

REPORT TO THE NORTHERN AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	1 st June 2011		
Application Number	11/00173/S73A		
Site Address	Castle Combe Race Circuit, Castle Combe, SN14 7EY		
Proposal	Variation of condition 1 of 06/01814/S73A to allow 6 additional club sprint meetings per year (10 in total)		
Applicant	Castle Combe Circuit		
Town/Parish Council	Castle Combe/Yatton Keynell		
Electoral Division	By Brook	Unitary Member	Jane Scott
Grid Ref	385118 176906		
Type of application	S73A		
Case Officer	Charmian Burkey	01249 706667	Charmian Burkey@Wiltshire.gov.uk

Reason for the application being considered by Committee

The item has been called to Committee by Councillor Jane Scott to consider the concerns of local residents about adding additional dates when those available are not all being used.

1. Purpose of report

To consider the above application and to recommend that planning permission be Delegated to the Area Development Manager to Permit subject to a legal agreement and conditions.

2. Report summary

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

- Impact upon highway safety
- Impact upon visual amenity and landscape character.
- Impact upon neighbour amenity

The application has generated objections from Yatton Keynell and Castle Combe Parish Councils; and 6 letters of objection from the public.

3. Site Description

The proposal relates to the well established Castle Combe Race Circuit situated in the Cotswold AONB. No physical alterations are proposed by the application.

4. Relevant Planning History

The circuit has an extensive planning history, a summary of which is attached as Appendix 1. The most relevant decisions are as follows:

Application Number	Proposal	Decision
92/01654/	2 days of private road car sprints in a calendar year	Permitted
06/01814/S73A	2 Additional Club Sprint Meetings per year (Variation condition 1 of N.92.01654.	Permitted subject to conditions

5. Proposal

The proposal is to vary condition 1 of 06/01814/S73A to allow 6 additional club sprint meetings per year to make a total of 10. The proposal now also involves the giving up 6 Defensive Driving Days (where 4 cars are on track at anyone time). This proposal has arisen from the current days on the Colerne Airfield needing to be relocated.

6. Planning Policy

North Wiltshire Local Plan: policies C3 and NE4 are relevant

7. Consultations

Castle Combe Parish Council opposed the application but queried the requirement for 6 additional race days when so many permitted days go unused. It appears to be an unnecessary escalation of the track.

Yatton Keynell Parish Council felt strongly that the days should be absorbed into the unused days at the circuit.

Cotswold Conservation Board state that the site is within the Cotswolds AONB where conservation and enhancement of natural beauty, including tranquillity, should have great weight. The Board considers that the additional days should be absorbed within the existing permitted 246 days leading to disturbance of the tranquillity of the area by noise generation, estimated by the applicant to be 500 cars.

Highways comments are awaited.

Environmental Health originally objected to the proposal on the basis that the increase in days would lead to an increase in noise disturbance. However, following negotiations with The Circuit it has been agreed that:

- The previously consented 4 Sprint Days and the newly applied for 6 days will operate at the lower C level ie 100dBA at 0.5m from the exhaust outlined in the Motor Sports Association Yearbook. They will not impact on the total number of noisier days.
- No more than 2 vehicles will be on the track at any one time.
- The Circuit will also surrender 6 days of Defensive Driving where 4 cars would operate on the track at level 'C'.

With these amendments the officer is wholly satisfied that there will be no adverse noise impact on the locality, but for completeness recommends that conditions be attached to the consent to limit the number of cars to 2 and the noise level at the exhaust to 100dBA at 0.5m ie 'C' level.

The agent writes that the Circuit currently has planning permission to operate 4 club sprint meetings per year, authorised by permission 06/01814/S73A restricted to use by the Bristol Light Car Club and the BAC Motor Club only. The Ministry of Defence are no longer allowing motor based sports at their airfields due to destruction of the tarmac surface. On a typical sprint rally day there are around 150 entries, each competitor with 2-3 guests. Each competitor has 2 practice runs and 2 competition laps. There would be up to 500 cars per day with the circuit having space for up to 5000 to park. It is not thought that there would be any unacceptable increase in traffic or noise.

8. Publicity

The application was advertised by site notice and neighbour consultation.

6 letters of letters of objection received

Summary of key relevant points raised:

- Increased traffic.
- There are plenty of unused days.
- The 'drip approach' to increasing the usage of the circuit.

9. Planning Considerations

The proposed use would generate only a small volume of traffic as it is not an event which is open to the public. Formal comments from the Highways officer have not been received at the time of drafting the report but will be available prior to the meeting.

There would be no physical alterations and thus the impact on the landscape quality of this part of the Cotswold AONB is un compromised.

The application is accompanied by a circuit usage list which indicates that in the last 5-6 years up to 72 of the permitted days usage on the site remain un used. What is not clear from this information is at what noise levels the unused days would have operated at. Notwithstanding this, the Circuit have negotiated with our Environmental Health Officer and have agreed to surrender "Defensive Driving Days" (where 4 cars can be out on the track at any one time). The applied for Sprint Days would also operate at 100dBA as would the other 4 days that exist.

It is considered that this "trading" of days will ensure that there is no increase in disturbance to the local area, but as this involves removing existing rights, this can only be achieved by way of a legal agreement. Any permission would be subject to the previously applied conditions relating to noise levels, numbers of cars on the circuit at any one time, use of entrances to the site etc.

10. Recommendation

Planning Permission be DELEGATED for the following reason:

To allow officers to draw up a suitably worded legal agreement for the circuit to enter into to secure the removal of 6 days of Defensive Driving Days and also to limit the noise levels on the existing permissions for Club Sprint days to 100dBA.

