

Old Sarum Airfield Appraisal and Sustainability Appraisal

Notes of Meeting at Salisbury City Football Club on 26 September 2006

1. The meeting was introduced by the Chairman, Councillor Michael Hewitt.
2. Eric Teagle, Head of Forward Planning and Transportation, Salisbury District Council, gave a background to the appraisals and an outline of the consultation process.
3. Andrea Bradley, Atkins Heritage, gave a presentation explaining the methodology for the survey undertaken, and the criteria for assessment of the character of the airfield and its environs.
4. Elaine Milton, Principal Conservation Officer, Salisbury District Council, explained the implications of conservation area designation, and additional planning controls that applied to householders in conservation areas.
5. Members of the public were then invited to make comments and ask questions. These were recorded as follows:

Tony Markham, Chairman of Laverstock and Ford Parish Council

Mr Markham said he felt that conservation area designation would put a blight on properties. The restrictions were not warranted. A conservation area would remove individual's property rights. He would support anyone wishing to object to the proposals in the parish. He said he spoke on behalf of the parish council (NB. Mr Hannath, the Parish Clerk, clarified after the meeting that the parish council had received the CD, but it had not considered the matter formally, and therefore Mr Markham's comments were his personal comments).

Peter Shield

Mr Shield would like to see the airfield protected. He queried why the proposed boundary excluded the area north of the Portway, and the former perimeter track at the southern end of the airfield. He believed the proposed boundary would be inaccurate. The proposed boundary currently excluded the former airmens' quarters, the Naafi, officers' married quarters and Ford Farmhouse (the original commanding officer's house). This was an inconsistent approach. Mr Shield also queried whether the Crown's immunity from planning controls would apply.

David Joyce

Mr Joyce lives in Green Lane. He wanted to know the cost of the exercise to date. He felt that there should not be pressure to agree to the proposals simply because of the costs incurred. He felt that action was too late, and that some of the modern industrial buildings had spoilt the character of the airfield. The buildings in Green Lane were dislocated from the airfield. There would be a potential health and safety issue for visitors if the site were to become an educational facility.

Mr Joyce was concerned over the omission of some of the former MOD properties (he referred, for example to page 29 of the Atkins' report, which mentioned the exclusion of the warrant officers' married accommodation). The approach was inconsistent. He also identified two flaws in the report – 11 Green Lane was actually two semi-detached properties, and it was not the A435, it was the A345.

Mr Joyce said it seemed unfair that people might be faced with further restrictions if a conservation area were designated. Each property owner already took pride in preserving or enhancing their properties.

Please Reply to: Swindon
Our Ref: MMW/we/C1531
Your Ref:
Date: 9th October 2006



Mrs E Milton
Principal Conservation Officer
Salisbury District Council
Planning Office
61 Wyndham Road
Salisbury
SP1 3AH



Dear Mrs Milton

Draft Minutes of Public Meeting on 26th September 2006

These appear a generally faithful record of the discussion at the meeting I observed only but took notes and the main differences/omissions in factual content I identify are as follows: (NB responses from SDC/Atkins are made under the name of the last commentator):

Peter Shield, 11 Green Lane

Mr Shield's reference to exclusion of the strip of land at the southern edge of the airfield in MOD ownership from the proposed Conservation Area boundary has been omitted.

Peter Shield/David Joyce

At this point, Andrea Bradley's response to comments on the apparent inconsistencies of the recommended Conservation Area boundary was that it is selective – of the areas which best represented the two key phases of development of Old Sarum Airfield (WWI and expansion period) - but Atkins may need to look again at rationale.

Ray Thomas, Laverstock & Ford PC

Mr Thomas also commented on the District Council's initial disinterest in protecting trees on the site.

Angus Beale

In addition to the apology comment, Mr Beale also asked for publication of the total costs associated with the quashed 2001 designation.

Councillor McLennan (Laverstock)

Mr Milton stated that the site lies outside development boundaries. It was Mr Teagle who emphasised that this was the current situation, that boundaries (and policies) would be subject to review in light of RSS housing requirements and that previously rejected sites may need to be allocated.

cont/d...

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Mrs E Milton
Salisbury District Council



Other comments:

1. North of Portway – One commentator felt this was an area that would benefit from enhancement. Andrea Bradley did state that this area was rejected from a heritage point of view but earlier she had commented that North of the Portway you do not feel as if it is in the airfield.
2. Determination of Conservation Area – this is a partial response. Mr Teagle additionally stated that, ultimately, it is an SDC decision which would be well informed based on (Atkins) expertise and consultation.

