

**05/00222/FUL**

**CONTINUED USE OF BLOCK H AS MUSEUM AND  
USE OF BLOCKS C AND D AS MUSEUM  
AT Bletchley Park, Wilton Avenue, Bletchley  
FOR Anthony E Sale**

**INTRODUCTION**

The application relates to three separate buildings within the Bletchley Park site, namely block C, block D and block H. All the buildings are located within the Bletchley Park Conservation Area and blocks D and H are listed buildings.

Block C is a single storey building located to the east side of the Bletchley Park. Although not listed, this building is currently being considered for listing by the Department of Media Culture and Sport (DCMS). The building is flat roofed and has a floor area of approximately 2180 square metres arranged in the form of a central core with six wings attached, three on either side of the main core. In terms of previous use, the building was designed and used to process data during the war years using the Hollerith punch card machines, followed by the use as a GCHQ training school between 1946-1987 but has remained mainly vacant after this date. This block is currently in a poor state of repair.

Block D is a larger building located within the centre of Bletchley Park. According to English Heritage, during the war this building took on the functions of huts 3 (to the west), 6 (centre) and 8 (east) which carried out work on the decryption of raw material from the German Army and Air Force. In February 1943, the building became the main reporting centre for all Enigma on German Army and Air Force communications and also for 'Fish' enciphered printer traffic from Testery and Newmanry in block F and later block H. From 1945-1992 the building was used for various activities including Control Commission for Germany 1946/47, GCHQ, civil aviation signals training establishment between 1957/67 and a magistrates court in spur G, but it is understood that the building has been left vacant since 1987. Like block C this building is also flat roofed and again mainly single storey in height but with a two-storey high entrance feature. In its scale and planning, the block clearly demonstrates the development of Bletchley Park's intelligence operation, from extemporizing temporary accommodation erected on the site at the start of the war, to a more planned and greatly enlarged approach to signalled intelligence process. The block has a floor area of approximately 5615 square metres and its layout is a central core with a number of wings leading off. As with block C this building is currently in a poor state of repair. The building is connected by two separate corridors with G block, located on the site owned by Bellcross and Bryant's homes. For the purposes of this current application block G is not included in the site. In March 2005 block D was designated as a listed building grade II by the DCMS. In the supporting text for the listing it is stated that GCHQ considered this building to represent the 'most important building in the Park' with its claim to special interest being primarily historical, and that this interest was considerable. Under application 01/01069/FUL the Trust sought and were granted planning permission for the use of this building as heritage/museum.

Block H is also a single storey mainly flat roofed building located to the northwestern corner of the Bletchley Park site, and recently designated grade II listing by DCMS. Advice from English Heritage is that this building was a purpose built extension to provide room for the Colossus and Robinson computers and currently provides a home for the team of volunteers, which includes the applicant, who are rebuilding the Colossus computer within part of the building. In terms of condition the Bletchley Park Area Masterplan (BPMP) lists this building as being in a poor state of repair, however in comparison to the other two blocks, block H is in a better condition having previously been used as part of the Bletchley Park museum, prior to the Bletchley Park trust moving the museum core into block B. A number of the exhibits within this block are still in place until room can be found in block B. Part of the block is located within the Bellcross and Bryant homes site and, according to the Bletchley Park Trust, part of the building will be demolished in the event that the developers appeal to develop the north area of Bletchley Park is allowed.

## MAIN ISSUE

1. Whether the use of the buildings for museum purposes would preserve or enhance the Conservation Area, the two listed buildings and their setting.

## CURRENT APPLICATION

The application is for the continued use of block H as a museum, the reuse of blocks C and D also for museum and associated car parking provided close to each of the blocks within allocated spaces. The applicant has put forward a detailed plan showing how each of the three blocks could be divided between museum use, archive and space allocated for private organisations linked with the work at Bletchley Park along with space for commercial lettings. The details show that there are no plans to remove any historic or existing internal or external features from the buildings.

In detail, block C would primarily be used as an archaeology store for Milton Keynes finds as well as an area for archives. For block D the proposal is to use the impressive entrance to the building as the main entrance to the museum with an exit via the west side of the building through a shop area along with toilet and catering facilities. Within the west side of the building would be a description of the breaking of the German Enigma cipher and a cinema to show early war time films along with a cryptology trail to show the stages involved in breaking the war time Enigma code. The east side of block D is to contain museum space dedicated to the development of early computers through to the present day, with an emphasis on hands on working exhibits. In addition to this further areas would be used as archives and an area for commercial lettings. Finally block H would remain in its current use as a museum with the rebuilt Colossus computer remaining in the building it was designed for. A cryptology trail would be set up through the building to focus upon the breaking of Lorenz, with a re-creation of a German command post to show the Lorenz cipher machine. In both blocks D and H schoolrooms and

lecture rooms could be provided to facilitate the increase in school visits to the site.

