

Enstone Parish Council Comments on the Mullin proposal

27 January 2023

Application Number: 22/03415/FUL Address: The Driving Centre Enstone Airfield Enstone Chipping Norton Oxfordshire OX7 4DR Proposal: Construction of automotive museum building and museum exhibition building with associated corporate hospitality/club space, public food and beverage, retail, workshops, showroom and energy centre and formation of car exercise road. Construction of supporting holiday homes together with the formation of landscaped grounds, associated site services and other works. Case Officer: Phil Shaw

Enstone Parish Council objects to the proposal for the reasons given in Sections 1 and 2 below.

This document summarises (1) the comments made at a public meeting of Enstone residents, (2) the comments of Enstone Parish Council, and (3) a number of desired mitigating actions should the proposal be approved by WODC. Appendix 1 lists the points made by residents who attended the public meeting and Appendix 2 includes more detail comments from the Parish Council on the Mode Transport Assessment included in the proposal documentation.

1. Public Meeting – the majority of residents attending voted to object to the proposal

Enstone Parish Council held a public meeting in Enstone on 17 January 2023. The meeting was attended by 63 members of the public, eight Parish Councillors, County Councillor Geoff Saul and District Councillors Andrew Beaney and Alex Wilson.

Members of the public were invited to express their views and at the conclusion of the meeting Enstone residents were asked to show their support or objection to the new proposal by show of hands.

38 residents voted to object to the proposal,
3 voted in support, and
7 voted in support with conditions.

11 non-residents did not vote

A record of the points raised by members of the public is included in Appendix 1. The principal areas of concern may be summarised as:

1. The height of the museum building and the light pollution especially from the glazed upper storeys
2. The morphing of the project from a world class museum into primarily a private members club
3. The planned operation of the 'exercise track' six days a week, 52 weeks a year, its uncontrolled use for members' vehicles, and the likely noise arising therefrom
4. The increase in traffic on local roads that will arise from the visitors, staff, members, contractors, service providers and holiday home residents.

5. A strong concern that an automotive museum that is positioned away from public transport and that is reliant on non-renewable energy sources will add to emissions and is not consistent with national or local environmental objectives and policies.
6. The disproportionate size of the project: the addition of 28 more holiday homes and 40+ members rooms creating a development which will dwarf neighbouring settlements such as Church Enstone and Gagingwell.
7. The suspicion that the scope and scale of the project will creep further. Soho Farmhouse, which is located next to the proposed Mullin project and which is under the same ownership and management, was cited frequently as an example of such incremental expansion.

2. Enstone Parish Council Meeting – The Parish Council voted to object to the proposal

Enstone Parish Council met on 19 January to discuss the proposal.

The meeting was attended by nine Parish Councillors, one PC having given their apologies. One PC spoke about the commercial and job opportunities that may be expected from the development. Others raised objections, please see below.

After discussion a vote was held

8 Enstone Parish Councillors voted to object to the proposal,
1 Parish Councillor voted in support of the proposal

The Parish Council has the following concerns about the proposal:

1. An unsustainable location which is not accessible by public transport

Section 7 Policy T1 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan states *“All new development will be designed to maximise opportunities for walking, cycling and the use of public transport, ensure the safe movement of vehicles and minimise the impact of parked and moving vehicles on local residents, business and the environment”*. This proposal is not consistent with the policy.

Para 110 of the NPPF specifies that, *‘Safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users’*. The location of this site is not consistent with this objective.

2. The increase in car and other traffic on local roads generated by visitors, staff, members, contractors and service providers, and holiday home owners/occupants.

Enstone Parish Council does not accept that the Transport Assessment written by Mode Transport offers a credible prediction of the impact of the development on local roads for the following reasons. (a) It makes no mention of Members, (b) it suggests that there will be a total of two (!) service vehicles visiting the site daily, (c) it understates the number of employees, (d) it provides no estimates of vehicle movements by contractors, and (e) it understates the likely road usage by occupants of the holiday homes. Please see Appendix 2 for more detail on these criticisms of the traffic projections in the Transport Assessment.

Among all the surrounding communities the parish of Enstone, which includes the hamlet of Gagingwell on the B4030, will experience the greatest impact from the development in terms of increased road use.

3. The height of the museum building and the resultant light pollution, especially from the highly glazed upper storeys, are a significant concern. In particular we object to the plan to locate the private members club on the fifth floor. We make the assumption that the members club will operate evenings/nights, possibly 365 days a year, as over 40 member bedrooms are included in the plans. The design of the building includes extensive glazed areas which we believe will create an intrusive visual impact on a predominantly rural setting. The museum is positioned on the highest land in the immediate area and will be visible from a considerable distance – we have not seen in the documentation a realistic assessment of the night-time visual impact.
4. The morphing of the project from primarily a world class motor museum into primarily a private members club, including the provision of 40+ members bedrooms. The new proposal appears to focus on catering for the appetites of wealthy classic car owners and to deviate from the former vision for the museum to hold charitable status.
5. The operation of the ‘exercise track’, its uncontrolled use by members for up to 312 days a year and the resulting noise from the track is a major concern for the Parish Council .and local residents.
6. The disproportionate size of the development, which will dwarf neighbouring settlements such as Church Enstone and Gagingwell.