Finally, there is insufficient record of comments in the introductory presentations and later discussion about the impartiality/independence of Atkins' work and specifically that the Council had not provided any guidance/information other than the study brief and a map of sites to which survey access had been granted.

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Maggie Wood'.

M M Wood
Principal Planner
Development Planning & Design Services Ltd
mwood@dpds.co.uk

cc: Grenville Hodge, Blenheim Property Co.

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Salisbury District Council Planning Department
Rec. 16 OCT 2006
Acknowledged _____
Copy to _____
Action _____

Mrs E Milton
Principal Conservation Officer
Salisbury District Council
Planning Department
61 Wyndham Road
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SP1 3AH



12th October 2006

Dear Mrs Milton

**Old Sarum Airfield Appraisal
Public Meeting 26th September 2006**

The letter accompanying the draft minutes asked for comments on the factual accuracy of the minutes by tomorrow's date.

Having spoken to other participants I hope that they will be writing to you with comments about their own points. I must add that I feel that the Council should make a public note that the groundswell of opinion was against the designation of a conservation area, albeit for a number of reasons.

Your minutes do not reflect the number of times that the Atkins team were unable to give specific accurate information when asked, or in some cases challenged, about general issues or statements made in the report. The role Mr Paul Francis took in the process of appraisal was also not properly explained. There is no mention of my request that the Birtles report be published.

Angus Beal (page 3)

Mr Beal mentioned that the Atkins' report was repeatedly inaccurate, and sited specific items about the squash courts as one example.

He said that he had asked Mrs Milton to close out other issues before granting access for the purpose of appraisal, and explained that he had discussed this formally with the Head of Legal and Property at the time.

Mr Beal stated that the MOD no longer had an interest in the airfield, which had been disposed of by tender in 1995 and bought, as he understood it, by a syndicate of members from the flying club.

Mr Beal questioned whether the Council should be carrying out the proposed designation when the Sustainability Appraisal carried a disclaimer on the back page that absolved it of any blame should the report be flawed or inaccurate.

(Councillor Hewitt said that this was standard text on council reports, but this wording would be checked)

Development Projects for Old Sarum and Ford

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NOTE: - Councillor Britton has since written to me stating that reports published by the council or its officers seldom if ever has a disclaimer. He assumed that the disclaimer was on the report by the consultants and that the council could therefore not be expected to guarantee it.

Sarah Champion (page 4)

Mrs Champion stated that there was an MOD covenant on the airfield that would prevent development taking place (and then waved a copy of the conveyance relating to the land owned by Mr Beal's company)

(Mr Beal said that although there was a covenant, the MOD had already conceded that they were agreeable to this being set aside in return for a percentage of the uplift in value should the land gain planning consent. He stated that negotiations were not concluded, but that The MOD had started with a figure of 60%. This demonstrated that they had a financial interest in the land being developed.)

Other Comments (page 6, 7 and 8)

Page 7

Mr Beal stated (in reply to an issue raised by another participant) that noise from light aircraft was currently exempt from normal legislation. He explained that fitting noise limiting equipment to aircraft would be onerously expensive and would be likely to 'kill' the industry. He also said that he was surprised that this process was being carried out when the council had done nothing about the unauthorised alterations to Hangar 3 despite it being grade II* listed and described in a report authored by Mr Teagle as being 'of National importance'.

(Mr Teagle commented that unauthorised works should be reported to the Planning Office's enforcement section for investigation)

I take particular exception to this statement by Mr Teagle. I have been repeatedly informing the council about the works to Hangar 3 since 1995. This has been in writing, in meetings with councillors, in meetings with officers including yourself (October 2001). The policy director told me in writing in March 2001 that the then extant conservation area would serve to give protection more weight. You and your departments have ignored all illegal works to Hangar 3, whilst rather perversely working up a scheme for conservation area designation. I feel that this should be detailed in your report in order that it gives a true reflection.

It was stated that there were good distant views of the airfield from across the valley.

Who made this statement? As I recall it was made by the panel in response to a comment I made that it was almost impossible to see the site without trespassing especially once the hedge established itself and that the public benefit described in the Sustainability Appraisal report was a misnomer due to the total area of the site being private property.

Page 8

Mr Beal asked Mrs Milton whether the brief for the designation appraisal was visual or historic, bearing in mind her rejection letter to other tender participants.

