

Mark Youngman
Development Management Group Manager
Hertfordshire County Council
Postal Point CHO242
County Hall
Pegs Lane
Hertford
SG13 8DE

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: 6/2021/2260/FULL
HCC ref: WH/8633/2021
HCC received: 23 August 2021
Area manager: Matthew Armstrong
Case officer: Samuel Tearle

Location

SHELL WELWYN GARDEN CITY STANBOROUGH ROAD WELWYN GARDEN CITY AL8 6XA

Application type

Full Application

Proposal

Redevelopment of petrol station; including demolition of existing sales building, canopy link and car wash/jet washes, erection of a new sales building, provision of car parking spaces, provision of EV charging bays and associated plant, erection of a new bin store, retention of forecourt and canopy, and associated works

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:

The existing vehicular accesses are in the form of wide bellmouths that are considered by the Highway Authority to be unsuitable to support pedestrian movements of all ages and abilities and represent a safety risk due to their excessive crossing distances and also allow vehicles to enter and exit the site at speed.

As the current proposals are to retain the separate 'entry' and 'exit' only arrangements, it is requested that the accesses are narrowed, and footways extended to include dropped kerbs and tactile paving or a footway crossover arrangement. This will encourage vehicles to travel at lower speeds when entering and exiting the site and will support pedestrian movements of all ages and abilities.

Until the access design is revised, the current proposals are contrary to:

- NPPF (July 2021) Paragraph 112(a): *give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas;*

- NPPF (July 2021) Paragraph 112(b): *address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport;*
- NPPF (July 2021) Paragraph 112(c): *create places that are safe, secure and attractive – which minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, avoid unnecessary street clutter, and respond to local character and design standards;*
- Hertfordshire County Council Local Transport Plan (2018): Policy 1 Transport User Hierarchy. *To support the creation of built environments that encourage greater and safer use of sustainable transport modes, the county council will in the design of any scheme and development of any transport strategy consider in the following order:*
 - *Opportunities to reduce travel demand and the need to travel;*
 - *Vulnerable road user needs (such as pedestrians and cyclists);*
 - *Passenger transport user needs;*
 - *Powered two wheeler (mopeds and motorbikes) user needs;*
 - *Other motor vehicle user needs.*
- Hertfordshire County Council Local Transport Plan (2018): Policy 5: *Ensure access arrangements are safe, suitable for all people, built to an adequate standard and adhere to the county council's Highway Design Standards.*

Issues regarding the refuse collection and servicing arrangements should also be reviewed. Further details can be found under the 'Design Consideration' section below.

Once the applicant has addressed the issues stated in the 'Design Considerations' section of this response, the Highway Authority will be in a position to recommend no objection subject to conditions and informatives.

ANALYSIS / COMMENTS

Description of Proposal

A full planning application has been submitted for the redevelopment of the Shell Petrol Filling Station.

The proposal includes the demolition of the existing site and the erection of a new sales building of 271sqm, the provision of 14 car parking spaces and an additional four EV spaces, two bicycle stands and a bin store.

The proposal also includes the retention of the existing vehicular and pedestrian accesses, and the retention of the number of petrol pumps (eight).

Existing Site Description

The existing site comprises of a Shell Petrol Filling Station of eight pumps, a sales building of 147sqm, and a car wash / jet wash of 149sqm.

Vehicular access to the site is in the form of bellmouths that operate to separate entry and exit only arrangements. The entry bellmouth is approximately 17m width and the exit bellmouth is approximately 15m width. A footway bounds the southern side of the site and links to bus stops on Stanborough Road.

Traffic Impact

Trip Generation

A trip generation assessment has not been undertaken by the applicant. Despite this omission, the Highway Authority are satisfied the number of vehicle trips generated by the site will remain similar based on the 'like-for-like' redevelopment proposals.

Highway Safety

A review of the personal injury collisions on the local highway network has not been undertaken. The Highway Authority have undertaken a review of personal injury collisions over the past five years and have found one collision of slight severity has occurred at the entrance only access and five collisions of slight severity had occurred at the exit only access.

This issue should be considered alongside the comments below regarding the vehicle / pedestrian site access design.

