

**Wycombe District Council
Proposed Developments**

Take notice that the following have been received by Wycombe District Council:

Town & Country Planning Act 1971
Planning Application Ref: W/86/6022.

For: Proposed erection of a single retail warehouse with garden centre compound, ancillary offices, car park and loading area.

At: site bounded by Queen Alexandra Road and Loakes Park Road, High Wycombe.

Applicant: Westbruton Co Ltd.

Department of Environment Circular 18/84 Consultation
Notification of Proposed Development Ref: W/86/9020.

For: Proposed hospital development.

At: Loakes Park, Queen Alexandra Road, High Wycombe.

Consultation made by: Oxford Regional Health Authority.

Copies of the above, including all relevant plans and documents, may be inspected at District Council Offices, Queen Victoria Road, High Wycombe, during normal office hours, Monday to Friday.

Any comments should be made in writing to the Department of Planning and Architecture at the above-mentioned address within 21 days from the date of publication of this Notice. It is regretted that correspondence cannot be entered into and objections are not considered confidential. If you wish to be notified of the Council's decisions, please enclose a stamped addressed envelope.

C. A. Swanwick
Planning Officer

**Sands
hit back
at soccer
plan**

ON behalf of Sands residents may I make it clear to Mr Brian Lee that it is not just a few neighbours who are against the move of Wycombe Wanderers to Hill Bottom Road. A majority of residents have signed the petitions.

We have heavy traffic five days and we consider Saturdays and Sundays our quiet days and the safe days for our children.

A local pub and a hall attract extra car parking and we get up on Sunday mornings to find food and beer glasses in our front gardens. And recently at Wycombe's matches there have been a lot of hooligans.

Surely better choice of site would be by the sports centre. At least there would be no danger to children and the elderly. It is not a built up area and it is away from the town. If there were trouble it would be easy to put the fans on the coaches and send them back up the motorway.

I ask the people of Sands to find out when the planning committee meets and turn up with your objections. — Mrs S. Chivers, Lane End Road, Sands.

**No to new
stadium**

WESTERN Branch Labour Party has passed a resolution condemning the plan to site the new Wycombe Wanderers ground at Hillbottom Road, Sands.

The proposed stadium would ruin an area of great beauty and the road access is unsuitable. If the club is serious in its aim of achieving Football League status then the site would be even more inappropriate. Serious investigation should be made of other sites, including Handy Cross which would be the perfect site.

So Mrs Chivers, and all other Sands residents who are worried at this proposal make sure you attend the Planning Committee meeting, which will probably be on July 9, to show your disapproval. If you do not protest the ground will come to Sands. — Cllr. B. R. Stenner, Chapel Lane, Sands.

Soccer club holds key

MAY I point out to "Dickens".

1. Loakes Park is owned by Wycombe Wanderers FC. They will sell their land to whoever they like, or not at all. If "protests" such as Dickens' are successful in preventing the move to Sands, the club will stay put, and Loakes Park will remain a football ground and a football ground only. Is that what he wants?

2. Hillbottom Road is an ideal location for Wycombe Wanderers. Notwithstanding the possibility that Dickens will reply "the Moon", if he can suggest a better site could he please let Westbruton or WWFC know, because they are not planning the move to Sands for the hell of it. Wherever a new ground is situated, there will be objections from someone. — Shakespeare, Hazlemere (Name and address notified).

Soccer at Handy Cross

I URGE support for Councillor Brian Stenner's proposal for Handy Cross to be the site for Wycombe Wanderers' ground.

I would go further and suggest that it should be designed as a full athletics stadium to the standard required for international athletic contests. With easy access from the motorway a variety of events could bring in a substantial income, also increasing amenities for the town, particularly for the youth.

The younger generation have played an important part in the Wellesbourne and other campaigns and with their active support the local authorities could be persuaded to support this proposal. — D. O. Salmon, West Wycombe Road, High Wycombe.

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Loakes Park crunch time

FOUR places on the top table of the Rotary Club's President's dinner on Tuesday separated two of the principals in the Loakes Park sell-out controversy.

By the time Wycombe's Planning Committee debate the issue next week, Brian Lee, chairman of Wycombe FC, and Len Hampton, acting chairman of Wycombe DC and chairman of the Planning Committee, could be much further apart.

Brian Lee, in a keynote speech, raised the issue while detailing the problems of promoting sports in this country. He asked for the town's support for its football club to ensure it a better future. Len Hampton steered clear of controversy except to comment that having heard Mr Lee's problems he would willingly swap chairmanships next week.

Those brief remarks adequately sums up their different situations. Mr Lee is campaigning for the future of his club. Mr Hampton needs to be more concerned about the future of the town.

