

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

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



Committee Submission on behalf of Applicant

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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