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Response to Planning application from Hertfordshire County Council (T and CP GDP Order 2015)

Director of Planning

Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
The Campus
Welwyn Garden City
Hertfordshire
AL8 6AW

District ref: 6/2020/3451/MAJ
HCC ref: WH/5158/2021
HCC received: 11 January 2021
Area manager: Matthew Armstrong
Case officer: Samuel Tearle

Location

WELLS FARM NORTHAW ROAD EAST CUFFLEY POTTERS BAR EN6 4RD

Application type

Full Application

Proposal

Demolition of existing buildings and erection of 14 dwellings

Decision

Notice is given under article 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 that the Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority recommends that permission be refused for the following reasons:

There is insufficient information supplied with this application to enable the Highway Authority to reach a recommendation. In the absence of the necessary information, the Highway Authority recommends refusal due to doubt over possible implications for highway safety and convenience.

It is evident the required visibility splays at the site access cannot be achieved with the proposed reduction in speed limit from national speed limit to 30mph. The details submitted to support the reduction in speed limit are currently insufficient. The applicant must be aware of the required characteristics for a 30mph zone set out in the HCC Speed Management Strategy (November 2020).

Description of Proposal

A full planning application has been submitted for the demolition of the existing commercial buildings of (101sqm B2 and 828sqm B8 land use) for the erection of 14 dwellings. The dwellings are proposed to consist of:

- 6 x 2-bedroom dwellings;
- 7 x 3-bedroom dwellings;
- 1 x 4-bedroom dwelling.

Vehicular access to the site is proposed via the existing site access from Northaw Road East. The proposals include the provision of 32 car parking spaces, with each dwelling served by one EV charging facilities.

Pedestrian access is proposed to remain via the footway crossover.

The proposals include changing the speed limit on Northaw Road East (for a stretch of approx. 360m from 60mph to 30mph).

Existing Site Description

The site is occupied by several buildings that have an established B2 / B8 commercial use. Existing access to the site is via a footway crossover onto the B156 Northaw Road East. Northaw Road East is a classified B highway and secondary distributor, subject to national speed limit. The speed limit changes to 30mph upon entering the main built form of Cuffley, approximately 290m to the north of the site access.

From the site access, a footway is located on the western side of Northaw Road East and links to the wider footway network in Cuffley and bus stops outside the Tennis Club.

Traffic Impact

Trip Generation

The Transport Statement has predicted the net vehicle trips by calculating the trip generation of the existing and proposed site uses.

The trip generation for the existing site has been based on trip rates for industrial units, derived from TRICs. The Highway Authority are satisfied with the use these trip rates.

The trip generation for the proposed site has been based on trip rates for houses privately owned, derived from TRICs. The Highway Authority are satisfied with the use these trip rates.

The net trip vehicle generation for the site is predicted to generate + 2 two-way trips in the AM Peak Hour and + 1 two-way trips in the PM Peak Hour.

The Highway Authority are satisfied that the predicted increase in vehicle trips does not warrant capacity impact assessments.

Highway Safety

The Transport Statement has included a review of the personal injury collisions over the most recently available five-year period that have occurred in the vicinity of the site. The review has shown no collisions occurred along the immediate site frontage and a limited number (14) of PICs along Northaw Road East between Station Road and Cattlegate Road, none fatal. The Highway Authority have checked the PIC review and are satisfied the collision record stated above.

Design Considerations

Vehicular Access

The development proposals intend to retain the existing footway crossover arrangement. Whilst a bellmouth arrangement for a proposed development of this size would be preferable, the Highway Authority is not averse to the retention of the footway crossover as it ensures priority remains with the pedestrian – in line with Policy 1 of HCC LTP 4. However, the footway crossover access design must be of a width suitable for two vehicles to pass in order to avoid conflicting movements and changes in priority if a vehicle is waiting to enter the access whilst a vehicle is positioned to exit the site.

It is therefore requested that the applicant demonstrates on a swept path drawing that two large sized cars can pass on the access.

The visibility splays from the access for the proposed 30mph speed limit has been shown on drawing No. PL02. The visibility splay of 2.4m x 43m has been shown to be achievable.

A visibility splay drawing (Drawing No. PL03) has been submitted for the access which shows visibility of 2.4m x 160m, which is not considered suitable for national speed limit or the standards contained in the DMRB/Road in Hertfordshire: Highways Design Guide.

Speed Gateway

In order to provide acceptable visibility splays at the access, a change of speed limit has been proposed.

The Transport Statement has proposed that the speed limit gateway of 30mph will be moved from 290m north of the access to 70m south of the access (a total of approximately 360m). This is in order to ensure adequate visibility splays from the access are achievable. Northaw Road East is currently subject to national speed limit. The proposed gateway design has been shown on Drawing No PL04.

Changes to speed limits in Hertfordshire are required to be in line with the HCC Speed Management Strategy and be approved by the HCC Speed Management Group. Currently the applicant has not supplied the following essential information that is required to review the proposal:

- Existing speed data is required at the location of the proposed 30mph gateway;
- Existing speed data is required at the site access;
- Street lighting proposals are needed along Northaw Road East.

