

**WESTERN AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE  
ON 13/12/2017**

**UPDATE REPORT**

**Item No:** (1)                      **Application No:** 16/03411/FUL                      **Page No.** 11-26

**Site:** Land Opposite Church of St Mary and St Nicholas, Aldworth Road, Compton

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**Planning Officer Presenting:** Derek Carnegie

**Member Presenting:**

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**Parish Representative speaking:** Mr Aaron Smith from Fowler Architecture and Planning Ltd  
Mr Keith Simms – To answer questions  
Mr Mark Birtwistle – To answer questions

**Objector(s) speaking:** Mr Tony Keys

**Supporter(s) speaking:** Dr Peter McGeehin, Flood Warden for Compton

**Applicant/Agent speaking:** Mr Geraint Williams from Mursell & Co (Newbury) Ltd

**Ward Member(s):** Councillor Virginia von Celsing

**Update Information:** additional consultee comments and additional representations.

**3. Consultations and Representations**

**Compton Parish Council** - Documentation submitted demonstrating the need for the burial ground. One letter is the first formal communication from St Marys and St Nicholas Church, Compton that the graveyard was filling up. The other covers the lack of space and is notifying West Berks Planning of the issue. An email is also attached from the Vicar confirming what space is left at this time. Please see appendix 1.

Officer comment - whilst this is not a planning issue, the matter was raised at the site visit.

**Highways** - It would seem that there will be three / four funerals per year. After further thought, that is not enough in my view to raise objection. However request that (if approved) an additional condition to the conditions already requested be attached:

Access construction (plans required)

No development shall take place until details of all access(es) into the site have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This will include the vehicular access being widened to 4.8 metres whenever possible and the provision of parapets on the culvert. The use shall not commence until the access has been constructed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interest of road safety. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012) and Policy CS13 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026).

Officer comment - if approved the above condition could be attached to the decision.

**Archaeology** - the site has archaeological potential, due to its proximity to what would have been the centre of the medieval settlement of Compton centred on the Church which may have had its origins as a Saxon Minster. Earthworks to the immediate west of the Church were interpreted as the remains of part of this village, although investigations in 2012 concluded they were probably post-medieval in date, and this analysis led to their removal from the Schedule of Ancient Monuments. However this suggests that the original settlement core is yet to be uncovered. We know from later documentary evidence that there were cottages and smallholdings along the roadside, opposite to the church. A well is definitely shown within the proposal area on the 2nd Epoch Ordnance Survey mapping of 1899. Ploughing may well have disturbed buried remains but archaeological finds and features do sometimes survive even where there has been cultivation.

Our original advice was that an archaeological evaluation would be the best way to determine the nature and extent of any archaeological features or deposits present that would be impacted by the proposed car park, drainage and garden as well as the future burial plots. This would then inform whether or not any further mitigation work would be necessary.

This evaluation does not appear to have been possible pre-determination, so an archaeological planning condition is advised.

The Archaeological Officer suggested that the applicant(s) be asked to commission a programme of archaeological supervision (watching brief) during the excavation of the foundations and any related groundworks for the car park and garden of remembrance. The Archaeological Officer understands that levelling is going to take place by cutting material from the south of the site and filling to the north – this cutting should also be monitored. This should be secured by applying the following condition to any approval granted:

No development/site works/development shall take place within the application area until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall incorporate and be undertaken in accordance with the approved statement.

Reason: To ensure that any significant archaeological remains that are found are adequately recorded. Such an approach follows the guidance set out in paragraph 141 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Officer comment - archaeological work recommended prior to issuing of a decision if committee member's wish to approve the application. If not possible, then the recommended condition could be attached.

**Ecology** - No comments. When discussed suggested an informative regarding badgers.

**Environmental Health** - consulted regarding wells in the area - confirmed that they are not aware of any private water supplies (wells, boreholes or springs) within the vicinity (within 250m) of the application site. There is a borehole approximately 40m north of the site but water is only use to water the garden, and there is a mains drinking water supply.

