

From: John.Steele@awe.co.uk
Sent: 12/08/2010 13:37:45
To: Hazel Evans; dave.shirt@btinternet.com
CC: Ian.Ward@awe.co.uk; RICC.Office@awe.co.uk
Subject: Hydrus Planning Application 10/01695: AWE Response to Aldermaston Parish Council
Importance: High
Attachments: Hydrus 13. Appendix E.6 Visual Impact Schedule Supplementary Viewpoint 11.8.10.doc; 6471D_100810RM_AddPhotomontage.pdf; AWE Response to Aldermaston Parish Council_Noise.doc

Hazel / Dave

The purpose of this email is to respond to the Aldermaston Parish Council consultation on the above planning application which states:

"At its meeting on 3 August Aldermaston PC recorded No Objections to this application, but requested two conditions:

1. AWE provide a statement regarding noise from the wires of the lightning conductor grid.
2. AWE provide visual montages of the view from the second floor of the Manor House."

Item 1 – I have attached a statement from our noise consultant which indicates a very low probability of noise nuisance arising from these circumstances. Notwithstanding this AWE will undertake noise monitoring during the construction and commissioning phase which can include this potential nuisance and respond accordingly.

Item 2 – I have attached the additional photomontage together with an extended extract from the visual impact schedule which was provided as part of the planning submission. The landscape architect who was responsible for the preparation of the visual impact assessment has provided a summary statement below. The overall conclusion being that the additional photomontage does not lead to a revision in the overall conclusion that the visual impact upon the Manor will be minor adverse. We also now have the benefit of the advice from WBC conservation officer who agrees with this overall assessment.

"The submitted Landscape and Visual Assessment for Project Hydrus includes an assessment of views from rooms within Aldermaston Court. This encompasses views from south facing rooms the within the hotel, including those on the second floor.

Following the request from Aldermaston Parish Council on 3rd August 2010 for an additional photomontage from the second floor of the hotel, a further baseline photograph was taken on 10th August 2010. This is necessarily a summer view. A photomontage from this location has subsequently been prepared and is provided with this statement.

The visual assessment contained within the DEEA considers the impact of the Hydrus proposals during the winter months at Operational Year 1, when there are no leaves on deciduous trees. The text of the existing visual assessment for Visual Receptor 50 (Aldermaston Court hotel and conference centre) has been extended to include an individual assessment of the impact of the proposals on the specific view from the second floor of the hotel. The extended assessment is appended to this statement. This is in line with the assessment of other specific views from the hotel and its grounds, previously requested by West Berkshire District Council.

The impact of the proposals on the specific view from Room 4M on the second floor of Aldermaston Court is assessed as Moderate Adverse. The overall assessment of the impact of the Hydrus proposals on Aldermaston Court and its grounds had already considered views from south facing hotel windows, and therefore remains as Minor Adverse."

If there are any additional matters of concern please do not hesitate to contact me.

John

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EXTENDED EXTRACT OF VISUAL IMPACT SCHEDULE

To be read in conjunction with Visual Impact Summary Plan (Figure 13-11), Photomontages (Appendix E.7) and the additional Photomontage from the second floor of Aldermaston Court.

Key

Impact: Sev. – Severe Maj. – Major Mod. – Moderate Min. – Minor
 Neg. – Negligible NC. – No Change NV. – No Views Adv. – Adverse
 Ben. – Beneficial

Scale: Major – dominant and immediately apparent Moderate – visual and recognisable evident
 Minor – only a minor component may be viewed Negligible – only very small part discernable – scarcely appreciated
 Neutral – no part discernable

Length of View: Short – less than 2km Middle. – between 2km and 5km Long – More than 5km

Con – Construction Op – Operation Y1 – Year 1 winter assuming no mitigation planting Y10 – Year 10 summer with mitigation planting

Notes:

- Surveys undertaken during March to August 2009 and April 2010. The additional photomontage was prepared in August 2010.
- Weather conditions during visual assessment: Daytime - variable: generally good visibility, but on occasions overcast with occasional bright sunshine. Night-time – bright and clear, or bright but with cloud cover.

