
HIGHWAYS RESPONSE

To: Debra Hammond
Planning Team Leader

Our Ref: 23/02094/FULMAJ

From: Paul Goddard
Highways Development Control
Team Leader

Your Ref: 23/02094/FULMAJ

Extn:

Date: October 27th 2023

The Kennet Shopping Centre, Newbury

Full planning permission for the redevelopment of the Kennet Centre comprising the partial demolition of the existing building on site and the development of new residential dwellings (Use Class C3) and residents' ancillary facilities; commercial, business and service floorspace including office (Class E (a, b, c, d, e, f, and g)); access, parking, and cycle parking; landscaping and open space; sustainable energy installations; associated works, and alterations to the retained Vue Cinema and multi storey car park.

INTRODUCTION

1. I refer to the above planning application. I have viewed all relevant plans and documents including the Transport Assessment (TA) that has been prepared by Waterman Infrastructure & Environment Ltd.
2. The development proposals would comprise of 426 apartments as follows:
 - 223 one bedroom or studio apartments.
 - 188 two bedroom apartments; and
 - 15 three bedroom apartments.
 - 1,159.90 sqm resident's indoor amenity.
 - 121.34 sqm managers office.
 - 2,467.91 sqm Use Class E (commercial, business and service) floorspace;
 - 555.49 sqm offices.
 - 936.47 sqm store; and
 - 5,248.47 ancillary.
3. The proposals also retain 5,068.95 sqm of the existing Class E floorspace within Kennet Centre. This includes the cinema (3,594.61 sqm) and restaurants (1,474.34 sqm) within the site. The total Class E floorspace including the retained and proposed floorspaces would amount to 8,092.35 sqm. This represents a decrease of 14,891.15 sqm (65%) when compared with the existing commercial floorspace (22,983.5 sqm).
4. This follows from planning application 21/00379/FULMAJ that was refused planning consent a year ago and was due to go to planning appeal set for this month. However, after much work and discussions during this summer, a way forward was seemingly found for all issues including on highway issues. The appeal was therefore withdrawn, pending this further planning application.

5. While there have been some relatively minor changes to the floor areas for commercial uses. The most significant difference is the additional number of proposed apartments which has increased from 367 with the previous planning application to a higher total of 426 apartments. The Local Highway Authority is somewhat surprised at this, because there is no recollection of this from the discussions held during the summer, when it was assumed that the numbers would be kept at 367. As will be explained later, this will have some implications in the consideration of car parking issues.

ACCESS

6. It is proposed to remove the existing service ramp access onto Market Street and replacing with two service accesses, one onto Cheap Street and another onto Bartholomew Street.
7. The proposed Cheap Street access would serve both residential and commercial uses and would be for service and emergency vehicles only. The access would consist of a new drop kerbed access. It would seem that the proposed visibility splays of 2.4 x 25 metres would be appropriate for 33 kph (20 mph) speeds are being provided.
8. The proposed Bartholomew Street access would also serve both commercial and residential uses and would provide access for service and emergency vehicles. The Bartholomew Street access would also provide access to an additional resident's car park of 83 car parking spaces. It would also seem that the proposed visibility splays of 2.4 x 25 metres would be appropriate for 33 kph (20 mph) speeds are being provided.
9. This proposed access is to be located some 30 metres north of the existing Kennet MSCP entrance and the start of the existing pedestrian zone that is enforced by a set of bollards and signage. Therefore, this would need to be relocated some 45 metres northwards. This would allow for the access to be used over 24 hours. It is then proposed that the new open section of road would be revamped to become more informal, with shared surface materials. I have been liaising with colleagues from the Councils Intelligent Transport Services team who also consider cycle routes and facilities within the district. Together we have the following comments regarding this section of Bartholomew Street.
 - We would like to be able to provide a cycle contraflow on Bartholomew Street fronting the site that would enable cyclists coming south over the canal bridge to continue south through the Bartholomew Street pedestrian area to reach the Bartholomew Street / Market Street junction. Either a 2.0 metre wide one-way contraflow lane southbound, appropriately signed especially at "crossover" points is provided, or alternatively a 3.0 metre wide bi-directional facility is provided.
 - Consideration could be given to offsetting the northbound vehicle running lane in Bartholomew Street fronting the site more to the western side of the road, using part of the former bus stop area that is almost opposite The Newbury PH.
 - I will liaise with colleagues on whether to replace the existing bollards with a similar make or whether a different make would be preferred.
10. The existing MSCP exit would remain unchanged as an exit only onto Market Street.
11. It would seem from the drawings that changes are still proposed to the bus stop laybys on the south side of Market Street. They must remain as they have been recently constructed with two bus stop laybys.
12. I would request that consideration be given to improving the existing pedestrian crossing location just to the east of the MSCP exit on Market Street. T

