary of State at the CLG , via GOSE, the Council has been directed to refer the application for possible determination to the Secretary of State should the Committee resolution be one of approval. For clarity, if the Committee are minded to refuse the application, the decision notice may be issued, without referral.

Greenham Parish Council were the third party objector who formally requested the call in and a copy of their letter dated the 14<sup>th</sup> of January is attached at Appendix 1 to this update. This also sets out the Parish Council's objections in full to the application when considered at the Committee on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2010, as it is considered this will assist the DPC in debating the application.

Further information has been provided by the applicants agent indicating that if a 24 hour security cover were to be provided on the site this could cost in the region of £300,000 pa. However it is understood that this level of cover is not presently provided for on site. Despite requests the applicants have not provided the Council with the ACTUAL costs incurred over 2010 on the site.

At the time of writing, the Council has received 4 more specific objections to all the three applications. The concerns are based upon the very important National Historical component which should be ascribed to the GAMA site and its importance for future generations to remain unsullied by commercial operations of this nature. The officer recommendation is a very strong one of refusal, not "on balance", the applicants were fully aware of the planning restrictions on the site when it was purchased, serious impact on Brackenhurst Lane and the local ecology, plus potential drainage problems created by the cars and the increase potentially in hardstanding required. The visual impact upon the Common will be significant. Disruption to road users on Brackenhurst Lane and to the local resident on that road –noise and disturbance.

The Environment Agency has been consulted formally in case the applications are approved, in order that conditions may be applied. Conditional permission is recommended.

Councillor Swift Hook as the local ward member is intending to submit an 'on-line' petition to the Council. This was submitted to the Planning Department on Monday , objecting to the applications on the following grounds:-

. 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.

At the time of writing the update, 542 signatories are on the petition with 237 from West Berkshire postcodes. The remainder are from the rest of the UK and some are from other countries indicating the international significance of the site.

A whole range of comments are also made on the petition, too numerous to mention in this update, however one printed copy will be available for members to read at the meeting tonight.

Councillor Swift Hook has circulated a fact sheet regarding the history of the GAMA site indicating that the site was the only fully operational cruise missile base in the UK. [Molesworth was active but not fully operational]. It was also the focus of the single longest anti nuclear protest in the country in the 1980s as many will appreciate. The conclusion is that the redundant base is unique and accordingly should be provided with the highest protection – hence the scheduling by English Heritage in March 2003.

The Countryside Section have provided an estimate cost figure for the maintenance of the GAMA site on an annual basis [excluding security issues] This is £3000 pa.

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