Design Considerations

Vehicular Access

The proposals include the retention of the existing vehicular accesses. The Highway Authority are satisfied with the location of the accesses, however, note that the design of the bellmouths must be enhanced in order to support safe and suitable pedestrian movements (see paragraph below).

Pedestrian Access

The existing vehicular accesses are in the form of wide bellmouths that are considered by the Highway Authority to be unsuitable to support pedestrian movements of all ages and abilities and represent a safety risk due to excessive crossing distances and also allows vehicles to enter and exit the site at speed.

As the current proposals are to retain the separate 'entry' and 'exit' only arrangements, it is requested that the accesses are narrowed, and footways extended to include dropped kerbs and tactile paving or a footway crossover arrangement. This will encourage vehicles to travel at lower speeds when entering and exiting the site and will support pedestrian movements of all ages and abilities.

Until the access design is revised, the current proposals are contrary to:

- NPPF (July 2021) Paragraph 112(a): *give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas;*
- NPPF (July 2021) Paragraph 112(b): *address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport;*
- NPPF (July 2021) Paragraph 112(c): *create places that are safe, secure and attractive – which minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, avoid unnecessary street clutter, and respond to local character and design standards;*
- Hertfordshire County Council Local Transport Plan (2018): Policy 1 Transport User Hierarchy. *To support the creation of built environments that encourage greater and safer use of sustainable transport modes, the county council will in the design of any scheme and development of any transport strategy consider in the following order:*
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 - *Passenger transport user needs;*
 - *Powered two wheeler (mopeds and motorbikes) user needs;*
 - *Other motor vehicle user needs.*

• Hertfordshire County Council Local Transport Plan (2018): Policy 5: *Ensure access arrangements are safe, suitable for all people, built to an adequate standard and adhere to the county council's Highway Design Standards.*

Refuse Collection Arrangements

The proposals, as shown on the Proposed Site Layout Drawing No. 12038629_PSL2_21 include a bin store on the north west of the site. Opposite the bin store is a row of perpendicular car parking spaces and bollards.

When vehicles are parked in the proposed spaces, alongside the bollards, it is unclear how a refuse collector will be able to drag the bins to the refuse collection vehicle. It is also unclear whether a refuse collection vehicle will reverse out of the entry only access or use the proposed separate entry and exit junctions. The Highway Authority only consider the latter arrangement to be acceptable and a swept path analysis drawing must be submitted to demonstrate it is achievable.

Servicing Arrangements

The servicing arrangements for the proposed development have not been detailed. It is noted the Proposed Site Layout Drawing No. 12038629_PSL2_21 includes a delivery bay on the west of the site, however it is unclear whether a delivery vehicle or fuel tanker will reverse out of the entry only access or use the proposed separate entry and exit junctions. The Highway Authority only consider the latter arrangement to be acceptable and a swept path analysis drawing must be submitted to demonstrate it is achievable.

Parking Arrangements

The proposals, as shown on the Proposed Site Layout Drawing No. 12038629_PSL2_21 include the provision of 14 car parking spaces (including one disabled spaces) and four EV charging spaces. The proposals also include two cycle parking stands located near the entrance of the store. The Highway Authority are satisfied with this arrangement.

It is noted that the Application Form states there will be 11 car parking spaces. The disparity should be clarified.

Licences

The proposals, as shown on the Proposed Site Layout Drawing No. 12038629_PSL2_21, include two signs located outside of the site's red line boundary. Therefore, if the application is approved a licence will be required and details will be provided by way of an informative.

CTMP

Due to the location of the site accessed off A6129 and close proximity to local amenities and facilities, a Construction Traffic Management Plan will be requested by way of planning condition once the above highway issues have been resolved.

Conclusion

The Highway Authority have reviewed the supporting documents and wishes to raise an objection to the application due to severe issues with the access arrangements, which are currently contrary to the policies set out in the NPPF and HCC Local Transport Plan.

Once the applicant has addressed the issues stated in the 'Design Considerations' section of this response, the Highway Authority will be in a position to recommend no objection subject to conditions and informatives.

Signed

Samuel Tearle

9 September 2021