13. The existing Market Street / Bartholomew Street traffic signal junction currently only allows for exit northbound one way movements. As part of the development proposals, it is proposed that this junction would be redesigned to allow for all movements. Again, I have been liaising with the councils ITS team that also considers traffic signal junctions within the district. Together we have the following comments regarding the proposed changes to the traffic signal junction:

- There is concern regarding the lengths that pedestrians would have to cross at the Bartholomew Street / Market Street junction are at the upper end for a single stage crossing. This will increase the crossing time for pedestrians and due to the traffic movements result in a dedicated pedestrian stage which may affect junction capacity and queues in the area. Consideration should be given to keeping the central pedestrian island and banning the right turn out of Bartholomew Street fronting the site and forcing all traffic to turn left thereby allowing pedestrians to cross in shorter times. Also are the splitter islands wide enough for the proposed signal head configuration?
- The northbound stop line in Bartholomew Street opposite Jones Robinson estate agents may need to be set back further for allowances to be made for the adjacent loading bays. It can also be difficult to get a 12.0 metre bus around from Market Street into Bartholomew Street when there is a vehicle sat at the northbound stop line and on the road centre line.
- The highway alignment in Market Street has changed significantly since the documents were drawn up, and this should be checked.
- Following consideration on potential redesign of the traffic signal junction, further traffic modelling results will need to be submitted for this traffic signal junction.

SITE LAYOUT ISSUES

14. There is concern about service access and car park access being in the same place with service vehicles mixing with a car park. Service area should be kept separate from the car park movements. I am assuming that the proposed car park will be used by residents only.

15. There is concern over the routes cyclists will need to take to get to the cycle stores including through proposed car parks.

16. I am concerned however, that larger vehicles such as HGV's will be unable to use either of the new accesses. I consider this is an issue that should be addressed. Will HGVs be likely to visit the site?