(Mrs Milton conceded that it was both, but the historic aspect was a most important consideration)

Mr Beal then asked that if this was in fact the case, when the council were carrying out appraisals of all the other historic aviation sites within the district, and why was Old Sarum the first on the list. Mr Beal quoted Zeals, New Zealand Farm, Oatlands Hill, and others as examples. Mr Beal involved Mr Francis in this issue, as he was able, and in fact did confirm that the flying field and control tower, along with many technical buildings survive at Zeals. (This was I believe the only involvement Mr Francis made in the meeting)

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(Eric Teagle replied that the other areas mentioned by Mr Beal had not yet been looked at. The catalyst for looking at Old Sarum was The English Heritage report into historic military airfields, which highlighted the national importance of this group).

Mr Beal then asked was this the Lake 2000 report as detailed in the Atkins report, or the Lake 2003 report as mentioned elsewhere.

(Andrea Bradley said that they were the same document, but although the document was compiled in 2000 it was issued in 2003.)

Mr Beal asked Andrea Bradley what weight the Lake report carried, was it now published and adopted as a definitive reference work.

(Andrea Bradley said that the work was published in 2003 by English Heritage and that it was used as a reference document)

These are my comments and I ask that you include them fully in the report. I again stress that I feel the report should clearly detail the fact that at least eighty percent of people present at the meeting were against the designation.

I have taken care not to attempt to correct inaccuracies pertaining to the comments of other participants; hopefully they will feel strongly enough to correct you personally.

There is one further issue that I wish to raise about the costs involved. Mr Joyce (page 2) raised the issue of costs and Mr Teagle has seen fit to publish a figure. I asked Mr Teagle in the meeting that seeing as he was willing (subject to Atkins not raising an objection) to publish the costs of this 'round' he should publish an honest account of how much the previous (2001) designation had cost the taxpayer. This issue has not been reported in your minutes at all.

Should any of the above comments need further explanation, please do not hesitate to contact me.

I will be submitting my response to the consultation exercise separately, especially in respect of the proposed boundary. Hopefully as the boundary is without doubt a clear issue Mr Teagle will be asking Atkins to re-appraise the area as he suggested he would in page seven.

Yours sincerely



Angus Beal

Cc John Crawford SDC Legal and Property

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(Andrea Bradley responded regarding the proposed boundary, and said that Atkins had selected the areas which best represented the two key phases of development of Old Sarum (WW1 and the expansion period)).

(Eric Teagle said that if Atkins Heritage were agreeable (as there may be issues of commercial confidentiality) he would provide details of the costs incurred to date with a copy of the minutes).

(Note: After the meeting the contract costs with Atkins to date were established as being £16,955).

Ronald Rock

Mr Rock was worried about the restrictions placed on satellite dishes within conservation areas. He would wanted to know the total cost of the project cost to date, including manpower.

(Eric Teagle said that although there was no time recording system in use in the Council's Planning Office, he would attempt to provide an estimate of the officer time spent on the project).

(Elaine Milton explained that in certain circumstances planning permission would be required for the installation of a satellite dish in a conservation area. This does not mean that satellite dishes would not be allowed, it would mean that the local planning authority would have to assess the proposal to determine the effect on the character of the conservation area).

Ray Thomas, Laverstock and Ford Parish Council

Mr Thomas did not receive a CD.

(Eric Teagle apologised for this omission, and said that CDs were available at the meeting to take away if Mr Thomas would like one).

Mr Thomas felt that the conservation area would not result in many additional controls. He said that the MOD might still have a property interest in the airfield, as he believed it might still be available for MOD emergency use. Nevertheless, he felt it was important to retain the airfield use.

Mr Thomas said that he had been concerned over the loss of trees in the past, and, via the parish council, had asked the district council to protect these with tree preservation orders.

Gerard Parsons

Mr Parsons wanted confirmation that the properties in Merrifield Road were not included within the proposed conservation area boundary. He also felt that including the four houses in Green Lane was an anomaly. He supported the conservation area in principle.

(Andrea Bradley confirmed that the properties in Merrifield Road were not within the proposed boundary).

Angus Beal

Mr Beal said that the Atkins' report was inaccurate in that it mentioned things about the squash courts that were incorrect.

He said that in effect he had not agreed to allow access for Atkins' survey.

Two commercial sites had not been mentioned in the report.

Mr Beal stated that the MOD no longer had a property interest in the airfield, which had been disposed of to the flying club.