Visual Receptor				Visual Impacts							
Ref. No.	Visual Receptor	Sensitivity of Visual Receptor	Approx Distance to Hydrus Site (km)	Description of Existing View and of Change in View resulting from the Proposals	Scale of Change in View	Duration of Change in view	View of existing Hydrus site	Con.	Op Y1	Op Y10	Night time
Employment Areas											

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50	Aldermaston Court (Hotel / Conference Centre and its grounds)	Medium	0.1. to 0.9km (Short)	<p>Note: The impact on the settings of the listed building and registered park and garden at Aldermaston Court are considered within <i>Chapter 14: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology</i> of the DEEA. This assessment considers the visual impact on the hotel / conference centre and its grounds.</p> <p><i>Daytime Assessment</i> Access to the hotel from the minor road through Aldermaston village passes the large modern office building of Portland House and its associated car park area to the north of the hotel.</p> <p>Most rooms within the hotel do not have views of the existing Hydrus Development Site due to their orientation. A limited number of south facing rooms within the hotel have glimpses towards the existing AWE Aldermaston Site, but these are constrained by the tall conifers along the boundary of the grounds with Cwm Road, and also by the evergreen hedges and avenue of trees and within the grounds of Aldermaston Court. From some south facing rooms, the tennis courts and / or the small disused building towards the top of the remnant Oak avenue prevent or limit views of the existing Hydrus Development Site. Where views are available, the western part of the Hydrus Development Site may be glimpsed to the rear of the security fencing and gates along Cwm Road.</p> <p>There are existing narrow views south towards the Hydrus Development Site from the end of the remnant Oak avenue which leads towards the southern wing of hotel. These views are constrained by the tall conifers along the boundary of the hotel grounds with the AWE Aldermaston Site, and also by the evergreen hedges and avenue of trees and within the grounds of Aldermaston Court. The western part of the Hydrus Development Site is glimpsed to the rear of the security fencing and gates along Cwm Road. More distant structures within AWE Aldermaston may be glimpsed further south.</p> <p>The centre of the Operations Building and the associated LPS masts have been orientated to align with the centre of the remnant Oak avenue within the grounds of Aldermaston Court. This creates an inter-relationship between the hotel and grounds and the Hydrus Development Site. If the proposed Operations Building had been off-centre then this would create a less positive relationship.</p>	Neutral to Moderate	Permanent	Neg	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Neg

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				<p>The orientation of the majority of rooms prevents views of the Hydrus Development Site from most locations within the hotel. However, a limited number of southern facing rooms will have views of the upper parts of some or all of the LPS masts and part of the roof of the Operations Building. The number of LPS masts visible depends on the precise location and the angle of the view.</p> <p>The extensive areas of trees and vegetation within the grounds of the hotel and conference centre prevent or restrict views of the Hydrus Development Site from most locations. However, there will be views of the upper parts of some or all of the LPS masts and part of the roof of the Operations Building from localised areas but these are generally restricted to the southern and more open areas of the grounds. The number of LPS masts visible will depend on the precise location and the angle of the view. Where the LPS masts or the Operations Building are visible, they will represent recognisable new elements in existing views above the existing tree line.</p> <p>During pre-application consultation meetings, West Berkshire District Council (WBDC) requested that photomontages were prepared from three key views from within Aldermaston Court and its grounds: refer to Photomontage 7 – grounds of Aldermaston Court towards the top of the remnant Oak Avenue; Photomontage 8 - Sir John Milne bar / lounge on the ground floor of Aldermaston Court; and Photomontage 9 – Sir Humphrey Forster Suite – a principal bedroom suite on the first floor of Aldermaston Court. The photomontages are set out at Appendix E.7: Figure 13-13.</p> <p>In the specific location from the top of the remnant Oak Avenue (Photomontage 7), a small proportion of the proposed Operations Building roof-scape and sidewalls will be visible in the gaps between the conifers and other trees at the end of the remnant Oak avenue. Six of the eight LPS masts will also be visible, although the view of some of these masts is filtered by trees within the parkland. The new structures and the building would represent recognisable elements in this view along the avenue. However, the existing visual clutter of the existing AWE Aldermaston security measures along Cwm Road and the access road, temper the impact of the proposals.</p>							

