

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

---

**REPORT TO:** Development and Conservation Control Committee      6<sup>th</sup> April 2005  
**AUTHOR/S:** Director of Development Services

---

### **S/0129/05/F - Oakington and Longstanton**

**Use of Land and Building for Saturday Market Including Car Boot Sales (9am-2pm),  
(Renewal of Time of Consent S/1671/03/F), Land at Oakington Airfield for Bedford  
Markets UK LTD.**

**Recommendation: Approval**  
**Date for Determination: 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2005**

#### **Site and Proposal**

1. The site comprises a piece of hardstanding, grassed area and old aircraft hangar located within the centre of the disused Oakington Airfield, between the villages of Longstanton and Oakington. The actual market area is sited approximately 550 metres east of the nearest residential properties located in St Michaels, Longstanton. The remainder of the open airfield separates the site from residential properties in Oakington.
2. This full application, received on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2005, seeks consent for the renewal of application S/1671/03/F, (expired on the 28<sup>th</sup> February 2005) for the continued use of the land for a Saturday Market and Car Boot sale. Access to the site is provided off Station Road, Oakington, adjacent to a pair of semi detached properties, (Nos 11 and 13 Station Road). The point of access measures 6 metres in width and is sited 16 metres away from the adjacent residential dwelling, (No 13). The access links onto the northern internal access road, (2km).
3. The Market and Car Boot sale is open to traders from 7am while public access is restricted to between the hours of 10 am and 2pm. The site is closed to traders at 4pm.

#### **Planning History**

4. Sunday Markets have in the past been held on the airfield under the provisions of the General Permitted Development Order which states that a Market can be held on up to 14 days of any calendar year without the need for planning permission.
5. An application for a Sunday Market with access off Longstanton Road in Oakington was submitted in 2001 but withdrawn prior to determination, reference **S/0252/01/F**.
6. Planning permission was originally granted for a Saturday Market on the airfield by the Planning Committee in June 2001 for a temporary period of one year (ref. **S/0544/01/F**). The site was located 50 metres from the nearest residential property in Longstanton with access provided off Station Road in Oakington, via the southern internal airfield road. The market ran from 9am to 5pm.

7. A later application, **S/1752/01/F** for use of the same area of land for a Saturday Market and car Boot, accessed directly off Longstanton Road, was withdrawn.
8. Planning permission was again granted for the Market and Car Boot Sale for a further temporary period of one year in February 2002 (ref. **S/2419/01/F**). The site was relocated further away from the residential properties in Longstanton, sited more centrally within the airfield. The market area was slightly larger. Access remained via Station Road in Oakington but ran via the northern internal airfield road. The hours of use remained the same.
9. In 2003 permission was granted for a slightly reduced area of the airfield to be used as a Saturday Market and Car Boot sale, reference **S/1671/03/F**. This temporary 17 month consent allowed the Market and Car Boot sale to be held every Saturday but from 9am to 2pm only. The times traders and the public were allowed on to the site in the morning remained at 7am and 9am respectively. Access to the market area was again provided off Station Road in Oakington, via the northern internal airfield road.

### **Planning Policy**

10. The site lies in the countryside, outside the village frameworks of both Oakington and Longstanton. **Policy P3/2 'Locating uses which attract large numbers of people'** of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 seeks to locate leisure and shopping uses which generate large numbers of people within village centres or on edge of centre locations which are accessible by a range of transport modes.
11. **Planning Policy Statement 7** (Sustainable Development in Rural Areas) seeks, amongst others, to support countryside-based enterprises and activities which contribute to rural economies, and/or promote recreation in and the enjoyment of the countryside.

