

## Report to the Southern Area Planning Committee

Date of Meeting	28 November 2013		
Application Number	13/03819/FUL		
Site Address	Amesbury Bus Station, Salisbury Street, Amesbury, Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP4 7HD		
Proposal	Change of Use of the bus station to pay and display car parking including the installation of a ticket machine and the removal of bus/coach parking bays, raised pedestrian footways, railings and lean-to building.		
Applicant	Leisure Activity		
Parish Council	Amesbury		
Electoral Division	Amesbury West	Unitary Member	Cllr Fred Westmoreland
Grid Reference	Easting: 415514	Northing: 141384	
Type of Application	Full Planning		
Case Officer	Charlie Bruce-White		

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### Reason for the application being considered by Committee

Cllr Fred Westmoreland has called in the application due to public interest.

#### 1. Purpose of report

To consider the above application and the recommendation of the Area Development Manager that planning permission be **GRANTED subject to conditions**.

#### 2. Report summary

The main issues in the consideration of this application are as follows:

1. Principle of development;
2. Affect upon bus services / public transport use;
3. Highways safety;
4. Character & appearance of the area;
5. Suitability of proposed use;
6. Other matters.

#### 3. Site Description

The site relates to the Amesbury Bus Station, situated within the centre of the town. The site is located adjacent to the roundabout forming the junction of the A345 with the town centre shopping area in Salisbury Street. The site has a frontage and accesses onto both roads.

#### 4. Relevant Planning History

None relevant

## 5. Proposal

It is proposed to change the use of the bus station to a privately operated pay and display car park. A parking layout for 33 cars is proposed, with 3 designated bays with additional width for drivers and/or passengers with impaired mobility, and designated parking for motorcycles. The scheme would involve:

- the removal of the bus parking bays, raised concrete pedestrian footways, railings and the lean-to building;
- repairs to the ground to allow tarmac surfacing to join with and match the remainder of the site;
- marking of the parking bays
- installation of a ticket machine.

## 6. Planning Policy

Local Plan: policies G1, G2, CN11, TR16

Local Transport Plan: *Car Parking Strategy*

Central government planning policy: NPPF

## 7. Consultations

### Town Council

Support subject to conditions including

- i) that consideration is given to highways safety with regards to entry/exit points;
- ii) directional signage be erected for the town car parks;
- iii) that a S106 contribution be made towards the town's public WC's;
- iv) that the permission temporary.

### Wiltshire Council Highways Officer

No objection subject to conditions to secure

- i) minor amendments to the parking layout;
- ii) directional signage and markings for the entry/exit points; and
- iii) a management plan to secure regular visits by a parking attendant.

## 8. Publicity

The application was advertised by site notice and neighbour consultation.

- 5 letters were received raising the following concerns:
  - Unnecessary due to existing parking provision;
  - Should remain as a bus station as more convenient than bus stops;
  - Site could be better utilised;
  - Detrimental in visual terms;
  - Could increase congestion.
- 1 letter of support was received subject to management measures (litter control and security).

## 9. Planning Considerations

### 9.1 Principle of development

No specific policies address the formation of private non-residential car parks outside of Salisbury, although general planning criteria is relevant as set out within the objectives to Local Plan policy G1, which are to:

- i) achieve an overall pattern of land uses which reduce the need to travel and support increased use of public transport, cycling and walking;
- ii) promote the vitality and viability of local communities;
- iii) conserve both the natural environment and cultural heritage of the District; and
- iv) make effective use of land in urban areas, particularly on previously developed sites.

Local Plan policy TR16 also states that existing bus and rail services should be retained and expanded where appropriate to provide an attractive alternative to the use of the car.

### 9.2 Affect upon bus services / public transport use

Whilst a well used facility would be lost, alternative provision is being made a short distance from the site for new bus stop facilities, which would be readily accessible to and from the town centre. Consequently it is not considered that the proposal would be contrary to objectives which seek to promote the use of public transport.

### 9.3 Highways safety

The Highways Officer comments that:

*I am generally satisfied with the proposed change of use of the former bus station to a public car park. I note that the accesses are to remain as existing although I would suggest that the access served directly from Salisbury Road is changed to 'No Entry' allowing exit only (with the other access allowing entry and exit). This would prevent the situation of right turning vehicles conflicting with northbound vehicles queuing for the roundabout. A signage scheme should be provided to direct vehicles to the car park and to control the internal movement around the car park.*

*With reference to the internal arrangement, parking space no.28 seems to obstruct the adjacent disabled space and should be removed. Furthermore, the motorcycle parking may be better placed between spaces 18 & 19 if spaces 7-18 were moved along slightly to open the gap.*

*Policy PS5 of the Car Parking Strategy (Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2026) refers to a car park management plan which has been provided within the supporting statement. The contents of the car park management plan is acceptable however the car park should be visited by a parking attendant more frequently than daily to prevent abuse and ensure enforcement. I should be*

*grateful if this aspect of the plan could be amended and re-submitted as per the condition below.*

Consequently no highway objection is raised subject to conditions to secure minor amendments to the parking layout; directional signage and markings for the entry/exit points; and a management plan to ensure regular visits by a parking attendant.