The applicant should note that the requirements and expected characteristics of a 30mph zone are set out in the HCC Speed Management Strategy (Nov 2020). <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/media-library/documents/highways/transport-planning/local-transport-plan-live/speed-management-strategy.pdf>

The applicant should also be aware that the HCC Speed Management Group require 30mph zones to have active frontages. The proposed development does not support an active frontage nor does the section of Northaw Road East.

Internal Highways

The applicant should be aware the internal highways at the site will remain private and the Highway Authority will not seek adoption.

Pedestrian Access

Pedestrian access to the site is understood to be via the footway crossover. The Highway Authority are satisfied with this arrangement and request that a private speed management strategy is provided on the highways internal to the site in order to ensure that vehicles travel at a low speed , especially

on approach to the footway crossover. Pedestrian visibility splays, as set out in Roads in Hertfordshire: Highways Design Guide, are required at the footway crossover.

It is noted that the TS states the applicant will fund footway conditioning works. Plans showing the survey of required works, along with street lighting details are required.

Refuse Strategy

The applicant has submitted Drawing No. SP101 for a swept path analysis using a design vehicle of 11.4m length entering and exiting the site access junction. The Highway Authority are satisfied that a refuse vehicle can enter and exit the site without the body of the vehicle encroaching on the footway.

The Drawing No.s SP102 and PL05 have shown that the maximum dragging distance for a bin collection is 25m which is in line with the standards set out in Roads in Hertfordshire: Highways Design Guide

Car Parking

The proposals include the provision of 32 car parking spaces spread across garage, driveways, and allocated on-street parking spaces. The Highway Authority are satisfied with this level of parking provision.

The Transport Statement states that at a minimum of one parking space per dwelling will be for EV charging and an appropriate number of dwellings can be considered to be 'fully adaptable'. Hertfordshire County Council issued a climate emergency in 2019 and the HCC Local Transport Plan Policy 5 requires all new developments to provide EV infrastructure. The Highway Authority therefore support this proposed level of EV infrastructure and request, by way of planning condition if permission is granted, that at a minimum each dwelling is served by an active EV charging space and all other spaces are provided with passive infrastructure.

Cycle Parking

The Transport Statement states that each dwelling will be provided with appropriate cycle parking and storage.

The Highway Authority are concerned about the lack of detail for the cycle parking provision and request, by way of planning condition if permission is granted, that cycle parking is provided in line with WHBC standards. The storage for the bicycles must be in a secure, covered and well-lit location.

Sustainable Transport Provision

The closest bus stops to the site are on Northaw Road East, approximately 130m and 180m from the proposed entrance to the Site. The bus stops for travel in both directions comprise of a stop flag and timetable board. Cuffley railway station is approximately a 1.2km walk distance.

There are no dedicated cycle facilities within the immediate vicinity of the proposed development site.

The footway provision along Northaw Road East links to a wider network of footways and other pedestrian facilities within Cuffley, providing routes to key services and local facilities. The Transport Statement has undertaken a review of local amenities and facilities based on the IHT Guidance for Acceptable Journeys on Foot. The results have shown that a number of facilities are within the preferred maximum distance.

Travel Plan

A Travel Plan is not required under the Hertfordshire County Council Travel Plan criteria. Although a Travel Plan is not required, it is recommended that the applicant provides sustainable measures to

future residents such as travel information packs upon moving in order to encourage public transport and active travel use.

Planning Obligations / CIL

Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council is in the process of adopting CIL and therefore contributions sought towards sustainable transport are based on the S106 process. Until CIL is adopted, Hertfordshire County Council planning obligations toolkit will be used to identify the fee required in order to offset the impact of the site to the local highway, footway, cycleway and public transport networks whilst enhancing the and enhance sustainable travel options.

In accordance with the HCC Planning Obligations Guidance, contributions are sought on a unit rate basis and are pooled where appropriate. For residential use the charge is based on the number of bedrooms. This is calculated based on the site's accessibility zone.

The site is located in Zone 4 and given the presented proposals (6 x 2-bed units@ £750, 7 x 3-bed units@£1,125, 1 x 4-bed units@£1,500) this equates to £13,875 in 2006 prices. The current SPONS pricing index suggest that this equates to £19,859 in today's prices. HCC Highways would distribute this via S106 agreements to sustainable transport schemes to mitigate the impact of the development.

Conclusion

The Highway Authority wishes to raise an objection to the proposed development due to insufficient information.

It is evident the required visibility splays at the site access cannot be achieved with the proposed reduction in speed limit from national speed limit to 30mph. The details submitted to support the reduction in speed limit are currently insufficient. The applicant must be aware of the required characteristics for a 30mph zone set out in the HCC Speed Management Strategy (November 2020).

Signed

Samuel Tearle

15 February 2021