### **Consultations**

12. **Oakington Parish Council** - Recommend refusal due to the increased traffic flows, adverse affect on road safety and harm to the well-being of local residents. Reference is made to the infringement of numerous planning conditions and the fact that the operator has failed to ensure the stipulated entry times are adhered too. Requested if the application is approved, any consent be made personal to prevent different operators from running the Market
13. **Longstanton Parish Council** - No objection subject to access remaining via Station Road, Oakington
14. **Local Highways Authority** - No objection
15. **Cambridgeshire Constabulary Community Safety Department (Architectural Liaison Officer)** - No objection
16. **Chief Environmental Health Officer** is considering the application and any comments received. Any comments raised will be reported verbally to the Committee
17. **Old West Internal Drainage Board** - No objection

### **Representations - Applicant**

18. In a letter dated 18<sup>th</sup> February 2005 the applicant has confirmed it is their understanding that the definition of the site, as referred to in condition 3 of permission S/1671/03/F, relates to the area of land on which the market is held and does not include the access road. It is confirmed that no trader or member of the public access the market area before the times specified.
19. It is also confirmed that the vehicle control point is located more than 50 metres from the access, as specified by condition 5 of permission S/1671/03/F.
20. To prevent members of the public posing as traders to gain earlier access into the market area, all traders are given a yellow entry ticket, (it is my understanding that this entry ticket has a related fee)
21. Reference is made to the earlier approvals on the land and the support that has been raised for this development in the past. Bedford Markets UK Limited have operated the site since August 2004 and it is stated that all planning conditions have been adhered to during this period.
22. A second letter was received on the 16<sup>th</sup> March 2005 which mainly summarised the points raised during the consultation period. Reference is again made to the applicants interpretation of condition 3 of the previous planning approvals.

#### **Representations - Local Residents**

23. A number of letters of support have been received from residents living within Longstanton.
24. 1 letter of objection has been received which makes reference to traders and members of the public accessing the site before the times specified in condition 3 of the previous permission. It is also stated that the hangar can no longer be used for health and safety reasons

#### **Planning Comments - Key Issues**

25. The main issues to consider in relation to this application are:-
  1. The impact of the development on the character and appearance of the area;
  2. The affect of the increase in traffic generation and use of the access on highway safety; and
  3. The impact of noise and disturbance on the residential amenity of nearby occupiers.
26. The current Saturday Market and Car Boot sale has been running on the disused airfield now for approximately 3 ¾ years. With the exception of Oakington Parish Council which has remained concerned about the traffic implications of this use, each planning application considered has received little local objection. The small number of objections that have been received mainly relayed concerns from residents in Longstanton about the possible use of an access point in the village.
27. **1) Character and Appearance of the Area**  
The site lies within the countryside and is classified as brownfield land as a result of its previous use as an airfield for the Ministry of Defence. The principle of a Market on the site has already been established by the approval of temporary planning

permissions in 2001, 2002 and 2003. These applications considered the impact of the development upon the open and rural character of the area and determined that because the site was previously developed and the use requires a large open area for its operation, temporary re-use of the land for such a purpose was acceptable. The continued use of the land for a market is therefore considered appropriate in this location.

