

<b>Item No</b>	<b>Application No. and Parish</b>	<b>8 Week Date</b>	<b>Proposal, Location and Applicant</b>
(12)	04/02978/FUL Aldermaston	4 <sup>th</sup> February 2005	Circular 18/84 Notice of Proposed Development for the Erection of New I.T Service Stations. Ministry of Defence AWE, Aldermaston, Reading. Ministry of Defence.

**Recommendation Summary:**            **That the Head of Planning and Transport Strategy be authorised to raise no objections.**

**Ward Member(s):**                            Councillor Irene Neill

**Reason for Committee determination:**            Level of objection

**Committee Site Visit:**                        N/A

<b>Contact Officer Details</b>	
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## Site History

The site has a very long and complex planning history – see site number 101084.

## Publicity of Application

Site Notice Expired: 28<sup>th</sup> January 2005

Press Notice Expired: 31<sup>st</sup> December 2004

No neighbour notification necessary.

## Consultations and Representations

**Parish Council:** No objections

**Highways:** No concerns with parking as no additional staff will be based in the buildings.

**Environment** Comments awaited.

**Agency:**

**Correspondence:** As at 8/2/05, 71 letters of objection received. Objections are mainly on grounds of nature/use of the site, the site is not compliant with EC regulations in respect of reporting any developments at a nuclear site, health and safety, and that a public inquiry should be held as this is not a local issue, rather than planning considerations relating to the potential impact of the proposed building.

However, a number of letters of representation raise objections on grounds of:

- Increase in nuisance traffic, noise and light pollution;
- Proposed buildings are unsightly;
- Environmental impact and possible pollution caused during the construction period;
- Proximity of new buildings to public roads;
- Expansion of building works rather than replacement of out-dated buildings;
- Increase in road hazards due to more heavy vehicle movements on already crowded roads;
- There is a risk of disturbance of contaminated land at the site;
- Full Environmental Impact Assessment required;
- Insufficient information provided; and
- An independent chemical and radiation assessment of the site by the Environment Agency should be carried out.

A separate letter has been received from the Nuclear Information Service (NIS) objecting on the following grounds:

- Results of soil investigations should be provided before a planning decision is made;
- The schedule of work described infers that work will commence before the planning committee has publicly addressed the matter;
- Both developments should not be considered separately and the Deputy Prime Minister should be approached with regard to a full or partial public inquiry.

## **Policy Considerations**

Planning Policy Statement 1 2005 – Delivering Sustainable Development.

Berkshire Structure Plan 1991-2006 – Policy LD3 (Environmental Impact of Development), Policy C2 (Development Outside Built Up Areas and Settlements).

West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 – Policy ENV.18 (Control of Development in the Countryside); ENV.25 (Defence and Government Establishments in the Countryside); Policy OVS.2 (Core Policy).

## **Description of Development**

This application is a Notification of Proposed Development submitted under Circular 18/84. This form of application is specifically for applications on Crown Land and Government establishments. Government Circular 18/84 sets out the background and procedures to be followed in this type of application. Essentially, it is processed in the same way as a normal planning application and should be determined within the usual 8 week statutory period.

The Notification includes additional environmental information (AEI), however, this is not intended to represent a formal statutory Environmental Statement (ES) as required under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 1999, since the development falls outside the descriptions of development referred to in Schedules 1 and 2 of the Regulation and therefore an Environmental Statement is not required.

The Notification has been submitted for two buildings to house IT systems for the site. Two purpose built facilities are necessary to accommodate replacement hardware. The proposed building at location 1 would be 32 metres long and 23 metres wide, with a maximum height to the eaves of 4 metres and a height of 5.1 metres to the ridge. Location 1 is on the eastern side of the site, approximately 50 metres from the site boundary that adjoins Red Lane. The proposed building at location 2 would be 81 metres long, 23 metres wide, with a maximum height to the ridge of 4 metres and a height to the ridge of 5.1 metres. Location 2 is located well within the site complex, some 350 metres from the perimeter fence on the A340 at the main entrance. It is adjacent to buildings of similar or greater height. The elevations would consist of a 'dado' wall in facing brickwork to a height of 500mm, with PVC coated profiled cladding above. The cladding to walls and roof on both buildings would be light coloured to assist in minimising the visual impact.

## **Consideration of the Proposal**

Paragraph 2.52 of the WBDLP refers specifically to defence and Government establishments in the countryside and states at 2.52.1 that “*applications submitted for Crown development relating to existing establishments would be supported where required for the continuation of operational activities related to the use of the establishment within the context of the other policies in the Plan*”.

The Site Development Strategy Plan published by AWE advises that the Ministry of Defence has stated the need for the Aldermaston site to continue its operation and therefore the principle of further development to allow the continuation of operational activities is acceptable, subject to compliance with other policies of the Development Plan.

The main issue in this case is the impact of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

#### Impact of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

It is acknowledged that building 1 is located close to the perimeter of the site and would be seen from Red Lane. However, this site was previously developed and formed part of the Old Boiler House complex and a compound for storing coal occupied this location. It is considered that as the building is only single storey and would infill a gap between existing buildings and structures on the site, the visual impact of the proposal would not be unduly harmful.

Building 2 would be in excess of twice the length of Building 1. However, this proposed building would be located well within the site complex and would be surrounded by existing buildings on the site. Again as the building is only single storey and would not be able to be viewed from outside the site, the visual impact of the building would not be harmful.

Whilst the design of the buildings are of a basic industrial nature, this is considered to be appropriate for the use proposed given the existing functional design of the existing buildings on the site.

#### Other issues raised.

The NOPD has generated significant concern among interested parties, however, the majority of objections are in respect of the nature of the use of the site which is not a material planning consideration in this case as the use is long established.

### **Conclusion**

It is concluded that the buildings proposed would either not be visible from outside of the site or would be seen as an infill of the site and in context with the existing buildings. The buildings are in character with the existing development on the site are not considered to have a significant visual impact. Accordingly it is recommended that no objection be raised.

### **Full Recommendation**

That the Head of Planning and Transport Strategy be authorised to raise no objections to the Notice of Proposed Development for the erection of new IT service stations.