

Our Ref: 2479-01/LK

25<sup>th</sup> April 2019

Ms Mared Rees-Jones  
Area Planning Officer  
Wrexham County Borough Council  
16 Lord Street  
Wrexham  
LL11 1LG

planning

transportation  
planning

environment

design

### By Email Only

Dear Mared,

### **PLANNING APPLICATION REFERENCE: P/2018/1063 PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT, VICARAGE LANE, GRESFORD**

#### ***Introduction***

I refer to the recent consultation response memorandum from the Local Highway Authority (LHA) dated 15<sup>th</sup> January 2019 in respect of the above application.

I am writing to set out a response to the points raised in the memorandum. For ease of reference I will respond to the issues raised in broadly the same order as they are presented in the memorandum.

#### **Site Access Arrangements**

- Junction visibility has been amended on the revised drawing PL-002 Rev D to show a 2.4m x 41m splay to the south and a 2.4m x 33m splay to the north, commensurate with the speed survey results.
- As shown on the revised plan, a 2m footway has been included along the site frontage up to the existing tree that is to be retained to the south of the access. Thereafter, instead of a new footway, a small section of the hedgerow will be permanently removed to facilitate the visibility splay to the south. This is to avoid constructing new footway in the root protection area of the tree.
- A new 2m wide footway will also be formed along the site frontage to the north of the access to help reduce the distance that prospective residents of the site would need to walk in the carriageway towards Gresford village centre.

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Well House Barns  
Bretton  
Chester  
CH4 0DH

*South Manchester Office:*  
Camellia House  
76 Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
SK9 5BB

- This footway, coupled with the proposed off-site highway improvement scheme to the north, would reduce the distance that prospective residents have to walk in the carriageway to around 80m, rather than 140m, as referred to in the LHA's comments. Assuming a walk speed of 1.4m/s, this walk distance would take less than a minute to complete.

It is therefore concluded that the comments on the site access arrangements have been satisfactorily addressed.

### **The Effects of Vehicles and Pedestrians Mixing Together on Vicarage Lane**

- Whilst on-street parking does occur along Vicarage Lane, the recent video surveys show that this is generally contained to the north-eastern side of the lane, and not the south-western side. The south-western side, because it is the desire line, is the side of the road along which prospective residents of the site would walk along to reach the footway included as part of the proposed off-site improvement scheme (more on this below).
- The potential for residents having to regularly walk around parked cars, as suggested in the LHA's comments, is therefore considered to be very small.
- Nonetheless, the submitted Transport Statement (TS) provides ample justification as to why it is acceptable for prospective residents to walk along the 80m long section of the lane within the carriageway at this location (see Chapter 6.0 of the TS).
- The TS demonstrates this through reference to the 19-year safety record, through detailed observations of the way in which pedestrians and traffic already interact on the lane, through reference to the Inspector's Decision from 2015 and with reference to the observed low traffic flows and low traffic speeds.
- The survey demonstrated that 136 pedestrians walked along the road in a single day and pedestrians and traffic were observed to mix easily, safely and on a conciliatory basis with one another.

It is recognised that the acceptability (or otherwise) of residents walking along even the short section of the carriageway on Vicarage Lane is a subjective matter and one which the applicant and the Council may not necessarily agree on.

Nonetheless, when the application is considered in terms of the benefits and mitigation measures that are offered, the sustainable location of the site in relation to the village and then weighted against the low risks involved, it is the applicant's and Axis' firm view that a relatively small intensification of pedestrian movements walking along a short section of the lane without a footway should not be a reason to resist the application proposals.

### **Local Residents' Parking Area**

- The revised scheme layout on drawing PL-002 Rev D shows that the local residents' parking area will have 11 dedicated spaces. The off-street parking for plots 1-12 has been redesigned and provided separately to conform with the parking standards in LPGN16. Therefore, none of the 11 spaces will be used by or allocated to the proposed dwellings.
- The parking spaces have been annotated on the revised layout to show how they relate to individual plots more easily.
- Some interest has already been received from locals to utilise these facilities, and there are a number of ways to ensure they will be kept available to local residents in perpetuity, the details of which can be secured by planning condition.
- This will alleviate the level of parking that currently occurs on the lane.

It is therefore concluded that the comments on the local resident's parking area have been satisfactorily addressed.

### **Proposed Off-Site Footway / Give-Way Highway Improvement Scheme**

- The proposed off-site footway improvements / give-way priority scheme has been assessed in a comprehensive manner in the submitted TS.
- From a vehicular perspective it is Axis' view that the scheme will effectively formalise an existing situation which already occurs on an informal basis – e.g. cars give way or slow down significantly for one another through the constrained section.
- However, with the scheme in place, eastbound cars will be able to move away from Chester Road more easily as they would have formal priority in the give-way system.