28. **2) Residential Amenity and Highway safety**

- The market area is held in the centre of the disused airfield, now a large expanse of open land. The site lies at least 550 metres away from the nearest residential property located within St Michaels, Longstanton. With neighbouring properties sited within Oakington located even further away, the level of noise and disturbance created by the market itself is not considered to have any significant adverse impact.
29. The access to the site is provided through an existing crash gate leading onto Station Road, Oakington. This access is sited 16 metres north east of the adjacent property No 13 Station Road with a hedge running in between. While No 13 has a blank gable facing the access, having regard to the number of vehicles attracted by a use of this kind, the relationship between this property and the access is considered poor.
30. When considering the initial application for the Saturday Market and Car Boot, (S/0544/01/F), it was agreed that as the market would not be open to the Public until 9am, the proposal is only for one day a week and the occupiers of the adjacent properties had not objected to the proposal, the access arrangements were acceptable. This was on the proviso that a condition be issued preventing traders entering the site before 7am and members of public before 9am, (see condition 3 of all previous permissions). Contrary to the applicants claim, (see letter dated 18<sup>th</sup> February 2005), the access road and market area both fall within the definition of 'the site' and this condition precludes any access onto the airfield before the times specified.
31. Over the last 12 months a number of objections have received by the Council's Enforcement Team. The majority of these concerns relate to the times both traders and members of the public are being allowed onto the site. Cuttings of numerous adverts stating that the Market is open from as early as 6am have also been submitted. Whilst in recent months evidence of correct forms of advertising have been submitted to the Council, the current operators have stated that, in the interests of highway safety, any trader or member of the public who arrives before the times specified in Condition 3 are allowed to gain access onto the airfield, but is then made to queue outside of the market area on the internal access road, some distance from the adjacent properties. Whilst this approach is beneficial from a highway safety perspective, (discussed in more detail below) operating the marketing in this way is in breach of Condition 3 of the previous planning approvals.
32. Whilst the applicant has misinterpreted how Condition 3 should be implemented, (officers agreed that the wording of the condition is not totally clear) if the operator of the site prevents traders and the public entering the airfield before the times specified, cars, vans and trailers will queue on the highway. Markets and Car Boot sales of this nature attract vast numbers of people, many of whom visit a variety of different markets each week, travelling great distances to do so. Many people visiting the site will not be aware when the Market opens, while others intentionally arrive early to either get the best pitches or best deals. If the access gates onto the airfield remained locked until the specified times, (as intended by condition 3), a number of vehicles will queue within Station Road. Station Road is not wide enough to allow a car to pass parked vehicles without crossing the white centre line. If visibility is

obscured by a number of stationary vehicles, this obstruction within the Highway will result in hazardous road conditions, a situation made worse by a bend in the road.

33. The Local Highways Authority has indicated verbally that any condition which results in vehicles queuing within the road, would be the subject of highway objections.
34. Whilst the use is being operated in breach of Condition 3, the occupiers of the adjacent property have not raised any objections either during this planning application or prior to this latest application being submitted. In the absence of any objection, the harm that unregulated access on to the airfield is causing is questioned. In many respects it may be better to allow cars to drive clear of the nearby dwellings rather than forcing them to queue outside.
35. The two initial applications that were approved, were given a temporary consent to enable the impact of the development on the amenities of neighbouring dwellings to be assessed. Prior to the first application being approved, (S/0544/01/F), Oakington Parish Council raised concerns regarding the number of vehicles that will end up queuing within Highway. When the second application was approved, (S/2419/01/F), no objections were raised to the use of the access, nor was a concern raised about the noise and disturbance being caused by its use. Again when application S/1671/03/F was approved, no comments on this specific issue were raised. It is possible that objections were not raised to these previous applications because at the time, the Market and Car Boot sale had been run in accordance with the conditions specified on each approval. Given the difficulties associated with enforcing condition 3, Officers are however not convinced that this is the case.
36. Whilst the above-mentioned condition may be unable to be implemented as intended without having highway safety implications, this restriction was issued for good reason. Officers have therefore considered the potential benefit of delaying the times at which the market is open. If the times at which traders and the public are allowed to enter the market area is delayed by 1 hour, (until 8am and 10am respectively), the number of vehicles using the internal road and access at unsociable hours, (before 8am) is likely to be substantially reduced. If the condition is worded so that the use of the access road is not precluded but access onto the market area is restricted to the revised times, this is considered to strike a suitable balance between protecting the amenities of the properties sited adjacent to the access and highway safety. Whilst the applicant has explained that such an approach would have severe financial ramifications, now that the above difficulties associated with the implementation of condition 3 have come to light, re-issuing this condition in its current form is not considered acceptable.
37. **3) Highway Safety**  
Since the original approval for a Saturday Market and Car Boot Sale on the site, the access onto Station Road has been upgraded in accordance with the recommendations of the County Council Highway Department. The access has been extended to a width of 6 metres for a distance of 30 metres from the carriageway edge. Although located on a bend the access is sited on the outer edge of the curve with good visibility provided in both directions. There is also a 30 miles per hour speed limit in operation throughout the village. The Local Highways Authority has not raised any objections.
38. It is accepted that this use does generate more traffic which travels through the village of Oakington than on a normal day. The road that is currently used most frequently to access the market is already considered to be fairly busy as it links the A14 with Oakington, Cottenham and the villages beyond. The general increase in traffic on

market days is therefore not considered to be detrimental to highway safety. The traffic will also be travelling from different directions so will not solely affect one road in isolation. In relation to the safety of pedestrians crossing the road, measures such as the introduction of a pedestrian crossing have improved the situation greatly. Vehicle to pedestrian visibility is considered to be good.

