

WATERMEAD PARISH COUNCIL CONSULTEE RESPONSE TO APPLICATION FOR 21 FLATS IN PIAZZA CAR PARK, WATERMEAD - 17/00771/APP



IMAGES SHOW THE PIAZZA CAR AND MAIN ROAD WITH OVERFLOW AT 12.17PM
ON WEDNESDAY 27TH OCTOBER 2021



BELOW: ALL SPACES OCCUPIED AT SAME TIME – SOME CARS OUTSIDE DESIGNATED SPACES



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The following images are for context to assist Councillors at Committee.



Piazza car park from Ayleswater, 12th March 2017 11.38am



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MONDAY 11TH OCTOBER 2021 11.31AM PARKING SPACES FULL



This image shows the mature trees and green space which would be lost and replaced with blocks of flats.



This image shows the current 4 bay space now designated for 5 cars which simply couldn't be fitted into the space and is an excellent visual indication of the unrealistic plans submitted. This bay would include at 1D a disabled space as well as 4 others.

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Background and Introduction

The cover picture of this document shows the Piazza car park and adjacent Ayleswater at midday on a normal day, Wednesday 27th October 2021.

The site is the car park for the use of Lakeside residents, (each resident has one or two designated parking spaces), as well as visitors to the homes and businesses in the Piazza. The number of current spaces is frequently inadequate, resulting in cars being parked on other village roads causing considerable inconvenience to residents, as well as potential for accidents, and loss of amenity to residents unable to park outside their own homes.

This is a purely speculative application. The applicant, who is the freeholder of the Piazza, is aware that no development could ever take place unless and until all the leaseholders of both the flats and businesses agreed to a Variation of their Lease. A significant number of residents, and the Parish Council (owner of the village hall in the Piazza), would never agree to such a change. The only advantage to the freeholder would appear to be a perceived increased value of their investment. **Given the inability to develop the site the Parish Council asks that the Local Planning Authority simply refuses the application.** To assist, we include our detailed material objections below.

Watermead Parish Council formally requests that this application is heard in Committee with public speakers including the Parish Council

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Material planning considerations

Impact on Appearance/Character and Identity of Watermead

Watermead was designed in the 1980s as a self-contained village, surrounding a lake with extensive green spaces for recreation and leisure. Everything from the pastel-coloured houses to the elegant Victorian-style streetlights sets Watermead apart as a community designed to be different. To this day Watermead remains distinctive and unique.

The car park which the applicant proposes to use to build three blocks of flats, is adjacent to the central Piazza area of Watermead. This area is surrounded by trees which would do little to hide the ugly and overbearing buildings proposed. Additionally, it is proposed to remove a much-used green open space beside the Watermead Inn and extend the car park to the edge of the lake which frequently overflows on to the Piazza. Moving cars immediately outside the door of the Watermead Inn is extremely dangerous.

The substantial number of new flats would be highly visible to residents whose flats overlook the car park, and to all neighbouring properties including those in Dove House, Pipit Gardens, Fieldfare and Whinchat all of which have been built in the Watermead vernacular. The Parish Council contends that the suggested colour scheme and 'living wall' on the sides of the blocks will only serve to increase their inappropriate impact. This application is injurious to an existing community. It is out of keeping due to its location, scale and bulk.

This proposal would detract from the pattern of development and would adversely impact the character and appearance of the original design concept of Watermead and result in harm to the visual amenities of the area and would be contrary to policies BE2 (design of new development) and BE3 (protection of the amenity of residents) of the adopted Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP).

Impact on Residential Amenity

Policies BE2 and BE3 of the VALP states that planning permission will not be granted where the proposed development would unreasonably harm any aspect of the amenity of nearby residents, when considered against the benefits of the proposal. We strongly believe the following should be taken in account under Policies BE2 and BE3:

- Damage to the visual appearance of the Village from the single approach road.
- Soil movement as a result of building works and changes to drainage in an area already at high risk of flooding. (Please refer to the Land to the East of Watermead Inspector's report).
- **Flooding** is always a very serious concern for Watermead. (NPPF Section 174-175 flooding).
The applicant has produced a surface water drainage scheme for the site, based on sustainable drainage principles. We cannot agree with the view of the officer responding to consultation for SUDS that she has no objection, subject to conditions, when Watermead is already at considerably increased risk from flood and surface water as evidenced in recent years.
- **Loss of further green space** visited by wildfowl. Affecting the biodiversity of this lakeside area would be very damaging. Swans, Canadian Geese, Ducks and many other fowl reside and visit the area every day. Turning this green space into car parking spaces would result in loss of habitat. The installation of 14 bird boxes in the eaves of these flats (as suggested by the Bio Diversity Officer replying to consultation) will do nothing to mitigate this loss. Swans, ducks and geese are the most common birds in Watermead and there are other large areas of woodland and lakeside ground nesting opportunities for all birds.

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- Loss of Public Amenity:** It is self-evident that parking is already frequently inadequate. Supposing each of 21 flats generates a minimum of 1.5 cars there is considerable unmet need in the planned spaces, some of which are simply too narrow for larger modern cars. The revised parking plans “shoehorn” spaces where there is insufficient room and double-count existing spaces, presenting them as new.



