

Rethink plea on country rifle range

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A Hungerford-style massacre is feared by West Dorset villagers living near a rifle range.

Sadborough Gun Club wants to build a rifle range near its Clay pigeon shoot at Thorncombe.

But residents fear gunshots will shatter peace and quiet in the village — and a massacre could even be triggered off.

Now the local Ombudsman is to investigate claims that West Dorset District Council was at fault when it considered the planning application.

Councillors at last week's western area planning committee were told the Ombudsman was investigat-

Star report by SIMON CLIFFORD

ing maladministration claims.

Thorncombe Parish councillors told the meeting the rifle range could attract riflemen from all around the country and "possibly encourage another Hungerford massacre."

No more houses for Thorncombe
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Although planning permission for the gun range had been given, the parish council called on the district to reverse its decision and pay any compensation that would be due.

Neighbouring parish councillors from Broadwindsor backed up the calls. They told the district planners the residents of Hungerford would have told the possibility of murder by a rifleman not be taken into account when planning permission was granted for its own club application.

INVESTIGATING

The Gun Club chairman Mr Peter Over, said the club would be used by

members from just a 15-mile radius.

He said there would be strict supervision at all times and the firing would be carefully monitored.

Clay pigeon shooting had been taking place at the Knackers Hole wood site for four years.

Recent complaints about the shooting range were being investigated by the public health department.

Area planning officer Mr Derek Price said the Ombudsman would carry out a full investigation.