

Proposed Residential Development For Up to 4 Dwellings, Glebe House, Horsemans Green, Whitchurch, Wrexham

The Whitehouse Partnership has been commissioned by David Parker Planning Associates to offer highway advice on the above planning application and in particular the response of the local highway authority as a statutory consultee. The site was inspected on 7th May 2021.

Existing Highway Conditions

The site is served by a private drive off the Class III road known locally as Horsemans Green Road. The road at this point is some 5.5 m wide with a kerbed footway varying in width between 1.0 m and 1.5 m opposite the private drive entrance. To the south west of the private drive entrance the carriageway is bounded by a narrow grass verge backed by a live hedge. To the north east of the entrance the carriageway is bounded by a grass verge and backed by a brick pier and wooden picket fence.

Horsemans Green Road is not subject to a local speed restriction but the highway authority estimates typical traffic speeds to be of the order of 25 m.p.h. This estimate is not contested. Street lighting is not provided through the village, there are no carriageway markings along the centre of the road and waiting restrictions are not in force.

The private drive is typically around 4.6m in width for a distance of 50m or so from its junction with Horsemans Green Road. It is therefore wide enough to enable the simultaneous entry and exit of vehicles without the need for vehicles to stand on the highway carriageway whilst vehicles exit the private drive.

Visibility from the private drive is severely restricted to around 7.0 m in a south westerly direction by the highway boundary hedge. In a north easterly direction visibility of some 31 m is available although this is obtained over third party land.

Response to highway authority's comments

The highway authority's response to the application appears to be an observation and not a recommendation of refusal. It is accepted that visibility for the drivers of vehicles emerging from the site access onto the Class III road is restricted. However, the site access is conspicuous and there is an adequate stopping sight distance available to the drivers of vehicles approaching the site access from both directions along the Class III road. Moreover, Horsemans Green Road is lightly trafficked and there have been no personal injury accidents in the vicinity of the site. Whilst the lack of visibility from the private drive is not contested Manual for Streets 2 states, inter alia, "Available guidance is just that, guidance, and cannot be expected to cover the precise conditions and circumstances applying at the site under examination" and "... The informed judgement of trained professionals on site should logically take precedence over guidance".

As far as the application is concerned, there appears to have been no consideration given, by the highway authority, to the existing use of the site access by vehicles associated with the current use of the site.

As an agricultural holding the site generates the following traffic along the private drive.

Winter – twice daily with tractor or 4 x 4 to tend to stock – feed, clean and check on well-being

2-3 visits daily with telescopic loader to fetch straw stored in shed and transport to main farm

Summer - larger vehicles e.g. tractor and trailer to fill shed with straw at harvest time

tractor and manure spreader to remove manure produced by over wintering of cattle
2 daily visits to tend to stock plus unsociable hours visits during calving season
visits for general farm maintenance and animal husbandry

All Year – used for machinery storage collected when needed
often large vehicles e.g. trailers

In the event of planning permission being granted all of these activities will cease. Assuming two vehicle movements per dwelling during the morning and evening peak hours the development would generate 8 movements per hour and these would tend to be passenger cars. In the context of the nature of Horsemans Green Road such movements would not lead to any capacity issues.

It is considered, therefore, that the development would be unlikely to lead to an unacceptable impact on highway safety and would be beneficial in reducing the type and volume of traffic using the private drive. There would therefore appear to be no reason why the application should be refused on highway grounds given the benefit to be gained by the loss of agricultural traffic using the site access.