

Speaking notes – 316 West Wycombe Road

Thank you, Chairman. I am objecting to the current application on behalf of West Wycombe Parish Council.

As members will have noticed, there is an impressive history of planning applications for this site, several of them retrospective. In addition, planning enforcement measures have repeatedly been required due to breaches of planning consents given.

The present application continues a consistent pattern of progressive, salami-slice development which, cumulatively, has gained planning consent for a development which, we believe, would never have succeeded if the true, final intentions of the applicant had been known from the start.

The initial application in 2009 was for the storage of 14 motor vehicles, with consent given on the basis that “no cars should be advertised for sale, or have mechanical work undertaken whilst parked on the land”.

In 2010 the Planning Officer’s report stated “An enforcement investigation has shown that the site is being used for the storage sale and repair of motor vehicles. A portacabin has also been brought onto the site in association with the use.” Although a shed had been erected on site, no enforcement action was taken.

In 2011 a planning application was duly submitted to add an extension and an upper floor to that original shed. The Officer’s report stated that an investigation “had revealed that there were numerous breaches of planning control taking place on the site, most notably: the sale of motor vehicles; removal of a mature hedge along the frontage; incorporation of residential land within the commercial area of the site; and the erection of an unauthorised fence”.

It was noted that poles had been erected to support CCTV cameras. Retrospective consent for this was given, provided that the poles were for the cameras only and that “no form of lighting should be affixed to the poles without the express permission of WDC”.

At the time of a 2013 planning application the Officer’s report noted that lighting had been installed on the CCTV posts. Planning consent for change of use was granted, with restrictions placed on the hours of business.

Further applications in 2014 and 2015 sought to further intensify the use of the site, and to add buildings to provide storage, wash and maintenance facilities. At the time, West Wycombe Parish Council pointed out that the restrictions on the hours of business were being flouted.

It is our contention that, through gaming the planning process, the applicant has sought to make a fool of your committee and planning officers. We believe that there is a pattern of behaviour on the part of the applicant that demonstrates contempt for the proper planning process.

The latest application represents a considerable enlargement of the building on the site – the footprint is well in excess of twice that of the current building.

The existing building, in brick and slate, would be replaced by a much larger structure (more than 3 times the size of the present building) in grey metal. Laughably, the applicants describe their proposed new building as “of a general design, scale and form that would preserve the character of the area”. It most emphatically would NOT!

It is noted that the proposal includes the stopping up of the site entrance to 314 West Wycombe Road – but this was a **condition** of planning consent being granted for an earlier application!

As it is, traffic turning into the site from the east is seen to occupy the right turn lane into Chapel Lane, thus endangering oncoming traffic.

We remain concerned at the number of cars, vans and lorries that are being rented out from the site.

Finally, West Wycombe Parish Council very much shares the detailed objections and concerns raised by Network Rail, particularly the concerns regarding the potential danger to the public and of costs to be incurred by the public purse if this application is allowed to proceed.

On behalf of our concerned residents, and in support of a properly managed planning process, we urge you to get a grip on the stewardship of the site by the current applicants, and to emphatically reject the present application.

Thank you.