For Mr Hampton and his committee to agree with the aspirations of Wycombe Wanderers would require the turning of town planning principles and local planning policies on their head.

That is not to say the planners do not want to ensure a brighter future for the club. It is not to say that the planners are against an expansion of local medical services that a sell-out to the Wycombe Health Authority would hasten. But neither can be countenanced if it means allowing unsuitable development in the town centre and the annexing of an area of Green Belt.

We all want a successful football club. After all, invariably some of that success rubs off on the town. But a town is more than about football. In the final analysis it is about people and we would guess that there are as many, if not more, local people against the commercial development of Loakes Park and the move-out of the club to Green Belt land at Sands as are in favour of it.

Wycombe Wanderers could be accommodated, with Wycombe Council's co-operation, at Handy Cross close to the sports complex already there. It might not have the same financial attractions for the club as Sands and the commercial sell-out, but it makes better planning sense.

Such a solution would give the club better facilities, save Green Belt land and meet Sands residents' objections and allow the hospital expansion we all agree is essential. Even Westbruton, the commercial developers, could be accommodated on the Cressex wasteland as part of a compensatory deal.

But is this a matter for the locals to decide? Doesn't our emotions and the wish to do well by everybody confuse the issue? While it is advisable for local planners to retain control in their own back yard, the two applications to come before the committee next week might be considered an exception to the rule.

The easy way could, in the long term, be the best and more just way for all concerned, the residents, the club, the hospital and the developers. Why not leave it to Whitehall to decide?

A national disgrace

IT comes as no surprise that, with so many divergent interests involved, the proposed extension of Wycombe Hospital on Loakes Park will not go ahead.

We all knew that the Wycombe Wanderers' move to Green Belt land was suspect. We knew that local residents would howl in protest if extraordinary permission were obtained. Commonsense should have dictated that a prime site becoming available in the centre of town should be allocated for a high priority socially valuable purpose, but we anticipated that commercial interests might prevail, and the expedient compromise of a Do-It-Yourself warehouse on part of the site was inevitable . .

We know that the Health Authority is not likely to find the funds to buy the whole site even if by some miracle everything

else gets sorted out.

The sum result of all this is, of course, that the main losers are yet again the elderly population of Wycombe.

It has been said that it is nothing short of national disgrace that this vulnerable section of our society should be deprived of proper facilities by the system. The system in this case has been unable to get its act together. There have been too many factional interests to consider

Perhaps we deserve what we organise or disorganise for ourselves — but Wycombe families of the future will not thank us for failing them and when we reach our later years ourselves neither will we. — **Dr H. R. Simons, Consultant Psychiatrist, Department of Mental Health of the Elderly, Shrubbery Road, High Wycombe.**

Loakes Park

THE strength of objectors guaranteed that Wycombe Wanderers sell-out plans for Loakes Park would have a rough passage through Wycombe Council's Planning Committee on Wednesday.

The planners tried to push through a deal that had been struck in private but the committee was having none of it.

No doubt many felt, as we do, that the developers and, to a lesser degree, the football club are riding on the back of genuine public support for additional medical care for the elderly to get permission for a proposal, which, if submitted in the normal manner, would be thrown out as totally unsuitable.

Councillors spoke of the plan before the committee being the best compromise. Why do we need to look for a compromise to accommodate a development that would be totally out of place in our town centre?

If Loakes Park is for sale then the Wycombe Health Authority should acquire it for the additional services it has in mind and for adequate car parking that general hospitals are now expected to provide.

Sands site for soccer refused

THINK AGAIN, WANDERERS

by Lucy Tennyson

PLANS to move Wycombe Wanderers to a new ground on the edge of the town at Sands have been given a flat refused by councillors.

The hunt is now on to find another site in High Wycombe for the football club to move to.

Possible sites at Hazlemre and The Rye have already been rejected and the council now faces the near impossible task of finding a suitable site for a club aiming at Football League status.

The proposal to build a stadium on Green Belt land off Hillbottom Road was heavily rejected by Wycombe council's planning committee on Wednesday.

Sands residents who packed the public gallery cheered the decision after hearing councillors warn of crowds of 6,000 converging on the area of outstanding natural beauty in the Chilterns.

This decision meant that linked plans to divide up Loakes Park between a property developer and the hospital could not proceed.

In the compromise proposals, Wycombe Wanderers were to sell half of its ground to Westbruton for retail warehouses and the

other half to the health authorities.

"We need warehousing on that site like a hole in the head," said Valerie Letheren, who said that the whole of Loakes Park was needed for hospital expansion and car parking.