#### 9.4 Character & appearance of the area

The new use would have many similarities in visual appearance to the existing bus station use, i.e. parked vehicles and a large expanse of tarmac, and therefore it is considered that the proposal would preserve the character of the area.

#### 9.5 Suitability of proposed use

Wilts & Dorset, the operator of bus services from the site, have made the decision to dispose of the site. The proposed use would be an effective use of the land which could be readily undertaken with relatively little modification, and would prevent the site become vacant and potentially an eyesore (particularly if security fencing had to be erected to prevent unauthorised access). It would increase choice of parking and thereby promote the viability/vitality of the town centre.

It is noted that the Town Council have suggested a temporary consent, presumably on the grounds that car parking is considered to be an effective use of the site in the short term, as a 'stop-gap', but not in the long term since the site is ideally situated for a retail or mixed use redevelopment. The national planning practice guidance that accompanies the NPPF states that "*Local planning authorities should assess and plan to meet the needs of main town centre uses in full, in broadly the same way as for their housing and economic needs, adopting a 'town centre first' approach and taking account of specific town centre policy.*

*This positive approach should include seeking to improve the quality of parking in town centres (in line with the National Planning Policy Framework) and, where it is necessary to ensure the vitality of town centres, the quantity too.*" This proposal will meet this objective in securing further parking for the town centre without prejudicing future redevelopment of the site.

In the view of Officers a permanent consent for the car parking use would not prejudice future redevelopment possibilities for the site and, with regards to the Town Council's aspiration, Officers advise that these are pursued through the Neighbourhood Planning process, which would help influence future decisions and policy making in relation to the site. It should be noted that the site is already designated as an area where retail development would be acceptable.

#### 9.6 Other matters

The Town Council have suggested that the developer make financial contributions towards much needed renovation works to the town's public WCs. However, there are strict tests which must be met in order for such contributions to be justified, and these include the relevance of the contribution to planning (i.e. is there a relevant planning policy?) and its necessity to make the proposed development acceptable (i.e. will the development cause harm to planning interests that need to be mitigated?). In the view of Officers there is no current policy basis for developer contributions in relation to local projects such as public WCs, and the link between the use of a new car park and the need to renovate the town's public WCs is weak. As a consequence, it is not advised that any planning permission granted is subject to a S106 requiring such contributions.

## 10. Conclusion

The proposed development would be an appropriate and effective use of the site that would be acceptable in terms of highway safety and the character of the area. Given the alternative provision to be made for new bus stops, there would be no detriment to public transport use.

## 11. Recommendation

**Planning Permission be GRANTED subject to the following conditions:**

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- 2) No development shall commence on site until the following details have been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority:

- Details of the parking layout;
- Details of the location, scale and appearance of the pay station and any associated signage;
- Details of the making good to exposed surfaces where features have been removed (i.e. the lean-to building, railings, footways);

Development shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed details prior to the first use of the car park.

Reason: In the interests of highways safety and the character and appearance of the area.

- 3) Prior to the first use of the development, a revised car parking management plan reflecting the requirement of Policy PS5 of the adopted Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2026 Car Parking Strategy, as submitted but to include a regular visit by an attendant, shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The parking management plan shall be implemented in full accordance with the approved plan at all times following the opening of the car park unless otherwise agreed in writing with the local planning authority.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and to ensure the adequate provision and control of the car parking.

- 4) Prior to the commencement of work, a signage scheme to include directional road signs, entry / exit signs and internal signs/ directional arrows shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The signs shall be erected in accordance with the approved plan prior to first use of the development, and shall be maintained as such for the duration of the permitted use.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and to prevent confusion for all users of the car park.

### **INFORMATIVE - Condition 3 (parking layout)**

With reference to the internal arrangement, parking space no.28 seems to obstruct the adjacent disabled space and should be removed. Furthermore, the motorcycle parking may be better placed between spaces 18 & 19 if spaces 7-18 were moved along slightly to open the gap.