The above is a view of the proposed car parking spaces to the southern side. Brewery lorries, large commercial vehicles and waste contractors use the car park daily. These vehicles are large and already find it difficult to drive up to the cellar and rear door of the Watermead Inn. They already have difficulties when car park spaces are full at present. (Evidenced by the number of damaged street light posts, which has been caused, we are told, by waste lorries and commercial vehicles). The proposed waste area next to new space 44 and 43 is inadequate for the number of flats and will be very hard to access. Cars will find difficult enough, let alone a large lorry.



Loss of Amenity to residents and businesses

The five new designated spaces shown here which have been added behind the shops in the Piazza, fronting The Heron, on what is currently green space would result in residents of The Heron being considerably inconvenienced, and disturbed, by increased traffic and vehicle movements.

Additional spaces proposed to the left of the entrance road will be difficult to access by residents or visitors. They are simply unacceptable and should not be accepted. As well as this the two banks of spaces shown number 6-10 and 1D-5 cannot fit into what are now tight 4 space bays. A disabled space here is out of the question, unless the spaces are reduced to 3.



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Policy BE2 of the VALP states that all development shall respect and complement the physical character of the site and its surroundings including the scale and context of the site and its settings; the local distinctiveness and vernacular character of the locality in terms of ordering, form, proportions, architectural detailing and materials and natural qualities and features of the area and the effects of important public views and skylines. For these reasons alone, this application should not even be considered.

Impact on Highways

The single road in and out of the village is frequently congested particularly with much recent development close to Watermead increasing traffic. People already park on the verges, causing disturbance to grassed areas and blocking pedestrian footways - of particular importance to those with accessibility issues.

The splay from the car park entrance to Ayleswater and on to Watermead does not provide safe vision, particularly when cars are parked against the Ayleswater kerb. The photographs provided clearly illustrate this.

Impact on Piazza Parking

Residents of the Piazza have completed a traffic survey using standard methodology and reporting, the results of which clearly show that existing parking is frequently at full capacity without the addition of vehicles parked permanently by residents of a further 21 flats. This traffic survey is attached at Appendix I.

Further survey results from a study undertaken by other villagers are presented at Appendix II.

Planned development

The VALP does not designate Watermead for any further development, there is no land and this speculative and ill-planned, development would cause lasting damage and much difficulty. In this particular case, given that the development could almost certainly never go ahead due to the legal requirement to vary ALL leases it appears to be a pointless and speculative application.

Conclusion

We ask that this application be refused.

Lakeside Car Park

AYLESBURY

October 2021

CAR PARKING SURVEY

Survey Date: 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th and 20th October 2021

Survey conducted by WRLA

METHODOLOGY

1 Location

A car park survey was conducted at Lakeside Car Park, Aylesbury.

2 Fieldwork

Fieldwork was undertaken over one week, on the following dates;

Saturday 16 th	8.00am - 21.00pm.
Sunday 17 th	8.00am - 21.00pm.
Monday 18 th	8.00am - 21.00pm.
Tuesday 19 th	8.00am - 21.00pm.
Wednesday 20 th	8.00am - 21.00pm.

3 Survey methodology

A spot check of the car park was conducted every day, once for every 4 time lots:

- 8.00-10.00
- 10.00-14.00
- 14.00-17.00
- 17.00-21.00

Throughout the survey period and the number of occupied parking bays recorded.

4 Report tables

For the purpose of reporting, the car park bays have been categorised into the following two parking groups;

- Private: Leasehold parking (34 bays).
- Public: Customer parking (76 bays) + Disabled parking (6 bays) + Unauthorised parking (8 bays).

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LAKESIDE CAR PARK AYLESBURY

Summary Table 1

	Sat, Oct 16, 2021			Sun, Oct 17, 2021			Mon, Oct 18, 2021			Tue, Oct 19, 2021			Wed, Oct 20, 2021		
	Visitors Parking + Disabled + Unmarked Bay	Leasehold Bay	Total	Visitors Parking + Disabled + Unmarked Bay	Leasehold Bay	Total	Visitors Parking + Disabled + Unmarked Bay	Leasehold Bay	Total	Visitors Parking + Disabled + Unmarked Bay	Leasehold Bay	Total	Visitors Parking + Disabled + Unmarked Bay	Leasehold Bay	Total
	90	34	124	90	34	124	90	34	124	90	34	124	90	34	124
8.00-10.00	30	13	43	30	13	46	41	12	53	15	13	28	28	13	41
10.00-14.00	40	10	50	71	11	82	86	15	101	40	16	56	40	12	52
14.00-17.00				64	7	71	39	16	55	28	14	42	34	15	49
17.00-21.00	48	18	66	30	13	46	25	12	37	29	16	45	21	16	47
Peak Hour	48	18	66	71	11	82	86	15	101	40	16	56	40	12	52
% daily occupancy	52%	52%	52%	79%	32%	66%	96%	44%	81%	44%	47%	45%	44%	35%	42%

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APPENDIX II traffic survey undertaken by other villagers on Saturday 23rd October