"It's hopeless, half-cock idea to me and it's thumbs down all the way," said Paul Endsor.

They ignored a plea for a compromise from Conservative leader Bruce Holland.

"We have to consider the football club. It's their land and they need the retail warehouses to finance their move," he said.

Councillors also reacted angrily to a call for a compromise from planning chief Chris Swanwick, who said that if the scheme at Hillbottom Road was refused, the hospital would be prevented from expanding.

Jean Teesdale said: "This is emotional blackmail to put us in the situation where the hospital will suffer if we turn down the football club."

Mrs Letheren said there had been a deal between the three sides; the football club, property developer and health authority. "There is always another deal," she said.

The committee agreed to defer the application by Westbruton to build a warehouse and garden centre on Loakes Park.

The application by Oxford regional health authority to build wards for the elderly, mentally infirm and geriatric on the other half of Loakes Park were not opposed.

NEW BLUES SITE BID REJECTED

by Sara
Cadenhead

THE dilemma of where to put the new Wycombe Wanderers football ground so that the town's hospital can freely expand is still no closer to being solved.

For the second time around councillors this week issued a resounding "no" to plans to site the ground on Green Belt land off Hillbottom Road, Sands.

Labelling it as a Catch 22 situation and as one of the most difficult decisions they have had to make in recent years, Wycombe district councillors turned down the Sands site by 18 votes to nine.

Sands residents who packed the public gallery of the planning committee on Wednesday night cheered the decision as they did last summer when councillors gave the same plan a flat refusal.

Available

At the centre of the issue is Wycombe Hospital, which is desperate to expand on to Loakes Park, present home of Wycombe Wanderers.

Money has been made available for 48 beds for the elderly mentally infirm and a 24 bed geriatric ward.

The fear is that the money will go elsewhere if a home cannot be found for the football club, which is willing to move, leaving Loakes Park for development by the health authority and for retail warehouses.

Councillor Jean Teesdale described the situation as emotional blackmail knowing that if a solution is not found the hospital will suffer.

But Valerie Letheren said the Sands site was just not suitable for a football ground as access would have to be through an industrial estate.

She added: "The only time the residents of Sands get any peace from the industrial estate is on a Saturday and at weekends. Please do not let us take that away from them."

To jeers from the audience, Paul Ensor said he had been on the working party looking for an alternative site in the Wycombe area and pointed out that there were none.

Audrey Moore said: "We are in an enormously difficult situation. We must built the extra accommodation at the hospital."

The plan before the council was identical to the one refused last summer apart from a slight change in access. That matter will be aired at a public inquiry in July together with an appeal against the council, which made no decision on another scheme to put retail warehousing on one half of Loakes Park.

Wycombe District Health Authority general manager Ron Darby said on Thursday that the situation had reached stalemate.

He said: "It would have been good news for us if this had been passed. Obviously we are disappointed."

"I can to a certain extent understand the objections in Sands but there has been an exhaustive list drawn up of alternative sites and every one is unacceptable to one side or the other."

Mann on Friday

TALK before last week's Wycombe Planning Committee meeting was that a majority of committee members were of a mind to allow Wycombe Wanderers to move to a proposed new ground at Hillbottom Road, Sands.

But when it came to the vote the application was beaten decisively once again, despite the fact that the decision was referred to as the most difficult the committee had ever had to make.

Sands residents in the public gallery were particularly vociferous, almost militant, and chairman Cllr. Freddie Secker had some difficulty keeping order. Even the Hun in the war years didn't cause him as much trouble.

Yet the residents' rowdy outbursts served to indicate the strength of feeling in that quarter about this application and I would think that if there was an alternative ground available Wycombe Wanderers would move there preferably to having such uncompromising neighbours at Sands.

Last hope or lost hope?

It is difficult for me and many others to accept that within Wycombe district there is no other suitable alternative site from everyone's point of view. But that is the view of the committee, and Cllr. Paul Ensor, one of the council's working party, reiterated the fact again so there is nothing more than for us to accept that judgement.

The applicants, of course, were hoping to avoid the long drawn out public inquiry process, commencing in mid July, but that is the last hope now left to them.

Will the Government Inspector, who will preside over the hearing, see things different from local planners? The odds must be stacked against the soccer club, the developers and Wycombe Hospital, the beneficiaries of the proposal.

Emotional blackmail, as one councillor described it, will play no part. The Inspector will decide on planning and environmental grounds and

while he will not allow Wycombe planners' and Sands residents' rejection of the proposal to affect his own judgement, these are factors that will weigh strongly with him.

And from where I am sitting, the developers seem to have little ammunition to nullify this view for the health needs of the district are unlikely to come into the equation.