

The Planning Inspectorate

COMMENTS ON CASE (Online Version)

Please note that comments about this case need to be made within the timetable. This can be found in the notification letter sent by the local planning authority or the start date letter. Comments submitted after the deadline may be considered invalid and returned to sender.

Appeal Reference: APP/H6955/A/14/2229577

DETAILS OF THE CASE

Appeal Reference	APP/H6955/A/14/2229577
Appeal By	CASTLEMEAD GROUP LTD
Site Address	Land at Pont Adam Crescent Ruabon Wrexham LL14 6EG Grid Ref Easting: 3296300 Grid Ref Northing: 3437190

SENDER DETAILS

Name	MR JAMIE LEWIS
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ABOUT YOUR COMMENTS

In what capacity do you wish to make representations on this case?

- ☐ Appellant
- ☐ Agent
- ☒ Interested Party / Person
- ☐ Land Owner
- ☐ Rule 6 (6)

What kind of representation are you making?

- ☐ Final Comments
- ☐ Proof of Evidence
- ☐ Statement
- ☐ Statement of Common Ground
- ☐ Written Statement of Evidence
- ☒ Interested Party/Person Correspondence
- ☐ Other

YOUR COMMENTS ON THE CASE

I would like to register my disappointment at Castlemead's decision to appeal against the decision regarding the proposed development at Pont Adam, Ruabon, and feel it necessary to express my concerns at some of the comments made in their appeal document.

Whilst fully appreciating the need for new housing in the Wrexham area, it appears that in this case the scale of the development is going to exacerbate existing safety issues on the local roads, and potentially put local residents and in particular local school children at risk.

Castlemead's 'Response to Highway Consultation Comments – Technical Note 1' document disregards the clear safety issues which local residents experience on a daily basis.

As Wrexham Council confirm in their reason for declining the original application, the B5097 Church Street/Pont Adam road would be unable to safely accommodate a further increase in traffic generation. The road is narrow, and in some sections pedestrians do not have a pavement on which to walk safely. Church Street is the main access route to Ysgol Rhiwabon, the local secondary school which has approximately 1,000 pupils, and the road can be extremely congested at peak school times, with children walking in large groups on the road. Increased traffic volumes on the scale proposed would be dangerous, and would increase the risk of a serious accident.

It is disappointing to read Castlemead's flippant attitude towards previous accidents on the road – they confirm in section 2.7 of their report that in one of the accidents a young pedestrian (aged 11-15) was on a footpath/verge but was still clipped by a wing mirror, but claim that as there has only been one accident in eight years, the road is clearly operating safely. This is a clear manipulation of the statistics, it could also be noted from the figures that there have been 4 accidents within the last 10 years, and that all of them a) involved young children, and b) occurred either during the pre- or post- school 'peak traffic' period. The report claims that some of these accidents should be disregarded, as they happened slightly to the west of the Pont Adam junctions, but the simple fact remains that they happened within the immediate vicinity of the school and Pont Adam, and that a new development would increase traffic volumes on an already dangerously congested stretch of road (during the peak school runs), and therefore increase the risk of a more serious accident.

Anyone who uses this road on a regular basis will know that the road is far too narrow for the volume of traffic that uses it, especially at peak times – the school was built in the 1960s, and the road has not been improved in that time, despite significant developments being built around it, that have increased traffic volumes substantially.

In section 2.16 of the above document, when referring to the proposed new Footway/Cycleway, it is claimed by Axis that, contrary to the opinion of Wrexham County Borough Council's planning decision, the local residents would use the route as a new alternative route into Ruabon. Even a cursory glance at the proposed plans would show that this claim is nonsensical, as the new route would involve a considerably longer journey for the vast majority of the residents of Pont Adam. In this section 2.16, it is also claimed that Axis feel that residents would use this route if they were to perceive it to be "more safe", because of the lack of 'footway provision' on the B5097 Pont Adam/ Church Street route – quite why Axis would think this would be an issue is rather confusing, as throughout their report they consistently claim that there are no significant safety issues on the alternative B5097 route. It is clear that, at certain peak times, the B5097 is inadequate for the considerable increase in traffic that a new development would bring (even by their own admission, in section 2.8 of the report, they state that the road does 'not accord fully with standards'.) Axis are confirming that the road can be perceived as unsafe by suggesting that people may prefer to use an alternative 'safer' route, which seems to contradict their previous comments and weaken their argument that there is 'no demonstrable issue with highway safety' (section 2.11).

Castlemead also claim that there are no serious issues with visibility at the easternmost Pont Adam Crescent junction with the B5097, despite this being another reason for the application's refusal. Anyone who lives on Pont Adam would find this claim surprising, as it is currently a dangerous corner for both pedestrians and drivers. The junction is effectively an uphill 'blind corner', and as the residents of numbers 86 and 87 Pont Adam Crescent park their vehicles on the road outside their properties, within 30 metres of the junction itself, it is not uncommon to turn onto the estate to find

traffic overtaking these cars heading directly towards you, on the wrong side of the road. This oncoming traffic cannot be seen until the junction has been turned. For Castlemead/Axis to claim that visibility is sufficient is simply incorrect - they do not take into account these extra factors, which make the junction inadequate for both drivers and pedestrians.

Whilst I understand that new housing is required in the Wrexham area, it should not mean this requirement overrides the basic safety concerns that this new development would bring – the fact that a serious accident has not occurred recently does not mean that the highway conditions are adequate or safe. I would be grateful if you would consider my comments, and would urge you uphold the original decision and refuse the latest appeal.