

Assessment of Parking Provision, Access and Traffic Generation

The highway department has raised concerns that the proposed alterations at 24 Maes Isaf will result in an intensification in use of the current vehicular access and that it will increase parking requirements at the site.

However, when assessing traffic generation for planning applications it is standard practice to evaluate the highway issues at the site with a comparison of its permitted use against its proposed use.

The site was actually used until six years ago as a shop selling newspapers, magazines, books, stationary, alcohol, sweets and ice cream amongst other things. See image below from google maps in 2009.



The proposal seeks a change of use of an A1 shop unit into a 1 bed flat with two further flats to be constructed above. The proposed first floor storage area has been removed and will be integrated to provide cupboard storage within each flat.

The traffic generation associated with this permitted A1 use is well in excess of the proposed use. Parking requirements for an A1 shop use are similar to the proposed 3 one-bedroom flats.

Traffic generation

An A1 shop use with newsagent / off licence / lottery would generate significant movement of traffic around the site.

The shop shown in the photograph used to open early morning and close late at night meaning the traffic generated at the site caused traffic disturbance / noise to the neighbourhood / customer parking pressures for up to 16 hours per day. All done under the permitted A1 use of the site.

There were up to 3 staff on duty at any one time – all parked to the rear of the building.

There were significant numbers of car bound customers utilising the two roadside laybys within 25m of the site for up to 16 hours per day.

There would be a minimum of three or more deliveries per day by transit van utilising the rear car park to offload goods.

Traffic generation from a 1-bedroom flat in a highly sustainable location is likely to be no more than 6 movements per day. So, for 3 flats that equates to just 18 traffic movements per day i.e. less than 1 traffic movement per hour over the course of the day.

Traffic generation from even a small shop, open for up to 16 hours a day would far outweigh this figure. Staff movements and deliveries alone would equate to the figure generated by the 3 flats (18).

On top of that you have car borne customers throughout the day. Just 6 customers per hour over the course of 16-hour opening equates to 96 movements. The likelihood is of course that there would be significantly more car borne customers every hour of the day. There would also be an intensification of pedestrian usage around the shop at school peak hours mixed in with parents dropping off their children at the nearby school.

Access

It is accepted that the existing access is below current design standards but it has nevertheless operated effectively for a number of years to adequately serve three A1 shop premises. The traffic generation from each shop unit is potentially far greater than for 3 one-bedroom flats. Reducing the number of shop units effectively reduces traffic use of the car park and access; of particular benefit is the removal of deliveries by transit vans.

Comparing the traffic generated by the permitted use of the site to the proposed use it is clear that three one-bedroom flats will generate significantly less traffic than the permitted use.

Reducing the traffic reduces the likelihood of danger to all road users in the vicinity of the site.

The limited visibility at the access creates more of an issue under the permitted use than the proposed use as less people / vehicles will be using this route in the future. A reduction in traffic and a reduction in pedestrians mean less likelihood of an accident occurring.

If the shop were to reopen under its permitted use there would potentially be traffic issues created by the development and furthermore there would be the added likelihood of disturbance to the local neighbourhood by virtue of early morning deliveries, the starting of engines and the slamming of car doors.

Parking

The highway department have stated the A1 shop use for an approximate floor area of 150sq.m is 1 space per 15 sq.m i.e. an LPGN recommendation for 10 spaces.

For the proposed use, 3 one-bedroom flats, the highway department suggest that there needs to be 1.5 spaces per flat.

It should be noted that the 1.5 spaces per 1 bed flat is specified in LPGN 16 to be **a maximum figure and should not be used as a minimum figure**. WCBC have been to appeal many times over parking requirements and the Welsh Government inspectors have always stated that the LPGN figure should not be used as a minimum.

The site is in a highly sustainable location and therefore a suitable area for further development. Given the sustainable nature of the site residents will be able to make use of the numerous facilities within easy walking distance which include bus stops, schools, dentists, doctors, public houses, fast food takeaways, coop and Premier local stores and a pharmacy.

The availability of a regular bus service in close proximity to the site ensures that there is no essential need to own a car to reach everyday destinations. There is an industrial estate within a 15-minute walk offering employment opportunities.

It is therefore be contended that 1 car parking space is adequate for a 1-bedroom flat in a sustainable location.

The actual parking figures for the proposed development is therefore just 10 spaces – equivalent to that which is required for the existing permitted use of the site.

Existing Parking recommendations

150 sq.m A1 shop use = 10 spaces

Proposed Parking recommendations

2 x shop use = 7 spaces

3 x 1 bed flat use = 3 spaces

It is clear that the proposed use will not increase parking requirements at the site.

The LPGN cycling requirements for the proposed development equate to just 5 spaces- 1.5 per flat, 1 for the two shops. The revised plan shows space for 5 cycles as required by LPGN.

This is actually offering an increase of 5 spaces over the existing on-site provision for cycles.

Highway reasons for objection

Intensification of use of inadequate access

Limited visibility

Parking requirements

Substandard turning area

Given that the permitted use would actually create a far more intensive use of the site than the proposed it is unjustifiable to recommend refusal on the intensification use of the access; as clearly the proposal will permanently reduce usage by changing the permitted use of the site.

The limited visibility also creates more of an issue under the permitted use than the proposed as less people / vehicles will be using this route in the future. A reduction in traffic and a reduction in pedestrians mean less likelihood of an accident occurring

Parking requirements have been shown to be equivalent under this proposal compared to the permitted site uses.

The turning area although limited has been used for years and was approved previously for use by all three units. Even though the turning area may not meet current designs standards it has operated successfully for years. There may be limited space to park and turn; but if each car has to do a 5-point turning manoeuvre it doesn't matter as it is on private land and has no impact on the highway.

The change of use of the A1 shop reduces traffic pressure on the area, it also removes any requirement for thrice daily deliveries to an A1 shop.

The whole area will benefit from removing the existing A1 shop use from the area.

The application needs to be assessed in a broader outlook than just the highway issues.

If the A1 shop use recommenced, the throughflow of traffic would be affected by excess traffic using the shop. A1 shop use would increase parking pressures, increase noise pollution and increase

disturbance to neighbours and quite possibly reintroduce a potential source of danger to children particularly at peak hours due to the amount of traffic the A1 use would generate.

It is therefore considered that the application should be looked upon favourably by both highways and planning officers.