

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

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



Applicants Committee Speech

Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council (SMPC) is Applicant but Great Western Railway (GWR) will construct the facility and appoint APCOA, who manage the existing car park, to deal with fee collection, safety and security.

We consulted WBC following the project being heavily endorsed in the NDP. SMPC has since worked closely with GWR and Englefield Estate (the landowner) over the last 4 years to procure studies and reports on Need, Landscape, Highways, Drainage, Trees, Ecology etc. to deal with concerns of the Council. Their three main concerns have been resolved:

Firstly, justification of need for 150 spaces:

- An independent survey was conducted in Mortimer and demonstrated overwhelmingly that at least 150 more spaces were needed.
- GWR advise that rail travel from Mortimer, currently 189,000 annual journeys and only 51 spaces, is being significantly suppressed by parking limitations and that similar rural stations have much greater parking capacity e.g. Kemble, 223,000 journeys, has 220 spaces and Kingham, 124,000 journeys, has 123 spaces.

Secondly, highway safety and accessibility for disabled and movement-restricted passengers using the road bridge and proximity of the access point to the bridge.

- A new pedestrian footpath over the road bridge is proposed. Passengers will now be able to park either side, complete a return journey, and safely return to their car via the road bridge as an alternative to the footbridge over the line. The access point has been moved further from the bridge to achieve visibility splays.

Thirdly, visual impact on the character of the area:

- A landscape and visual impact assessment has minimised the visual effect of the car park. The existing hedgerow will be maintained at a height not less than 2.5 metres. The car park will be almost invisible from the road and there are no footpaths from which walkers could see it. The car park is well screened from the station by dense existing trees and hedging along the back of the Basingstoke platform. A Grampian condition can secure additional planting.

Green Park Station will increase demand for parking at the station from those working in Green Park or travelling to Reading Stadium.

New homes in Mortimer will also increase demand.

Although Mere oak Park & Ride is useful for off-peak journeys to Reading or Royal Berks Hospital, there are delays of up to 30 minutes for traffic from Mortimer/Burghfield direction at morning rush-hour and of course it is no help for passengers to Basingstoke.

Some objectors cited a possible station at Grazeley as a reason not to increase capacity at Mortimer; this has been talked about for 40 years. GWR have stated that with the opening of Green Park station there will be no station built at Grazeley. In addition the Wokingham Local Plan is on hold pending a judicial review regarding the enlarged protection zone for Aldermaston and Burghfield AWE so the prospect for Grazeley has yet again receded into the distance.

WBC should support this application to fulfil the wishes of residents to be able to make use of the transport link.