- Detailed calculations have been carried out which show that no queues are expected to build up behind eastbound cars. Eastbound cars would have priority, but even for those that would have to wait for westbound cars passing through the feature, the waiting time would be only momentary, and not long enough for a queue to form.
- A passing place would be situated half-way along the feature and the number of vehicles that travel eastbound would be very low even in the peak hours (less than 1 per minute).
- A comparison with a similar feature on Marl Lane in Llandudno Junction would suggest there will be no queue build ups and this view is corroborated with reference to experimental research carried out by the Transport Research Laboratory, as detailed in the submitted TS.
- The view of oncoming traffic from Old Wrexham Road would also be enhanced by the scheme as approaching westbound traffic will be channelled further out into the carriageway by the proposed footway / give-way system.
- It is considered extremely unlikely that cars would ever park within the proposed footway / give way feature because they would therefore block through traffic and also because this section of Vicarage Lane is not generally parked within currently.
- The ability of a HGV to pass through the feature has been assessed and it has been shown that there would be ample clearance on either side to allow the movement to occur relatively freely.
- The ability of vehicles (large or small) to turn into or out of Old Wrexham Road will be almost entirely unaffected by the scheme when compared to the existing situation. This is demonstrated on the swept path assessment on the drawing in Appendix 8 of the submitted TS.
- The perception that the potential traffic increases along Vicarage Lane will be high in relation to the existing level of baseline traffic flow is only due to the fact that the existing baseline flows are so comparatively low to begin with. The total flows along Vicarage Lane, even with the development in place, will still be very low in absolute terms.

It is therefore concluded that the comments on the proposed off-site highway improvement scheme have been satisfactorily addressed.

## Internal Site Layout

- In terms of the comments provided on the geometry and layout of the site access, these have been addressed on the revised site layout drawing PL-002 Rev D. This includes the provision of 2.4m x 25m junction visibility splays at all internal junctions and 2m footways on either side of the site access junction.
- Where the splays cross over garden plots, restrictive covenants and/or planning conditions can be imposed to control the height of boundary treatments and planting within the visibility splay envelopes.
- The turning heads on the latest site layout have been designed to cater for the largest vehicles likely to regularly use them and are based on the swept path assessment manoeuvres in accordance with the approach recommended in Manual for Streets (MfS).
- In the case of plots 1-8, the largest vehicle that might require semi-regular access is anticipated to be a 3.5T delivery van and the submitted swept path drawing shows that the turning area will accommodate the manoeuvres of this size vehicle. Plots 1-8 are terraced units that also have a direct frontage to Vicarage Lane.
- The LHA are correct to assume that the culs-de sac shown on the layout will be managed by a private management company.
- The revised site layout drawing PL-002 Rev D includes refuse collection points on the proposed culs-de-sac.
- In terms of the requirement for localised widening on the internal loop road to accommodate the refuse vehicle movements, this is not considered to be necessary given that:
  - The layout has been shown to work on the refuse vehicle swept path drawing contained in Appendix 9 of the submitted TS.
  - No vehicles would be blocked by the refuse vehicle waiting momentarily in the loop road (e.g. vehicles would travel the other way around the loop to get in or out).
  - The scheme is small – 44 units, so the refuse vehicle would be able service the entire site within around 10-15 minutes, once per week or every fortnight. Similarly, the traffic flows within the site will be very low.
  - MfS (section 6.8) indicates that refuse vehicles will transgress into both sides of the carriageway, but that this is acceptable given the infrequency of refuse collection movements.
  - A wider carriageway would end up dominating the layout.

- Apart from the 3 private culs-de-sac, 2m wide footways have been provided throughout the site, as shown on the revised site layout drawing PL-002 Rev D.
- The revised site layout drawing PL-002 Rev D also shows that the foot / cycleway between plots 26 and 27 will be 5m wide with appropriate cycle safety barriers.
- The layout also shows the link to the Public Right of Way adjacent to plot 27 and the area of land along the eastern boundary that would be offered up for adoption to allow a widened footpath.
- It is considered that details of surface water highway drainage can be secured by condition or S38 / S104 Agreement, post approval.
- Similarly, a Construction Traffic Management Plan can be secured by a suitable planning condition.

It is therefore concluded that the site layout comments have been satisfactorily addressed.

I would therefore be very grateful if the LHA could revisit its comments having regard to the revised scheme and the above responses. Notwithstanding the points that have been raised, which I trust are satisfactorily addressed above, I note that the LHA has not actually objected to the application but merely expressed an unwillingness to support the application.

In view of the responses above, we would ask if this position might be reconsidered so that the LHA can support the scheme, subject to conditions.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



**Lee Kendall**

Technical Director  
For and on behalf of Axis

Enc: Memorandum of Agreement

CC: Phil Palmer – WCBC Highways  
Justin Paul – J10 Planning  
Rachel O'Hare – Base Architecture  
Mike Forgrave – Gower Homes