3. If the proposal is approved by West Oxfordshire District Council, Enstone Parish Council seeks the following adjustments and mitigations

3.1. Enstone Parish Council argues for ‘appropriate financial contribution’ especially towards mitigating the impact of traffic in Enstone where the greatest impact of traffic will be experienced.

Enstone Parish Council seeks appropriate mitigating actions, especially traffic calming measures and safety improvements to the junctions of the A44 and the B4030, the A44 and the B4022, and the B4030 and the B4022. Traffic infrastructure development such as road widening, passing bays and lay-bys should also be considered.

We argue that the development should be looking beyond ‘junction capacity’ to an evaluation of the implications for road safety and the impact of the development on all road users and on local residents.

In support of this we again draw attention to Section 7 Policy T1 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan *“All new development will be designed to maximise opportunities for walking, cycling and the use of public transport, ensure the safe movement of vehicles and minimise the impact of parked and moving vehicles on local residents, business and the environment”*.

Paragraph 1.2.2 of the Framework Museum Travel Plan gives as a key objective *‘To show a commitment to improving traffic conditions within the local area’*. The conclusion in the transport assessment that nothing need be done to improve the junctions is not consistent with this objective.

Accordingly, it seems appropriate to obtain more financial contribution from the development to improve the safety of local junctions and to minimise the impact of moving vehicles on local residents. We refer to the WOLP in support of this request, *‘Where necessary to mitigate the impact*

of development and support planned growth, contributions will be sought from new development towards new and/or enhanced highway infrastructure either directly as part of the development or in the form of an appropriate financial contribution.”

3.2 We also ask that the developer reconsiders the height of the crescent building and the external spill from internal lighting so as to reduce the visual impact of the development on the local community. Could the members club be located elsewhere than on the top floor of the tallest structure?

Enstone Parish Council asks that adjustments be made to the plans to substantially reduce or eliminate the risk of light pollution from the lighting within the crescent building. This concern is greatest with regard to the fifth floor of the crescent building, but the Parish Council is also concerned that the internal lighting on the fourth floor will spill and be widely visible.

3.3 Limitations on Use of the Exercise Track to reduce risk of noise nuisance for local residents

Reflecting the concerns of the community the Parish Council asks that steps be taken to reduce the impact of noise from the exercise track, including measures such as: limiting the vehicles to those exhibited in the museum, reducing the hours of operation to allow local residents to have peaceful enjoyment of their homes and gardens, restrictions on Sunday operation of the track, exclusion of noisy vehicles, noise-reducing track surface materials.

The Parish Council also asks that sound monitoring equipment be installed and that information from it be made publicly available.

The Parish council is aware that the outline approval given in 2020 includes:

27 The car exercise track shall only be used by:

1) automobiles which by virtue of their financial value, artistic value, historic significance and/ or rarity are deemed to be collectable and eligible for exhibition in the museum; and

2) contemporary road legal automobiles for demonstration or exercise or exhibition.

and the said use of the track shall only take place between the hours of 0900 and 1800 on days that the museum is open to the public

REASON: To limit potential noise impacts

29 The level of noise emitted by vehicles on the exercise track, measured at a distance of 20 metres from the middle of the hard surface of the track hereby permitted, shall not exceed 75db LAeq5min or 83 dbLMAX (fast) at any time.

REASON: To limit noise impacts

The outline plans that were approved in 2020 included a Bentley Pavilion/showroom which has since been dropped. We understand that the 2020 approval to allow ‘*contemporary road legal automobiles for demonstration or exercise or exhibition*’ was intended to accommodate the need to demonstrate these Bentley vehicles rather than to allow members to exercise any road legal vehicle on the track – something which is in danger of creeping into the present application.

In view of the above and to address the concerns of local residents, it is requested that a tighter definition of ‘*contemporary road legal automobiles for demonstration or exercise or exhibition*’ be made that is consistent with the purpose of the project as a museum and that reflects the clearly stated intentions of the applicant (as taken from correspondence between Jon Westerman and Phil

Shaw in 2019 and included on the WODC planning portal at 18/03319/OUT, that the purpose of the track is for 'exhibits to be exercised'.

3.4 The Travel Forum

We welcome the recommendation (TA 8.2) that there should be a local Travel Forum *'to allow for communication between local stakeholders and the MAM operations team to meet regularly and address any travel aspects resulting from the MAM operations.'* However, it is not clear how much influence the Travel Forum will be able to exercise in monitoring and seeking to mitigate the impact of the MAM. We would welcome more information on this. We also suggest that the scope of the Forum be expanded to include other aspects of environmental impact, including noise from the track.