The council had never apologised for the failed attempt to designate the conservation area previously.

Mr Beal felt that the rider on the back page of the sustainability appraisal, which claimed that the council was not able to guarantee the accuracy of the report, was very strange.

(Councillor Hewitt said this was standard text on council reports, but this wording would be checked).

Mr Beal quoted from a letter dated 15 January 2002 from Andrew Vines, former Historic Areas Advisor for English Heritage, in which he said that the council intended to re-designate a conservation area at Old Sarum Airfield.

(Eric Teagle said he could not explain Andrew Vines's comments and could not speak for another organisation – he had certainly not advised Andrew Vines that this was the council's intention).

Mr Beal would like to see the previous drafts of the Atkins' reports.

(Eric Teagle confirmed that these would be made available to Mr Beal).

Mr Beal had noted a plan on one of the council's files that indicated coloured zones. He wanted to know who had produced the plan. He did not agree with the way in which the areas have been zoned.

(Andrea Bradley said she was unsure which plan Mr Beal was referring to, and therefore she was unable to answer the question at present).

Mr Beal asked whether a consequence of designation of a conservation area would be that the airfield would not be designated for development within the forthcoming Local Development Framework (LDF).

(David Milton, Team Leader for Forward Planning and Conservation, Salisbury District Council, confirmed that designation of a conservation area would not preclude future development, although it would be a consideration in identifying sites for housing allocation within the LDF. He said that the site selection process had not yet been commenced. There was a requirement for the council to provide 450 new homes each year within the district).

Edward Rippier

Mr Rippier said that he would be concerned that if the flying club went, the area would be threatened and he queried the point of a conservation area if it did not preclude development.

Sarah Champion

Mrs Champion stated that there was an MOD covenant on the airfield that would prevent development taking place.

(Mr Beal said that there was a clause within the covenant that meant that MOD could be entitled to 60% of any development value. The MOD therefore had an interest in the land being developed).

Chris Brownhill

Mr Brownhill was unhappy that he had received a CD, because when he printed the report it came to many pages. He did not feel it was fair to expect people to print out the whole document.

Mr Brownhill raised concerns regarding additional restrictions that would be imposed on people within the conservation area. He also stated that the guardroom no longer existed.

(Eric Teagle said the CDs had been sent out to ensure that people were properly informed about the proposals. The council has attempted to make people aware of the proposals through a number of different means.

Eric Teagle reiterated the purpose of the consultation was to seek views about whether a conservation area should be designated and if so, what the boundary should be. He said that the minutes would contain a clarification of the implications of conservation area designation).

Tim Cottis

Mr Cottis said he had an enormous interest in the role of the airfield. He had been impressed by the Atkins' report and the historic background of the airfield. He felt that the airfield was of national significance. He said he had some sympathy with householders and businesses who might be faced with restrictions as a consequence of conservation area designation. However, he would support the proposals if he felt assured that the designation would result in an enhancement of the area. He believed that a parallel plan for the enhancement of the area would be required.

David Pullen, Stratford-Sub-Castle resident

Mr Pullen said that Stratford-sub-Castle, despite being a conservation area, had been blighted by aircraft noise. He was concerned that a consequence of conservation area designation at Old Sarum Airfield might be that aeroplane activity might be maintained. He said there did not appear to be any means to prevent the constant use of the site for flying. The current voluntary agreement had been of little effect. It was understood that the Blanefield Property Company intended to take back the lease from the current flying club and wanted to install two flying clubs. There would be no restrictions on flying, and there could even be 24 hour flying. Salisbury District Council would be able to do nothing to prevent it. He would be supported a conservation area if SDC were able to impose restrictions.

Ron Champion

Mr Champion supported the proposed conservation area designation, although he did not agree with the proposed boundary. He queried how landowners could be made to enhance their areas.

(Eric Teagle replied that conservation area designation would not result in any power to force individuals to enhance their properties. He also stated that the council was involved in a forum with the flying club, and tried to seek restrictions on flying times: The council had been successful in achieving this to some degree. The council had no information regarding the suggestion the use of the site for two flying clubs).

(Elaine Milton said that existing uses would not be affected by conservation area designation. Proposals for development would be considered against whether the character of the conservation area would be preserved or enhanced).

(David Milton also said that the council had set up a forum with the flying club. Sensitive noise reporting had been carried out by the environmental health unit of the council. If residents considered that there was a statutory nuisance then they could log complaints with Gary Tomsett, Environmental Health Officer, who would then carry out an investigation).