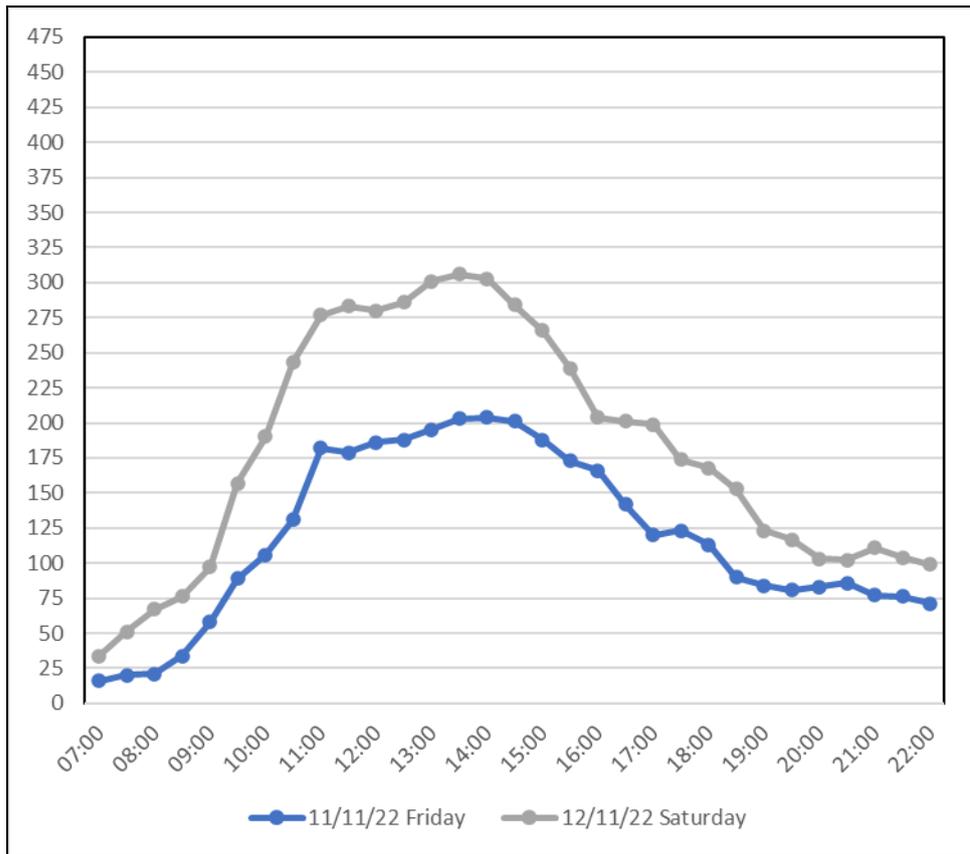
PARKING

17. Nine separate secure storage areas are proposed on the ground floor, totalling 632 spaces, with a range of tiered bike racks, Sheffield stands and secure lockers for storage. A number of visitor cycle parking spaces would also be provided within the site. It would seem that the development complies with the Councils Cycle and Motorcycle Advice and Standards for New Development.

18. The Council's residential car parking standards are set within Policy P1 of the Housing Site Allocations DPD. The site is within zone 1 and therefore the minimum parking standards are:

0.75 spaces per 1 bedroom apartment.
1 space per 2 bedroom apartment.
2 spaces per 3 bedroom apartment; and
1 visitor space is required per 5 apartments.

19. Based upon the above standards the residential proposals would require 386 parking spaces plus a further 85 visitor parking spaces. The total parking provision required for residents is 471 vehicle parking spaces.
20. The existing Kennet Centre MSCP currently includes 415 spaces and is owned by the applicant and leased to West Berkshire Council. The car park is available to the public and allows for both short and long stay parking. The pricing structure includes hourly, daytime, overnight and quarterly charges. Overall, a further 60 car parking spaces is being provided with the proposal to bring the total provision to 475.
21. I have read Section 7 of the TA titled Parking Rational. This site along with all other sites within the town centre and across the district must comply with the Councils car parking standards. It was made quite clear in discussions held in the summer, that this site is not considered to be an exceptional in any way. It is disappointing that such a claim is still being made. Contained with Section 7 is census data, in an attempt to justify a lower provision. However, as explained in the summer, census data was already considered when producing the parking standards that are set out in Policy P1 along with accessibility, etc. Policy P1 will be applied and will defended.
22. The nearby Market Street residential development approved in 2016 with planning application 16/00547/FULEXT has also been cited within the TA. However, the Market Street development was approved prior to the car parking standards being set out in Policy P1 that became live in May 2017. I am sure that this was also explained to the applicants and their consultants during the summer. Furthermore, all residents within the Market Street development all have access to the MSCP that was constructed within the development adjacent the train station. The Market Street development therefore did not set a precedent with regards to the application of car parking standards with a Newbury town centre and could be argued complies with Policy P1.
23. This development is proposed with a number of different uses that can have a demand for car parking at different times of the day including commercial by day and residential overnight. This is considered possible if the overall numbers are shown to work.
24. The Council does not have any particularly updated car parking standards for commercial uses but has detail of current usage of the existing MSCP.
25. Within Appendix H of the TA, there are details of car parking accumulation surveys undertaken within the MSCP between Thursday November 10th 2022 and Wednesday November 16th 2022. The surveys were carried out between the hours of 07.00 and 22.00 with occupancy levels recorded at 30 minute intervals. The results of the surveys are also shown in the graphs below from the busiest weekday and the busiest weekend day. It is clear that for much of the day and overnight there is car parking that could be available for residential use.



Car parking accumulation survey results

26. However as mentioned above, if 471 car parking spaces are required, then even with dual use car parking, I am concerned that there isn't sufficient car parking available within the site as shown in the table below:

Time	Friday survey	Available for residential	Saturday survey	Available for residential
07:00	16	459	34	441
07:30	20	455	51	424
08:00	21	454	67	408
08:30	34	441	76	399
09:00	58	417	97	378
09:30	89	386	157	318
10:00	106	369	190	285
10:30	131	344	243	232
11:00	182	293	277	198
11:30	179	296	283	192
12:00	186	289	280	195
12:30	188	287	286	189
13:00	195	280	301	174
13:30	203	272	306	169
14:00	204	271	303	172
14:30	201	274	284	191
15:00	188	287	266	209
15:30	173	302	239	236
16:00	166	309	204	271
16:30	142	333	201	274
17:00	120	355	199	276
17:30	123	352	174	301
18:00	113	362	168	307
18:30	90	385	153	322
19:00	84	391	123	352
19:30	81	394	117	358
20:00	83	392	103	372
20:30	86	389	102	373
21:00	77	398	111	364
21:30	76	399	104	371
22:00	71	404	99	376