As for access to and parking within the site the applicant has shown that the main access to the museum area can be accommodated via the proposed access point off Sherwood Drive as required by condition 2 of planning permission 01/01069/FUL. Parking is to be provided in three main areas within the site. The first is an area of 16 spaces to be allocated for staff to the north of block C and close to the proposed new access point. A total of 12 disabled car parking spaces are shown within the courtyard area at the main entrance to block D all of which currently exist. Two further areas are allocated, as open visitor parking the first is a new area of 33 spaces on part of the site of block F, which was demolished in 1987, while the second is the existing area located to the front of block H providing 34 spaces. The overall level of parking provided by this application is 95 including staff parking.

#### RELEVANT HISTORY

99/01196/MK	Change of use to educational and training for temporary period of four years at block E. granted 1999.
00/1397/OUT	Part heritage park/museum together with A1, A2, A3, B1, C1, C2 and D1 use, part residential (approximately 180 dwellings) car parking, service and access roads. Not proceeded with.
00/01399/CON	Conservation area consent for partial demolition of block C and for redevelopment of block C comprising of enterprise house/innovation centre, visitors centre with car parking and landscaping. Not proceeded with.
01/01069/FUL	Integrated Heritage Park including innovation centre-enterprise hub, heritage/museum uses & ancillary uses, conference, residential, education & community uses were granted in 2002.
02/01385/FUL	Change of use from education (use class D1) to business (use class B1), block E granted in 2002.
04/00309/FUL	Change of use from B1 to heritage museum (use class D1), block A and B granted 2004.
04/01964/FUL	Change of use: revised museum plan and internal demolition of partitions, at blocks A and B. Undetermined - on this agenda.
04/02203/FUL	Change of use from museum (use class D1) to business (use class B1), part block A granted January 2005.
04/02204/FUL	Renewal of planning permission for change of use from museum (use class D1) to business (use class B1), granted January 2005.
05/00137/LBC	Listed building consent for demolition of internal non-structural partitions to enable completion of phase 2 of museum plans in accordance with condition 5 attached to 04/00309/FUL. Undetermined - on this agenda.

## PLANNING POLICIES

The most relevant policies from the Adopted Local Plan are:

DC1	Impact of Development on Locality
DC2	Impact of Development on Site
DC13	Development Affecting Listed Buildings
DC14	Development Affecting the Setting of a Listed Building
DC15	Conservation Area
AM12	Parking Provision

The most relevant Policies within the Local Plan Second Deposit Version 2002 are:

D1	Impact of Development on Locality
D2A	Design of New Development
D2	Design of Buildings
HE2	Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest (Listed Buildings)
HE5	Development Affecting the Setting of a Listed Building
HE6	Conservation Area
T15	Parking Provision

Also relevant are:-

PPG 15	Planning and the historic environment;
PPG 16	Archaeology and planning

### Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)

Bletchley Park Development Framework (BPDF) adopted December 2001. Published by Milton Keynes Council and provides guidance on new development within the Bletchley Park area.

Central Bletchley Regeneration Framework (CBRF) adopted by the Council in July 2004. Published by EDAW in association with English Partnerships, SEEDA and the Bletchley Development Board. Provides guidance on the regeneration of Bletchley through the use of projects to act as regeneration catalyst.

Bletchley Park Conservation Management Plan (CMP) consultation with stakeholders carried out 10th December 2004 to 12th January 2005 following Cabinet endorsement. The document was published by Feilden and Mawson for EDAW, who were instructed by English Partnerships, Milton Keynes Council and English Heritage. Although not SPG, the document informs the Bletchley Park Masterplan which will form comprehensive SPG for the Bletchley Park area.

Bletchley Park Area Masterplan and Supplementary Planning Guidance (BPMP). Draft document published November 2004 by EDAW on behalf of

English Heritage and Milton Keynes Council. Public consultation will take place during January 2005. Once adopted it will form comprehensive SPG for the Bletchley Park area.

## CONSULTATIONS

The Design and Conservation Manager supports the proposal and confirms that blocks D and H have recently been listed grade II. Block C is at present with DCMS for consideration. The Conservation Management Plan, which has been adopted as an informative document, states that 'Colossus may yet emerge as the principle reason for long term internal interest in Bletchley Park, and decisions regarding this building should reflect this'. Block H was constructed to house the Colossus machines, and therefore I support the retention of the rebuilt Colossus in this building. The draft Masterplan supplementary planning guidance states that 'this part of block H is also historically valuable as the world's first purpose built computer room. If sufficient funding becomes available, it may be restored in connection with that function as an alternative to or complementing the above uses and incorporated as part of the wider interpretation of Bletchley Park beyond the museum'. The matrix within the supplementary planning guidance also considers museum use as acceptable in blocks D and H, with C to be used as a visitor centre. I would therefore suggest that the use of these buildings for museum use accords with the adopted Conservation Management Plan and the Draft Masterplan. Furthermore as all three of the buildings are either listed or likely to become listed buildings, the proposed use would accord with their special historical interest.