Gerald Steer, Stratford-sub-Castle

Mr Steer agreed with Mr Pullen. He said that he had been told that noise over 110 decibels had been recorded by a neighbour. This had been reported to the environmental health unit,

but because the noise level had not been recorded officially by the council, no further action had been taken. He said that there could be aircraft overhead every two minutes.

(Eric Teagle said that he was unable to respond on behalf of his colleagues in the environmental health unit, but that there were procedures in place for investigations to be made).

Mr Pearce

Mr Pearce said that his main concern was with potential development on the airfield. He was worried that conservation area designation would not prevent the airfield being developed for housing and queried the point of the exercise.

Councillor McLennan (District Councillor for Laverstock)

Councillor McLennan also queried the point of conservation area designation. It would appear to be restrictive, but would not necessarily result in any enhancement.

(Councillor McLennan would like to clarify that the emphasis of this minute is inaccurate, as he did not present a bias in any way for or against the proposal. He asked a question at the meeting, and did not query the point of designation. He wanted to know whether there were any positive aspects of designation as these did not seem to have been highlighted).

(Eric Teagle stated that in planning terms it was difficult to give a precise answer about the future of the airfield, as it was impossible to predict future policies or forthcoming proposals. He emphasised the importance of the relationship of the built form and the grass airstrip, and that this was a unique feature of the area).

(David Milton commented that the airfield lies outside development boundaries. Notwithstanding whether the area was designated as a conservation area or not, development on the site for housing would be contrary to current planning policy).

(Eric Teagle followed this comment by saying that this was the current situation and that all development boundaries would be reviewed in light of the Regional Spatial Strategy housing requirements, and that previously rejected sites for housing may need to be allocated to meet the need).

Other Comments

Concern over the omission of houses to the north of the Portway.

(Andrea Bradley replied that the study area had been much wider than the proposed conservation area boundary and that the boundary was drawn up in accordance with a robust set of criteria. The area to the north of the Portway had been discounted because it did not meet the tests required for conservation area designation).

(Eric Teagle invited comments to be made in writing regarding the proposed boundary, and that these would be given due consideration).

Concern was raised that this proposal might be a mistake by the council.

Mr Beal stated that aviation noise was exempt from current regulations. He also said that alterations have been carried out to Hangar 3 without listed building consent.

(Eric Teagle commented that unauthorised works should be reported to the Planning Office's enforcement section for investigation).

It was also queried whether there was a wholly altruistic reason for proposing conservation area designation, or was it simply being proposed to prevent development on the airfield?

It was stated that the whole of the airfield should be surveyed – this did not appear to have been done.

(Andrea Bradley replied that the whole of the airfield had been surveyed, although she conceded that some areas may need to be re-examined in the light of comments being received).

(Eric Teagle said that one of the issues that seemed to have emerged during the course of the meeting related to consistency of properties chosen to be within the boundary and those that were being left out. We would take note of these comments and those submitted during the rest of the consultation process and if the boundary was a clear issue he would consider asking Atkins to re-appraise the area).

It was stated that there were good distant views of the airfield from across the valley.

It was asked who would ultimately determine the conservation area boundary? Would it be Atkins or the council?

(Eric Teagle replied that Atkins had provided an independent specialist recommendation to the council. Once all the consultation responses had been received, Atkins would be asked to comment on these and recommend whether conservation area designation was still appropriate, and if so, where the boundary should be. The decision regarding whether the area should be designated a conservation area or not would ultimately be made by the council's Cabinet, which would be a well-informed decision based on the advice of Atkins and the outcome of the consultation).

It was asked whether the property owners of the four houses in Green Lane would be steam-rollered by the council just because they were a minority voice?

(Eric Teagle responded that the small number of residents there would be recognised, and their comments given due weight).

It was asked whether the status of the unadopted road would be changed if a conservation area was designated?

(Eric Teagle said that conservation area status would not mean that the road would become adopted).

It was asked whether Atkins would be required to carry out another technical study of the area or reappraisal?

(Eric Teagle confirmed that he would ask Atkins carry out additional work if this was appropriate in light of the comments received).

Mr Beal asked whether the council had carried out similar studies on other historic airfields in the district, e.g. at Zeals?

(Eric Teagle replied that the other areas mentioned by Mr Beal had not yet been looked at. The catalyst for looking at Old Sarum was the English Heritage report into historic military airfields, which highlighted the national importance of this group).