

WH/205/2010amended - Land Adjacent Georges Fields, Hatfield Park
District Ref: S6/2010/1710/FP

Decision- Grant with conditions

1. Prior to opening of the new car park, a signing scheme to direct visitors to and from the carpark shall be completed in accordance with the specification of the Highway Authority and the Local Planning Authority's satisfaction.

Reason: To ensure highway safety

2. Concurrent with the first use of the approved development, the existing car park accessed from Station Lodge shall be closed for use by visitors.

Reason: To comply with PPG13 and ensure that additional parking is not provided.

3. Construction of the development hereby approved shall not commence until details of construction vehicle movements and construction access arrangements are submitted to and approved by the highway authority.

Reason: To ensure the impact of construction vehicles on the local road network is minimised.

Comments

The proposal is to provide a new visitor car park for 148 vehicles to replace the existing 152 space car park currently located in front of Hatfield House. The proposed car park would be accessed from Church Lane using the entrance known as George's Gate which also serves the newly constructed 12 space coach car park.

The application is accompanied by a Transport Statement which considers the impact on the A1000 of relocating the entrance from the main Hatfield House gate at Station Lodge to George's Gate off Church Lane. There was insufficient information within the original Transport Assessment to enable the Highway Authority to determine the impact on the surrounding highway network. The applicant has submitted a Supplementary Transport Report that includes traffic counts on the existing exit to determine the impact on the highway network.

Trip generation

The number of cars using the proposed car park will be similar to the current use of the existing car park. The supplementary Transport Report gives figures for the number of vehicles entering and leaving the Station Lodge

entrance. This has been further divided into visitors, staff/residents and business tenants. The traffic counts show that on the Thursday surveyed, the hour with the maximum number of visitor trips was between 1100 - 1200hrs with a two way flow of 38 trips. During the network peak hour 1700 – 1800hrs there were 14 visitor trips. On the Saturday the maximum number of visitor trips was 64 during the period 1400-1500hrs. During the Saturday network peak 1200 – 1300hrs there were 40 visitor trips.

Using the survey information these trips have been assigned to the road network. It appears that just over 50% of vehicles departing will head north from the proposed access, rather than the previously assumed 70%. The maximum number of departures observed was 47 on the Saturday afternoon between 1600 and 1700. Assuming a 50:50 split this would result in 24 vehicles traveling north.

It should be noted that the visitor figures were obtained in the middle of September and suggest that the car park was not full. Therefore during holiday times it is reasonable to expect the number of vehicle movements to increase.

Current access arrangements

The current access at Station Lodge from the A1000 is an all movement junction with vehicles able to approach from both the north and south.

Proposed Access Arrangements (vehicles exiting the site)

The proposal is to serve the new car park from the entrance to the new coach car park. This is accessed from Church Lane. Church Lane is a local access road. The entrance to Church Lane is a short distance to the south of the roundabout junction of Great North Road, the A1000 with French Horn Lane, the B197. As a result of the centre island arrangement at the junction of Church Lane drivers wishing to travel north or west on leaving Hatfield House, have to turn left and proceed to the next roundabout at Welham Green a distance of approximately 2km to turn and then travel back.

The transport statement suggests that cars wishing to travel north and west will be directed to use the service road that links between Church Lane and The Broadway to enable them to access the French Horn Lane/Great North Road roundabout . This service road is one-way and single lane width, it has tight radii and is not designed to accommodate large volumes of traffic. The geometry of the junction of this service road with The Broadway makes the left turn onto The Broadway difficult however the Supplementary Transport Report provides tracking diagrams that indicate that large cars can negotiate this route without over-running.

Using the figures given in the Supplementary Transport Report the proposal would result in an additional 25 vehicles using this service road during the hour of peak visitor departures on a Saturday afternoon. This will lead to

increased queuing vehicles wait to exit onto the main part of the Broadway. The survey figures indicate that waiting vehicles should be accommodated within the service road without blocking onto Church Lane, which would be detrimental to vehicles trying to access Church Lane from the A1000. The Highway Authority understands that this car park will not be used for what are deemed as “medium-sized” events, including the Cancer Research 10k run, the Paws in the Park, the Wedding Fair and the Christmas events. Instead, they will use the same car parking arrangements that are deployed by the Estate for their large scale events, of which there are about four each year. This is important as such events could result in more vehicles leaving the car park at the same time and queues on the service road part of The Broadway reaching back to Church Lane.

Proposed Access Arrangements (vehicles entering the site)

The proposal will result in increased numbers of left turning vehicles into Church Lane from the A1000 and left turning vehicles from Church Lane onto the A1000. This junction is close to the French Horn Lane/Great North Road junction and the increased number of left turning movements will lead to the slowing of vehicles on the A1000. The situation is worse during the Saturday peak with 36 additional left turning vehicles into Church Lane. However, the peak visitor arrival times do not coincide with the peak times on the network. Providing vehicles can turn quickly and easily into St Georges Gate there should be no detrimental impact on the highway network. Therefore coaches using the coach park must not be delayed while they are signed in/accepted at any point in the route which would delay cars entering the site. A condition relating to this would address the concerns of the highway authority.

Highway Safety

The Supplementary Traffic Report contains road accident traffic data which shows that within the last three years there were two slight injury accidents in the vicinity of the Station Lodge access, neither of which related to traffic using the Station Lodge access. During the same time period there were two accidents at the two accidents at the Great North Road, French Horn Lane roundabout.

Very Special Circumstances

The applicant have included as one of their very special circumstances that "The proposal will help reduce vehicular congestion opposite the Hatfield Station thereby providing a highway benefit" This statement is supported by 5 paragraphs which relate to how the proposal will separate tourist traffic from the congested area opposite the station and prevent queues forming on the Great North Road at this location. During the weekday the majority of vehicles using the Station Lodge Entrance are staff, residents and tenants and these vehicles will continue to use this access therefore the reduction in traffic particularly during the weekday peak will be approximately 17%. On Saturdays when visitors account for the majority of turning movements the

reduction in movements at this junction will be greater.

Hertfordshire County Council as highway authority considers that based on the traffic information submitted the proposal will not have a significant impact on highway safety and free flow on the A1000.