3.5 Enhancement of Local Public Rights of Way (PROW) and Bridleways

The TA includes some important and valuable improvements to the PROW network. We welcome especially the joining up of the Green Lane along the southern boundary of the site. But we would like to be reassured that the construction of the holiday homes and associated landscaping will not include the construction of barriers which will detract from the enjoyment of the rural landscape by users of the Green Lane and the bridleway 28 that crosses the site. The Parish Council also seeks confirmation that pedestrians and non-motorised users of the bridleway 28 and the restored Green Lane route between the B4030 and the B4022 will be safely separated from motorised traffic accessing the site, both during the construction phase and during operation of the museum.

One condition of the approval of the outline application was improvement to Bridleway 202/28 parallel to the B4030 to the West of Gagingwell (as shown in Appendix J of the TA). This contribution was included in the Deed of Agreement dated 15 May 2020 as *'a safer connection/crossing of the B4030 to the west of Gagingwell to connect to bridleway 202/36'*. We do not see this mentioned in the Transport Assessment in section 8.5.4. We would like confirmation that this will be included as it is an important component in joining up the local PROW network in the parish.

Appendix 1: Notes of comments made at the public meeting on 17 January at Enstone Parish Hall

Note: these comments have been grouped thematically, and where necessary clarification is given in square brackets

ENSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

Public Meeting held in Enstone Parish Hall
On Tuesday 17th January at 7 pm

A public meeting was held to discuss “The Driving Centre, Enstone Airfield, Enstone”, 22/03415/FUL The Mullin Automotive Museum Development Company Limited

Present: Cllrs N Knott, P Shaw, D Robottom, P Johnson, H Bourne-Taylor, M Baggaley, CC G Saul, DCs A Beaney and A Wilson

Cllr Glendinning taking notes

Apologies: Cllrs Ward and R Parker

63 members of the public

Three letters of objection were received from members of the public who could not attend.

Below is a record of the comments of those who attended. These should be read with reference to the planning proposal above.

NOTE:

It was pointed out by one of the Councillors that the developers have stated that the museum will go ahead. The Developers have made it clear if they do not get approval to the new proposal they will revert to the original outline approval given in 2020.

We therefore cannot object to the museum what we should do is focus on how to limit the impact of the development so that the planning authorities are aware of the concerns expressed and type of mitigating actions that could be taken.

OCC have objected to the application in relation to the Bridleway. The only road recommendations in Enstone Parish are some painted “slow signs” on the junction of the B4022 and B4030.

Concerns raised during the meeting:

Traffic:

1. The calculation of an addition 1800 traffic movements could be increased by a further 200 for workers and assuming people drive to the local pubs there could be more than 2000 traffic movements a day.

2. We cannot do anything about the quantity of traffic apart from building an underpass or flyover.
3. A roundabout at Worths and the Tew junction would help.
4. We should highlight to planners that the accidents on rural road are much higher than urban roads. Many of these accidents are not reported they are dealt with at the scene by those involved.
5. Is 20mph more polluting than going at a greater speed? (*Since researched and found to be not more polluting see p23 of <https://content.tfl.gov.uk/speed-emissions-and-health.pdf>*)
6. Residents walking along the road [Green Lane] spend more time moving off the road with the amount of traffic going to Soho.
7. We should investigate the use of tracks at Bicester and Silverstone [to increase our understanding of how the exercise track may actually be used].
8. A footpath along the Charlbury Road and passing places on the Lidstone road would help.
9. Local workforce could be commuted to the museum by bus joining in with Warner Leisure, Heythrop, Alpine and Soho. Heythrop and Alpine already bus employees in.
10. Electric buses could be shared with Heythrop, Soho and the museum.
11. The [new] bridleway needs clarification. This needs to be for pedestrians, horse riders and bicycles only with no traffic.

Light Pollution:

12. A members club is being proposed on the top floors of the museum which could cause light pollution at night in Gagingwell and surrounding areas. There is less light pollution from the industrial estate [as seen from Gagingwell because of the lie of the land]; for example Alpine have a new car park and the light pollution from that causes a halo effect at night.
13. The new proposed version of the Mullin project seems out of proportion to the area, in particular the strain it will put on the roads and transport system. No doubt it will give rise to a certain amount of noise, and light pollution has also been raised as a concern.

Mullin:

14. New investors have new ideas. This is no longer a museum, it is more about making money through the members club.
15. The application for the original museum was for a Charity. This

has not been mentioned again?