Confirm that they are aware of a borehole at Church Farm House 40m north of the church/site, serving just that property. In January 2015 confirmation was received that the property had been switched to mains water but water from the borehole was still used for watering the garden. As a single supply there is no duty for Councils to sample or risk assess these supplies unless they are used for commercial gain, i.e. rented, or we are asked to sample/risk assess them.

Not aware of any supplies at Church Farm Cottage, or other supplies used for human consumption within 250m of the church/site, but will refer the matter to another colleague for their information.

### **3.2 Representations**

- Plan received from Murray McPherson showing where he measured the boundary of the neighbouring property to be. Please see Appendix 2.
- Parking and access not restricted to church traffic only. Can be used by anyone. Question parking with 19 spaces when having 3 funerals a year.
- Letter regarding inaccurate planning application, no risk assessments, incorrect assumptions and statements, compounding the pollution and contamination issue - Thames Water, ecology.
- Risk has not been highlighted to Thames Water, who have a pump station 95m from the site. This overflows with sewage when the ground water is at it's highest level.
- No improved risk assessment. "Groundwater Aspects" report no longer overlaps with any part of proposed burial site - so no groundwater risk assessment.
- Environmental issues in existing churchyard.
- Should be assessed against new guidance.
- Siting of graves - consider it unlikely that there will be anywhere within the site suitable for graves without posing a risk to groundwater quality.

Officer comment - it is noted that a consultant undertaking work on behalf of one of the objectors disagrees with comments by the Environment Agency and as such also the Council's Land Drainage Officer, as these consultees raised no objection subject to conditions, the application is found to be satisfactory.

DC

## Appendix 1

### Hermitage Team Ministry

Serving the Parishes of Cold Ash, Compton, East Ilsley, Frilsham, Hampstead Norreys, Hermitage & Yattendon

#### From the Team Minister for Compton & East Ilsley

**The Reverend Martin Cawte M.A. C.P.F.A.**

Telephone 01635 578716

#### The Vicarage

8 Yew Tree Stables

Compton

Newbury

RG20 6NG

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> January 2011

Mr Ron Palmer,  
Clerk to Compton Parish Council

Dear Mr Palmer,

#### Compton Burials

You may be aware that in 1950 the then adjoining landowner gifted additional land to the Parochial Church Council of St Mary & St Nicholas Compton to extend the burial provision within Compton Churchyard. This additional land is nearing completion and it is unlikely that further new graves will be able to be accommodated in the Churchyard in a year or two's time. It is not possible to further extend the churchyard by any significant extent as the adjoining land is an SSSI of archaeological interest. I have begun a conversation with the current adjoining landowner about the possibilities of boundary alignments but he is understandably anxious to resolve the issues relating to the fencing across the SSSI before entering into any detailed discussion.

The provision of land to enable burials is in any event a responsibility of the Parish Council. A number of residents have spoken to me about the possibility of establishing a secular parish burial ground, on the other side of the Aldworth Road, across the Pang, on the land which lies to the east of High Elms and the west of the access road to Church Cottage. Compton Parish Council may be aware that both Hermitage and Cold Ash Parish Councils have made provision of this sort in recent years.

This land is still in the ownership of the Stone family and Mrs Meg Stone believes that her son, William who is now the beneficial owner would be sympathetic to such a proposal. Mr William Stone currently farms in New South Wales and I have his contact details which I can let an appropriate officer of the Parish Council have in due course.

The purpose of this letter is simply to enable the Parish Council to have an informed discussion at its meeting next Monday. I want to stress that we are not in crisis mode, that there should be time available to make appropriate arrangements for the future, but that there will clearly need to be provision made in the near future.

