

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

Date: 25th March 2019

Report of Additional Representations



**WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Purpose:

To consider applications for development details of which are set out in the following pages.

Recommendations:

To determine the applications in accordance with the recommendations of the Strategic Director. The recommendations contained in the following pages are all subject to amendments in the light of observations received between the preparation of the reports etc and the date of the meeting.

List of Background Papers

All documents, including forms, plans, consultations and representations on each application, but excluding any document, which in the opinion of the 'proper officer' discloses exempt information as defined in Section 1001 of the Local Government Act 1972.

Please note that observations received after the reports in this schedule were prepared will be summarised in a document which will be published late on the last working day before the meeting and available at the meeting or from www.westoxon.gov.uk/meetings

Application Number	I8/03319/OUT
Site Address	The Driving Centre Enstone Airfield Enstone Chipping Norton Oxfordshire OX7 4DR
Date	11th March 2019
Officer	Phil Shaw
Officer Recommendations	Approve subject to Legal Agreement
Parish	Great Tew Parish Council
Grid Reference	440202 E 226047 N
Committee Date	

Additional Representations

Since the finalisation of the report there have been a further 6 objections, 2 general comments and 1 support comment received.

The objection comments refer to the following matters:

Highways

- Roads are already in a bad state with potholes and crumbling verges due to additional traffic.
- B4030 already taking a vast increase in traffic due to the new housing development in Upper Heyford.
- There is an ancient Listed bridge located next to Lower Cherwell, that runs over the Cherwell which is not suited to heavy traffic flows and so the additional traffic would cause damage in the long run.
- Increase in air pollution.
- Application fails to address any traffic mitigation measures in the local area.

Neighbourliness

- Soho Farmhouse has not contributed vastly to the local economy despite stating it would, so this would not be any different.
- No social interaction between Soho Farmhouse and the local community, so the Mullin Museum would end up being the same.
- Community suffering as a result of lack of resources.
- The application will have a negative impact on public health.
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Ecology

- Building works will impact local wildlife through noise pollution and disturbance of habitat.

Landscape

- Bridle path that is to serve the lodges will become an extension of the B4030. This will disrupt the farming land it sits upon and will disturb the local residents.

Policy

- Application does not sit within the Local Plan.
- The lodges that are being sold for private use goes against national and local policies regarding housing development in the countryside.
- Proposal does not include affordable housing for the local community.

Other

- The proposed development will put further pressure on water supplies which are already being stretched in the area.
- Electricity supply under pressure. Local areas already experiences regular power cuts.
- We already have Bicester Heritage and Gaydon to name a couple as significant car museums within the area, so we do not need another one.
- Monies being allotted to Great Tew Manor will not benefit the local community in any way as it is a private property. Also situated away from the development site, and does not comply with the National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 202.
- Support comments seem to mostly all come from individuals who live miles away and will not be directly impacted by the scheme.
- As the houses are to be sold freehold there is no limit to what each owner can do on their land.

The support comments refer to the following matters:

Design and layout

- The museum will be an excellent resource for local and national schools.
- It will help to preserve the history of motorcars within England.
- Bringing some of the Mullin cars as well as automotive art and design to the museum will encourage a better understanding and education of motoring and craftsmanship.

The general comments refer to the following matters:

Policy

- The applicant's business case has not yet been published. Under WODC's Statement Community Indictment this should be published a minimum of 21 days prior to a hearing. The public and any other observer have the right to study the business case for 21 days.

A letter in a similar vein has been received from an agent acting on behalf of objectors seeking access to the Applicants business case on the basis that this information is being denied to the public. In summary they consider that this is prejudicial to the public's ability to assess the proposals and makes a series of assumptions as to how that information will have been used by the applicants to seek to justify their case. The letter concludes by stating that failure to provide the information will feature in potential legal redress

Your Officers advise that the financial information referred to does not in fact form part of the application documents and as such has not been withheld as stated. Such information was indeed included in the first application and featured heavily in the pre application discussions as part of your officers discussions regarding whether there was indeed any financial basis for the lodges. It was concluded by officers that there was not (see main report at para 5.14) and so the information was not submitted with the revised application. Your officers non- the- less approached the agent with a view as to whether the applicants would be prepared to release the information. The following response has been received:

This is an outline planning application with all matters except access reserved. An illustrative Masterplan has been submitted in support of the planning application, together with a series of parameter plans.