16. Mission creep and expansion of the original plan as has happened at Soho. It is no longer now a car showroom and 28 houses - now there are proposed 56 houses and a members club.
17. What is the Mullin interpretation of an exercise track. This is bound to become more than an exercise track.
18. It is worth noting that the exercise track is also available for occupants of the holiday homes and the members club.
19. Could a price tariff be charged on owners and members to use the exercise track.
20. This track can be used from 9am to 6pm can we tie them down on the quantity and type of cars being exercised and the noise level.
21. How wide is the exercise track - can more than one vehicle travel around it at the same time. Is it wide enough for racing?
22. The Mullin will have more houses than Church Enstone.
23. The original Mullin : there is another planning application to assist with this which is an opening of a quarry off the Green Lane to provide aggregate for Mullin: It is for 4 years to provide 25,000 tons of material per annum from the Green Lane to Tew.
24. Is the planting scheme being planted as a carbon offset?
25. How many local people will be employed at the museum? Should a proportion be made to be local?

General:

26. What is in it for Enstone and the local community?
27. This area is becoming a Cotswold theme park with Soho, Diddly Squat, Daylesford, etc. and now the Mullin moving into the area, has changed the character of the area, and not necessarily to the good.
28. This area has reached saturation point : the application should be looked at in the context of everything else going on in the area.
29. Planners are very aware of the creep effect at Soho. Can we tie the Mullin down so that it does not happen?
30. Is it possible to have a judicial review - One was tried in the past but was unsuccessful.
31. Was a solar farm applied for in the past?
32. Enstone cannot apply for any money. Why is Tew school getting a car park and low cost housing and Enstone only getting painted

signs on the road.

In favour:

33. Mullin is an excellent idea, otherwise it could become a huge housing estate.
Quarries are often turned into beautiful lakes.
34. One resident has seen no increase in traffic arising from the redevelopment of Heythrop Park.

Comments can be written on the WODC planning portal using the planning application no. 22/03415/FUL

A vote was taken:

In favour :		3
In favour with conditions:	7	
Against:		38

11 non residents were not allowed to vote.

Appendix 2: Some objections to the calculation of estimated vehicle movements in the Transport Assessment (TA)

The modelled vehicle movements on which the impact of the development on the capacity of the local road network is calculated, (as shown in Tables 6.1 and 6.2 of the TA) appear to be understated. As a result, we consider that the calculations as to impact on capacity are flawed.

Areas where there appears to be an understatement of likely traffic movement:

Service Vehicles. The model in the Transport Assessment assumes that there will be just 2 servicing vehicles visiting the site per day, 4 traffic movements. Additionally, it is modelled that there would be 4 car transporter movements per day. These movements are described as ‘worst case’, but cannot realistically indicate the likely deliveries and collections from the site. These are absurdly low figures when there will be the museum, the exhibition space, the members club and the 56 holiday homes to maintain and service. No evidence is presented as to how these numbers are arrived at, in distinct contrast to the complex calculations around anticipated resident and visitor car movements.

Part 2 of the Design and Access statement includes the following, *‘The servicing and back of house areas, concealed behind the workshop, are located close to the site entrance to minimise the impact of service vehicles passing through the site. Much smaller scale vehicles will transport goods and staff around the site, in a similar vein to the converted milk floats in the neighbouring Soho Farmhouse, causing as little intrusion on the overall guest experience as possible.’* This appears to confirm that the designers anticipate that there will be such a need for service vehicles coming to the site that users on the site should themselves be protected from them.

Nor is there any indication given as to how these movements will be monitored or limited once the site is operational. Realistic numbers based on appropriate comparators are needed from similar sites. These numbers should in turn be built into the modelling of future traffic movements.

Members’ Vehicles. The transport movements used for calculating the likely impact make no mention of members and their vehicles; members are referred to elsewhere in the proposal as an important component of the anticipated users of the museum and its facilities. Are the members included in the 334 max visitor numbers? If so how will their movements be monitored?

Staff members Vehicles. The TA refers to 40 staff members and 30 volunteers (TA 6.2.4), whereas elsewhere in the proposal documentation up to 200 staff are mentioned. We understand from the project team that 200 is the expected number. This will have an impact on journeys made to and from the site.

Holiday Homes Vehicles. The Transport Assessment takes as its baseline assumption that traffic movements resulting from the holiday homes will be comparable with data for privately owned houses, *‘The TA of the consented scheme utilised the TRICS database (v.7.9.3) under the category ‘03 – Residential – A – Houses Privately Owned’.* (TA 6.3.1). But this assumption takes no account of the scale of the homes proposed. These homes have up to six bedrooms, and staff accommodation for two or three staff and garaging for up to 4 vehicles. For this reason the estimated travel movements must clearly be on the low side and not, as stated, ‘worst case’.

Contractors’ Vehicles – Contractors’ vehicle movements are referred to in the Travel Plan (Section 4.10) without any quantification. These vehicle movements are not included in the Transport Assessment. Why not?