Yours sincerely

Martin Cawte



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**8 Yew Tree Stables**

**Compton**

**Newbury**

**RG20 6NG**

**Date:** 1<sup>st</sup> February 2012

Mr Billy Pattison

Planning

West Berkshire Council

Market Street

Newbury

RG14 5LD

Dear Mr Pattison,

### **Compton Churchyard**

Mr Ron Palmer Clerk to Compton Parish Council forwarded your request to me and I apologise for the delay in replying. As well as the cases you quote I am aware of secular burial grounds, reasonably close to churchyards, being established in the not too distant past, when churchyards were full, at Holy Trinity Hermitage and at St Mark Cold Ash.

The churchyard at Compton St Mary & St Nicholas is nearing completion. The number of new graves required each year is impossible to estimate accurately but in recent years has averaged roughly 3 per annum. As things stand there is room for six or seven further graves but a minor alteration to the line of the existing boundary fence could free up space for something like 15 more (see paragraph 3). The current burials are taking place in an additional burial area gifted to the church in 1950 which is nearly full and a further significant extension of the churchyard westwards is likely to be impossible because the adjacent land is an SSSI in respect of archaeological remains lying under the surface of the paddock. The whole of the churchyard land surrounding the church has been very heavily buried in over the centuries and the Parochial Church Council do not believe there is any area of the existing churchyard which would be suitable for burying in again on top of the older graves. The responsibility for provision of burial grounds is now that of the civil parish council. St Mary & St Nicholas Parochial Church Council is very grateful for the co-operation of the Compton Parish Council in seeking practical solutions to this problem. The Parochial Church Council is very much in agreement with the Parish Council that the best solution is the creation of a new burial ground on the south side of the Aldworth Road between High Elms and Church Cottage.

I should also let you know that the Parochial Church Council are intending to submit a planning application for a minor amendment of the western boundary of the existing churchyard. This will involve the acquisition from the adjacent landowner of a small triangle of land not more than 6 ft wide at the base alongside the Aldworth road and extending not more than half the length of the western boundary of the churchyard, to enable the present row of graves in the existing churchyard to be completed. This should ensure that a secular burial ground can be in place before the churchyard completely runs out of room for further burials. If it would make sense for these two planning applications to be run together or on the same timescale the PCC would be very pleased to co-operate with the Parish Council in this.

Yours sincerely

Martin Cawte  
Cc Mr Ron Palmer

On 17 Nov 2017, at 09:16, Luci Heyn <[vicar.hermitageteam@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:vicar.hermitageteam@hotmail.co.uk)> wrote:

Dear Dave

On behalf of the Parochial Church Council, I recently conducted a survey on the number of new burial spaces available in the area of the church yard to the west of the church and the total number is 12. I also reviewed the number of coffin burials that have taken places since August 2006 (when our current burials record book began). The average is 4 per year (3.83 to be exact) but it was interesting to note that in those 12 years there were 4 years where there have been 6 or 7 burials in a single year. Therefore we estimate that, based on the average number of burials over the last 12years, we expect to have sufficient new spaces in the grave yard for 3 years but, should we have year of higher demand, this could drop to 2 years.