This is a tourism led development that involves the re-use of a brownfield site. The proposed development accords with the adopted West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 and the National Planning Policy Framework. There are no technical objections. Tew Park is not necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, is not a material consideration and should not be weighed in the planning balance. As such there is no policy requirement for a Business Plan to be submitted in support of the planning application. I note that this is also reflected in the officer report.

Whist the Business Plan was tabled during pre-application discussions as part of the background context, this was not submitted as part of the formal planning application submission and is not a document that we rely upon. However, the Economic Impact Analysis submitted in support of the application clearly demonstrates the economic benefits of the proposed development, in terms of:

- *Between £12.4 million and £13.7 million in GVA (economic output) per annum in the Oxfordshire economy;*
- *Up to 338 jobs supported in the local economy; and*
- *200,000 visitors.*

Based upon the illustrative Masterplan and parameter plans a Cost Estimate has been prepared by Smith Thomas Consult. The Cost Estimate shows a project in the order of £100m and with professional fees, contingency and inflation, this takes the total to approximately £125m.

It is also important to emphasise, as Peter Mullin has confirmed from the outset, this is a legacy project. On his death his entire classic car collection will become the property of the Peter Mullin Trust together with a substantial endowment to fund and protect the collection in perpetuity.

In reviewing the documents it has also become apparent that the views of the Gt Tew Parish Meeting were submitted and summarised as neighbour representations rather than as a consultee comment. They are therefore repeated in full here for consistency with other Parish Council/Meeting comments:

*The **Great Tew Parish Meeting** has not had time to call a formal meeting to consider this revised application but informal conversations with a cross section of the community confirms there is still a clear majority in favour of this revised application.*

To summarise, in February we supported the application with the condition that the Enstone District & Uplands Conservation Trust's suggestion that the 208,000 annual visits be made a formal condition of planning approval. The 200,000 figure (online booking only) has been incorporated in to the application.

In addition the application has been revised in other ways that demonstrate the extensive local consultation they conducted has borne fruit:

- the developable area has been reduced and is now entirely contained within the brownfield site (the former RAF Enstone).

- £1.7 million of s 106 funds have been diverted towards traffic, calming, a car park at Great Tew School and affordable housing (yet to be defined)

- the design of the site has been taken over by Foster & Partners ensuring the site will combine both world class architectural quality with minimal environmental impact.

We believe that this alterations demonstrate a willingness on the applicants to work with local communities. We also consider that this development offers the best possible option for a problematic site. The alternatives - a business park or housing development

- would creative more traffic and disturbance to an area rightly valued for its tranquillity.

The establishment of a world class automotive museum, in the middle of an area rich in motoring history and designed by one of

the world's great architects, which would create in excess of 300 jobs and involve extensive opportunities for education, is something WODC should definitely embrace.

The final comments of the **Planning Policy Manager** have also been received and the conclusion is reported in full below:

This is a large and relatively complex application in a sensitive rural location that raises a number of different policy considerations. A key issue is the location of the development and whether it is appropriate for the type and scale of use proposed. In this respect it will be particularly important to consider the potential impact of development on the character of the area and whether the proposal is appropriate for this location.

On a related note the location of the development means it is likely to be a predominantly car-borne destination and with anticipated visitor numbers of 200,000 per year this requires careful consideration. A decision therefore needs to be made in the planning balance as to whether the transport mitigation measures proposed are sufficient to outweigh any concerns when considered alongside the other potential benefits of the scheme such as additional local employment and spend in the local economy.

A third key consideration is the extent to which the proposal is consistent with the Council's overall strategy for promoting sustainable tourism which is focused on making the optimum use of existing tourist facilities and encouraging new small-scale facilities and attractions which can be more easily assimilated into the landscape and local communities.

Larger-scale proposals should be steered towards the main towns where there are public transport opportunities available and traffic impact on rural roads can be minimised.

The proposal is clearly very large in scale and the applicant's principal argument is that the nature of the proposal is such that it could not be located within or on the edge of a main settlement. This argument requires careful scrutiny in weighing up the overall planning balance because it could potentially be made in respect of any number of different uses. It will need to be convincingly demonstrated that the automotive museum has a functional link to its location, or that the museum could not otherwise be located within or close to a service centre or village.