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				<p>Ground level activity within the Hydrus Development Site will be largely screened from view by the proposed 2m high berm and high hedge planting on its top. This hedging would be 1.8m high at planting and so would make an immediate contribution to screening. The layering of the separate elements within the Hydrus Development Site (e.g. berm, hedging, building walls, roof, catenaries) helps to break up the perceived mass of the development as a whole. The impact of the Hydrus Development Site on the key view from the top of the remnant Oak avenue is assessed as Moderate Adverse.</p> <p>In the specific view from the ground floor lounge / bar (Photomontage 8), a small proportion of the proposed Operations Building roof-scape and sidewalls will be visible in the gaps between the conifers and other trees at the end of the remnant Oak avenue. Six of the eight LPS masts will also be visible, although the view of some of these masts is filtered by trees within the parkland. However, the tennis courts, the disused building at the north of the Oak avenue, the telegraph poles, the access road and the existing visual clutter of the existing AWE Aldermaston security measures along Cwm Road, limit the impact of the proposals. Ground level activity within the Hydrus Development Site will be largely screened from view by the proposed 2m high berm and high hedge planting on its top. This hedging would be 1.8m high at planting and so would make an immediate contribution to screening. The layering of the separate elements within the Hydrus Development Site (e.g. berm, hedging, building walls, roof, catenaries) helps to break up the perceived mass of the development as a whole. The impact of the Hydrus Development Site on this specific view is assessed as Minor Adverse.</p> <p>In the specific view from the first floor principal bedroom (Photomontage 9), the upper parts of all eight of the LPS masts and a small proportion of the proposed Operations Building roof-scape will be visible. The LPS masts will appear above the existing tree line and will be recognisable new elements in this view. Conifers within the grounds of the hotel and the small disused building at the top of the Oak avenue prevent views of the ground level of the Hydrus Development Site. The impact of the Hydrus Development Site on this specific view is assessed as Moderate Adverse.</p>							

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				<p>On balance, given that most rooms within the hotel will have limited or no views of the Hydrus Development Site, and the limited visibility of the proposals from the hotel grounds, the overall impact of the proposals is assessed as Minor Adverse.</p> <p>(Refer to Photomontages 7, 8 and 9 – views from towards the top of the Oak avenue, and from the ground and first floors within Aldermaston Court)</p> <p>Following submission of the Hydrus planning application, Aldermaston Parish Council requested that an additional photomontage was prepared from the second floor of Aldermaston Court. A supplementary photomontage was prepared from Room 4M on the second floor of the hotel. Room 4M and other rooms looking towards the Hydrus site on this floor of the hotel are standard bedrooms, and do not form part of a larger suite.</p> <p>Due to the timing of the request, the photomontage represents a summer view from this location. However, the assessment, set out below, is based on an assumed winter view. The winter views from the first and second floors of the hotel which are set out in Appendix E.7 of the EA have been used to assist with this.</p> <p>In this specific view, it is anticipated that in winter, the upper parts of all eight of the LPS masts will be visible above trees at the end of the Oak avenue. Views of the two masts to the left of this view would be all or partially filtered by the branches of trees within the hotel grounds. The masts will be recognisable new elements in this view.</p> <p>Parts of the roof line of the Operations building will be seen between the conifers at the end of the Oak avenue, but will appear lower than the tops of these evergreen trees. A small part of the proposed 2m high berm, the high hedge planting on its top and the side of the Operations building would be visible through the gaps between the bases of some of the conifers. The impact of the Hydrus Development Site on this specific view is assessed as Moderate Adverse.</p> <p>(Refer to Additional Photomontage – view from second floor of Aldermaston Court, from room 4M).</p>							