Potential availability of car parking

27. During the discussions held in the summer, it was considered by highway officers that with 367 apartments and an overall parking requirement of 423 car parking spaces, that on balance this may have worked. But unfortunately, this proposal has reduced the level of car parking with the previous proposal. The proposed additional apartments then add a further requirement of 48 car parking spaces. Together, I consider that this makes a sufficient difference to warrant recommending refusal on lack of car parking grounds.

TRAFFIC GENERATION

28. Projected traffic generation rates and levels were agreed with the previous planning application and pre- application discussions that took place in the summer. Traffic has been projected by using the Trip Rate Information Computer system in (TRICS) which is a traffic survey database covering Ireland and the UK. TRICS has survey samples of

uses within the existing the site and that are being proposed, and its use is a standard methodology.

29. In summary for the existing site, it is projected the during the AM peak the site would have generated 93 vehicle movements 78 in and 14 out. During the PM peak the site would have generated 523 vehicle movements 229 in and 294 out.
30. In summary for the proposed site, it is projected the during the AM peak the site would have generated 122 vehicle movements 38 in and 83 out. During the PM peak the site would have generated 303 vehicle movements 150 in and 153 out.
31. There would have been an advantage if actual surveys had been made of the existing traffic movements. I am seeking some data from colleagues in the Councils Parking Services team that may assist, and I will write later this point. On reflection, the projected traffic levels for the existing uses for the AM peak seem quite low. With the change in uses, the figures suggest that there will be a decrease in traffic during the PM peak, but an increase during the AM peak.
32. As previously discussed, the Councils VISSIM traffic model should be used by the applicants to assess the impact of any increase in traffic from this development, particularly the area including and towards the A339 / B3421 Bear Lane / Kings Road junction and the A339 / Cheap Street junction.
33. The calculations on traffic projections are submitted alongside this response.
34. The TA states that the distribution of the development is likely to follow a similar pattern to at present. To distribute traffic, origin and destination data has been downloaded from the 2011 Census. Analysis has also been taken of the routes people are likely to take using Google maps (route planner). This is considered acceptable and suggests that for residential traffic, some 91% for residential and 83% for commercial will travel to and from the A339 direction, with the remainder travelling to and from Bartholomew Street.
35. The TA reviews the 'Crash Map' website that reveals that for the most recent available five year period there have been six recorded Personal Injury Accidents within Bartholomew Street, Market Street and Cheap Street and a further three within the local area. These PIA's resulted in seven which are classified as slight and two as serious in severity. While every PIA is regrettable, I concur with the TA that overall, the local highway network is considered to be safe and the number or pattern of PIA's is generally consistent with what would be expected for the levels of traffic flow, etc.
36. I am aware of the Framework Travel Plan that has been submitted. Colleagues from Transport Policy will provide comments on the FTP.
37. I note the provision of a Construction Traffic Management Plan that will need to be secured by condition.

SUMMARY

38. There are a number of concerns regarding potential conflict with different users within the proposed accesses and service yards. Clarification is required on whether HGV's can visit the site, because the yards are not large enough to enable this. We would like to suggest improvements for pedestrians and cyclists around the site especially along Bartholomew Street fronting the site. We would also like further consideration to the proposed changes to the Bartholomew Street /Market Street traffic signal junction.

39. I will provide further clarification on whether the proposal should use the VISSIM traffic model once I have obtained data on traffic flows into and from the existing Kennet MSCP.
40. Overall, the biggest issue once again is a potential lack of car parking for residents within the site. This was something that I had considered resolved within the discussions that took place in the summer. But it would seem that the number of apartments has increased with this proposal and the amount of car parking being proposed has decreased with this proposal. Therefore, this is now an issue there is likely to warrant an objection from highways, unless the proposal can be changed to alleviate this concern.

Paul Goddard
Highways Development Control Team Leader