With all best wishes

Luci

Revd Luci Morriss  
Team Vicar, Hermitage Team Ministry

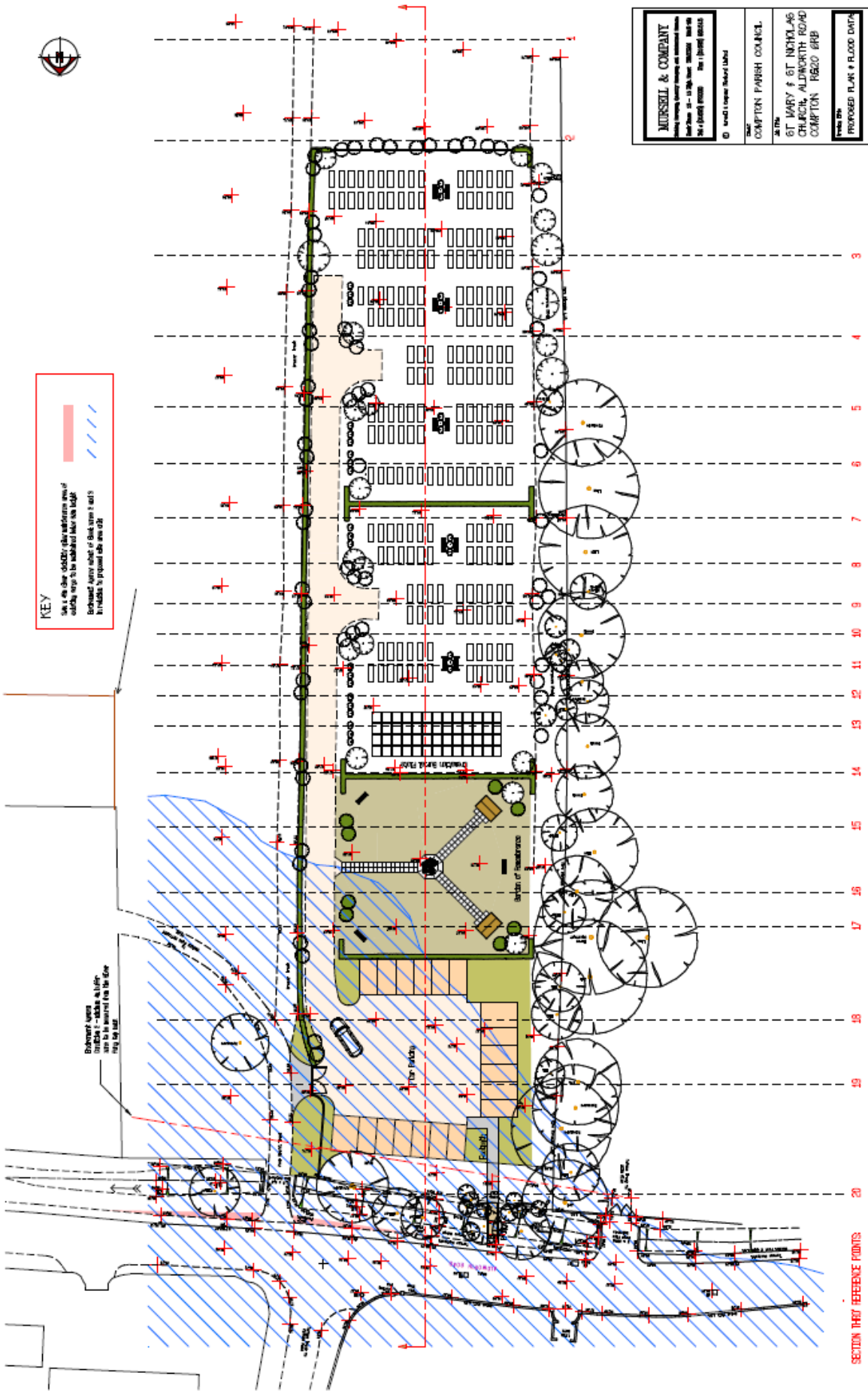




**KEY**

Site to be demolished (indicated by red hatching) to be replaced by the proposed development  
 Proposed new site of development  
 Proposed new site of development

Proposed new site of development  
 to be replaced by the proposed development  
 to be replaced by the proposed development



SECTION LINE REFERENCE POINTS

<b>MURSELL &amp; COMPANY</b> Planning & Design Services 100 High Street, Exeter, Devon, EX1 1AA Tel: 01392 262200 Fax: 01392 262201	
CLIENT: COMPTON PARISH COUNCIL	PROJECT NO: 16/03411 / 008
SITE: ST MARY & ST NICHOLAS CHURCH, ALDORTH ROAD COMPTON PARISH DEVON	DRAWN BY: AWJ / MHT
DATE: 16/03/2016	SCALE: 1:500