English Heritage broadly welcomes the proposal in principle, which generally appears to fit within the emerging Conservation Management Plan. Block H, a Grade II Listed Building is already in museum type use and given its history for the housing of the Colossus computer, this is highly appropriate. It is known that 'H' block was purpose built to house the Colossus and therefore is highly significant to the story of Bletchley Park, we therefore consider the use reflects this importance which is also set out as a brief summary in the formal listed building description. We note and would find agreeable that the proposed seeks to complement the work and display of the Bletchley Park Trust as set out broadly for the central area of the site that is being regarded as the 'core' in the emerging SPG. Undoubtedly the proposals set out will require extensive funding to bring them forward in a meaningful manner and there is little indication of how this might be achieved or indeed the plan period envisaged by the application. However, we also have little information on the proposals for the other parts of the site in this respect regarding the Bletchley Park Trust. English Heritage would much prefer to see a cohesive and all embracing plan for the museumological presentation of the whole Bletchley Park site, such that a full picture of the proposed Interpretation of Bletchley Park and its wartime events and national/ international significance could be understood. To this extent more 'joined up' information is clearly needed. Regarding the plan showing parking and possible access, this is also set out rather tentatively - we would have concerns regarding the extent of disabled parking shown at the entrance to block D which is shown rightly as a

key entrance, the extent of car parking would detract from this and would need reduction. Finally, given the access which seems to be proposed from Sherwood Drive on the application how this relates to the proposed road and access network in the site and the public realm and pedestrian access will need to be considered too, English Heritage regard this as an integral part of any proposal for Bletchley Park.

English Partnership does not support the application stating that in their opinion the uses of the buildings within the site are not sustainable or viable. The draft SPG approach is predicated on an 'enabling' development philosophy which ensures long-term viability of the reused buildings is secured.

The Senior Engineer, Highways Development Control comments are awaited and any received will be reported verbally during this meeting.

## CONSIDERATIONS

Under planning permission 01/01069/FUL, permission was sought by the Bletchley Park Trust to use building block C for business use. Although this use has not been implemented it remains valid until January 2007. Evidence from the Bletchley Park Conservation Management Plan (CMP) clearly states that the possible future uses of this building are listed as 'visitor centre, museum for Hollerith machines, offices or light industry'. The proposed use of the building for archives in connection with a museum use would therefore comply with the suggested possible uses within the CMP. Further support for the proposed use is provided within the BPMP which clearly states that: 'the intention is to retain the built form of block C with a full exploration of opportunities to restore or adapt the building to/for beneficial uses that will be attractive to a variety of creative, commercial or heritage/museum occupiers together with a full understanding of funding which may be available to support a high quality re-use and adaptation.' It is accepted that post war use as a training centre removed a lot of the war time features and internally the overall historic significance of the building has been diminished but it is encouraged in the BPMP that the adaptation of the building should be considered and could still show how the building was used. Furthermore due to the proximity to the museum activities at the entrance to the Park indicates that with support funding the building could be converted to visitor use, or for archive purposes and may become part of future visitor interpretation facilities. For these reasons the proposed use of C block as archive is considered acceptable.

With regards to block D the previous planning permission for this building is for a museum use, which from a site visit appears not to have been implemented. Evidence from the CMP clearly states that possible future uses of this building include, the entrance block as a museum, offices and/or light industry. It is however recognised that the size and condition of this building will make it difficult to find a suitable use for the whole of the building and that it may be necessary to concentrate on the area around the main entrance. This approach is also encouraged within the BPMP which confirms that this

building presents one of the most exciting opportunities in the Park area to creatively bring this building back into use - respecting the elements identified as being of historical importance whilst bring forward the sympathetic upgrading for other beneficial use of other parts of the building. Of particular note are a number of important rooms such as the 'Watch Room' located within the central core and was the hub of operations during war time, which the BPMP states should be restored to their original condition and to be opened to the public in a controlled form such as guided tours. Other areas of the building could be developed as workshop/workspace or small office, which could attract creative industries as well as other small-scale employers. Again the type of use encouraged by both the CMP and the BPMP are shown on the submitted plans for this current application and as such the proposal is considered to comply with current desired use of the building.

Turning to block H this building has already been used as a museum and this use was granted by application 01/01069/FUL. The CMP considers that suitable use for this building is in the form of museum, office, light industrial and/or community use. The Council's Conservation Officer and English Heritage consider that given the history of the building for the housing of the Colossus computer, the proposal to continue the use of the building as a museum is highly appropriate and as such the proposal is considered acceptable.

Previous permissions for the use of the buildings on site have been conditioned upon a new vehicular access to the site from Sherwood Drive. English Partnerships proposes to submit an application for the access in the near future, and to implement the new access as part of the enabling works for the future development of Bletchley Park. While a comprehensive plan for the future of Bletchley Park has still not emerged, it is considered that the granting of planning permission for museum use of these wartime buildings will not prejudice any future comprehensive proposals.

#### RECOMMENDATION:

That planning permission be granted subject to conditions relating to uses, car parking, provision of Sherwood Drive access prior to 02/01/07, no internal alterations other than as shown on the approved plans, no use of existing vacant/un-used buildings without further planning permission.