39. **Other issues**

Oakington Airfield forms part of the site for the new settlement, Northstowe. In considering an application for the renewal of the Oakington Barracks as an Immigration Centre, also located on the airfield, (sited to the north of the market site), permission was granted until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2006, to tie in with works starting at Northstowe. If Members are minded to approve this application a temporary consent until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2006 is recommended.

40. Oakington Parish Council has requested that, if approved, any consent be made personal to Bedford Markets UK Ltd, the current site operator. In this application however it is the use of the land that is being considered. Whilst the Parish is concerned that if the operator changes, conditions may not be implemented correctly, this is not a valid reason to justify a personal use. Providing the Market and Car Boot sale is run in accordance with all planning conditions, who manages the site is not relevant.

41. In a letter of objection it has been stated that the disused hangar included within the application cannot be used for Health and Safety reasons. Whilst this is not a planning matter clarification will be sought from the Council's Oakington Area Officer.

**Recommendation**

Subject to no objections from the Chief Environmental Health Officer

42. Approval subject to conditions

1. The use hereby permitted shall be discontinued and the land restored to its former condition on or before 31<sup>st</sup> December 2006.  
(Reason - Approval of the proposal on a permanent basis would be contrary to the proper planning of the area and the land should be reinstated to facilitate future beneficial use.)
2. The market and car boot sale hereby approved shall not held other than on Saturdays.  
(Reason - To safeguard the amenity of the occupiers of the properties close to the access and in the interests of highway safety.)
3. The gates separating the parking and sales area identified on the plan hereby approved and the internal access road of the airfield shall not be opened to traders before 0800 hours, and shall not be opened to members of the public before 1000 hours on the day of the market and car boot sale. Traders shall leave the site before 1600 hours on the day of the market and car boot sale.  
(Reason - To safeguard the amenity of occupiers of properties close to the access and in the interests of Highway Safety.)
4. Access to the site shall not be achieved other than from the access on to Station Road, Oakington as shown on the approved Scale 1:10000 location plan.  
(Reason- In the interests of highway safety.)

5. Any vehicle control point shall be positioned a minimum of 50 metres from the highway.  
(Reason- In the interests of highway safety.)
6. The access road shall be a minimum width of 6 metres for a distance of 30 metres from the edge of the existing carriageway and appropriately surface sealed.  
(Reason- In the interests of highway safety.)
7. The access from the existing highway shall be laid out and constructed to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority after consultation with the Local Highway Authority.  
(Reason- In the interests of highway safety.)
8. An adequate space shall be provided within the site to enable vehicles to enter and leave in forward gear, park clear of public highway and load and unload clear of the public highway.  
(Reason- In the interests of highway safety.)
9. The permanent space reserved on the site for turning, parking, loading and unloading shall be provided before the use commences and thereafter maintained.  
(Reason- In the interests of highway safety.)
10. All direction signs erected in relation to the Saturday car boot sale and market shall be removed before 1700 hours following the closure of the market.  
(Reason- In the interests of highway safety.)

### **Reasons for Approval**

1. The development is considered generally to accord with the Development Plan and particularly the following policies:
  - **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003:**  
**P3/2** - Locating uses which attract large numbers of people
2. The development is not considered to be significantly detrimental to the following material planning considerations which have been raised during the consultation exercise:
  - Increased traffic flows
  - Highway safety
  - Health and safety
  - Residential amenity

**Background Papers:** the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003
- Planning files Ref, S/0252/01/F, S/0544/01/F, S/1752/01/F, S/2419/01/F, S/1671/03/F and S/0129/05/F

**Contact Officer:** Paul Belton - Planning Assistant  
Telephone: (01954) 713253