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				<p><i>Night time Assessment</i></p> <p>The Portland House car park is well lit at night. The perimeter of this building and parts of its lower floors (e.g. the main entrance area) are also lit at night.</p> <p>The tower and parts of the facades of the hotel buildings are up-lit at night. The car parking areas close to the hotel are lit by bollards and small lighting columns, but the surrounding grounds are generally unlit. Rooms within the hotel where the curtains have not been drawn at night (eg the Sir John Milne bar on the ground floor) are strongly visible from the surrounding dark grounds.</p> <p>At night, from within southern parts of the grounds and also from southern-facing rooms, there are views of the security lighting along the perimeter fence and Cwm Road and other multiple light sources within the main AWE Aldermaston Site. During summer months views of some of these light sources would be prevented or restricted when the intervening deciduous trees are in leaf. The degree to which the existing lighting across the AWE Aldermaston Site creates a sky glow when viewed from Aldermaston Court depends upon atmospheric absorption. On a clear night, individual light sources are the most apparent features. On a less clear night, an orange sky glow over the AWE Aldermaston Site is apparent in views from the grounds of the hotel.</p> <p>The existing lighting columns along Cwm Road are 5m in height, whilst those along Griffin Road through the main AWE site are 11m high. These would be unaltered by the Hydrus Development Site.</p>							

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				<p>Proposed lighting for the Hydrus Development Site consists of 6m high downward facing luminaires around the buildings and along the access road. Light from these luminaires will be visible to approximately 3m up the sides of the Operations Building. At the main entrance to the building, up to 6m of the sides of the Operations Building will be lit. There may also be further light visible from other entrances or windows within the building.</p> <p>Further lighting is provided by bollards and downward facing lighting attached to the southern and eastern faces of the Support Building. The LPS masts would not be lit at night.</p> <p>In night-time views from within the hotel and its grounds, the 2m high berm and 1.8m hedging located on its top will prevent most views of the Operations Building where it is lit up by the light from the proposed luminaires. Whilst the Hornbeam hedge is likely to retain most of its leaves during the winter months, this may not provide as dense a screen compared to summer months, and there may be glimpses of the lower lit sides of the Operations Building seen through the hedging. This would be seen in the context of already well-lit AWE Aldermaston Site perimeter security fencing and lighting along Cwm Road. It is anticipated that the Operations Building will block direct views of most other luminaires across the AWE Aldermaston Site.</p> <p>Any perception of sky glow across the AWE Aldermaston Site is not anticipated to be significantly affected by the proposals.</p> <p>Due to their orientation or location, many parts of the hotel and its grounds, there will experience no change in the night-time character of views available. From other locations there will be a slight change from those currently experienced. On balance for the overall views from the hotel and grounds as a whole, it is considered that impact of the Hydrus Development Site on night-time views would be of Negligible significance, particularly given the context of already well-lit AWE Aldermaston perimeter security fencing and along Cwm Road which would appear in front of views of the Hydrus Development Site.</p>							



EXISTING SUMMER VIEW



PROPOSED SUMMER VIEW

Ref: C:\6471b Hydrus Photomontages\Tech\Graphics\CS\6471D_100810RM_AddPhotomontage.indd



Hydrus Photomontages

Date of photograph: 10/08/2010
 Lens type: 50mm

Distance to site: 0.3km
 OS reference: 459677, 164772

Direction to site: south
 Viewpoint height: Approx. 105m AOD

Horizontal field of view: 75°
 Viewing distance: 300mm @ A3

Summer photomontage: Aldermaston Court, Room 4M
 Figure: 13.13 Photomontages

Hydrus Planning Application 10/01695: AWE Response to Aldermaston Parish Council

"AWE provide a statement regarding noise from the wires of the lightning conductor grid"

The potential for significant noise generation from the LPS cables is considered by acousticians to be very low. The principal reason being the number of factors which would need to combine uniquely to create the specific conditions for noise levels to be audible. These factors include: the cable properties (length, tension and thickness), weather conditions (temperature, humidity etc) and wind speed (forces against the cables) which must all combine in a certain way for noise levels to be audible. Similar systems such as overhead utility lines produce audible sounds which cause annoyance only very occasionally under precise conditions.

Notwithstanding this statement AWE During the construction and commissioning phases of the development, noise assessments will be undertaken at the nearest receptor, Aldermaston Manor House. At these times, provided weather conditions are appropriate, consideration can also be given to the noise generated from the LPS cables. In order to reduce construction/commissioning noise interference, this will most likely take place outside normal working hours.

If cable noise is identified as an issue, mitigation could be incorporated to the LPS cables by adjusting the cable tension or in the form of weights placed at specific positions along the cable to reduce the noise levels generated. Any such process will be considered in line with electrical and structural best practice.