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Highways and Transportation

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Tel: 03000 418181

Date: 11 June 2024

Our Ref: AC4DB

Application - GB/20240402

Location - Huggens College , College Road, Northfleet, Gravesend Kent

Proposal - Demolition of existing buildings and erection of retirement living apartments (Use Class C3), together with the extension of the existing chapel and the provision of associated communal facilities and external amenity space, lodge keepers and guest accommodation, back-of-house facilities, parking, bicycle/mobility scooter parking, and associated works including the creation of a secondary, emergency access from College Road.

Thank you for your consultation in relation to the above planning application. I have the following comments to make with respect to highway matters :-

The site is located on College Road, Northfleet and currently provides 30 one and two bed units. A Chaplain and caretaker also live on site. All mode access is via a priority junction onto College Road. The proposal is to demolish the existing units and construct 96 one bed apartments (an increase of 66).

Sustainable Travel

The site is considered to be within a sustainable location, with Northfleet train station within a short walking distance and a number of bus services operating locally. In the future, residents will also have access to the Fastrack service which will run through the Northfleet West site to the north. The Applicant should confirm whether dropped kerbs are provided across the bellmouth to Wallis Park, to facilitate access to Fastrack and if not, this should form part of the proposals.

A new pedestrian entrance onto Stonebridge Road is proposed and is welcomed as this will enhance the permeability of the site. However, the access looks narrow and should be a minimum of 3m in order to allow cyclists to use it also. The plan does not show a footway/cycleway connection between the gate and the existing footway on Stonebridge Road (across the verge) and this must be shown on the plans in order to be conditioned.

There is a KCC Green Corridors scheme to enhance cycling facilities along the High Street between College Road and Vicarage Drive ("site 11"), which will be implemented in late 2024 / 2025. The scheme proposes changes to the area directly south of the site, where the proposed gate is located, which will helpfully enhance cycling facilities for the users of the proposed development. The latest plans for this scheme can be obtained by contacting greencorridors@kent.gov.uk. The short section of shared footway/cycleway required between the new gate and the existing footway should tie into the proposals.

Further consideration should be given to pedestrians entering and leaving the site via College Road. Are dropped kerbs provided on both sides of the bell mouth? Is the short section of footway from the pedestrian gate to the footway on College Road a minimum of 1.8m (ideally 2m)? The layout, dimensions and any required improvements should be shown on a plan.

The footway along the western side of College Road looks narrow and ideally would be widened to 2m (min 1.8m), although it is unclear if the existing wall is protected, or whether this could be relocated further into the site to create a wider footway. Further information is requested.

A draft Travel Plan has been provided. A Full Travel Plan should be conditioned to any permission granted. Given the nature of the site, and the expense of adapted bikes, a further measure to encourage sustainable travel could include provision of an adapted bike for residents to borrow.

Vehicle Access

Vehicular access to the site will continue to be from the existing access off College Road. A temporary access will also be provided off College Road during construction to allow flexibility for residents who will stay on site. The access will be converted to an emergency access post construction and secured. Please confirm how the access is to be secured for emergency use only, and show this on the plan.

Drawing H005-C R1 shows 22m vehicle visibility splays for the temporary access and 2m x 2m pedestrian visibility splays for the subsequent emergency access. The 'Y' distance of 22m shown on the plan equates to a speed of approx. 20mph. However, table 4-3 shows the 85th percentile speeds recorded by the ATC were 25mph northbound and 26mph southbound. Based on table 7.1 of Manual for Streets, this equates to splays of 33m and 34m (respectively). The plan should be updated to reflect this.

No visibility splays have been shown for the existing access, which will have an intensification of use. These should be shown on a plan.

Tracking of a refuse vehicle has been provided and is acceptable. However, no tracking has been provided for the temporary access. Tracking of a fire appliance vehicle is required. Alternatively, if this access is to be used for construction, tracking for the largest construction vehicle likely to access the site, could also be shown (if not, this will be requested for the Construction Management Plan).

A refuse vehicle currently accesses the site and no issues with this arrangement have been raised in the Transport Statement. The refuse vehicle will continue to access the site via this access. With regard to the proposal for additional double yellow lines on the eastern side of College Road, to assist the refuse vehicle by removing existing parking, the highway code stipulates that drivers should not park within 10m of a junction, except in an authorised parking space, so these should not technically be required. The Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) needed to enforce double yellow lines is subject to public consultation and is likely to receive objections from the local residents who have limited parking. However, KCC would support a much shorter section of yellow lines, directly in the junction bellmouth, to facilitate access by the refuse vehicle, and create a passing place for vehicles.

It is assumed that the site is not proposed for adoption by KCC, and it is concluded that the internal road layout is unlikely to have any impact on the KCC network. However, no dimensions have been provided for the internal roads. Are two vehicles able to pass? The Kent Design Guide recommends an intervisible passing point at a min of every 40m. In addition, any

routes through the site that are to be used by both pedestrians and cyclists should be a minimum of 3m in width. Cyclists should not be made to dismount.

Parking

55 car parking spaces will be provided on site for the 96 units (including one space for the Chaplain, one space for the Warden and five visitor spaces). This is in line with the draft KCC standards for sheltered accommodation. SPG4, which contains the currently adopted standards for Gravesham, does not give a standard for sheltered accommodation, although the standards for C3 are 'maximum' and the provision is therefore in line. However, it would be useful to understand the existing car ownership of the site to support this provision.

Given the nature of the site, 18 of the 55 spaces will be for disabled use. This is acceptable.

Six active electric vehicle spaces will be provided, along with passive provision for the remaining 49 spaces. This is acceptable. Active spaces should be a min of 7kw. Passive spaces should have ducting and cabling.

50 cycle and five mobility scooter parking spaces are proposed to be provided, which is significantly in excess of the cycle parking standard. A proportion of the cycle parking should be wide enough to accommodate adapted bikes, which require 1.5m between stands to allow for dismounting. KCC usually request 5% but given the proposed use, and the fact that people with mobility issues often find it easier to cycle than walk, a higher proportion should be provided. This may result in fewer overall spaces being provided but the resulting provision is likely to still be in excess of the standard.

Traffic Generation

Traffic surveys were undertaken during the KCC schools half term which is not a neutral period and therefore not normally acceptable. However, given the nature and location of the site it is unlikely that this would have had a significant impact on the turning movements in/out of the site access.

Figure 4-8 shows at the time of the surveys there were six two way trips in/out of the site during the AM peak and nine two way trips during the PM peak. The proposed development is anticipated to generate an increase of 13 two way trips in the AM Peak and 20 two way trips in the PM peak. This increase is not considered to have a significant impact on the local highway network in this location.

Conclusion

I would like to place a holding objection on the application until the above issues have been resolved.

Informative: It is important to note that planning permission does not convey any approval to carry out works on or affecting the public highway.

Any changes to or affecting the public highway in Kent require the formal agreement of the Highway Authority, Kent County Council (KCC), and it should not be assumed that this will be a given because planning permission has been granted. For this reason, anyone considering works which may affect the public highway, including any highway-owned street furniture, is advised to engage with KCC Highways and Transportation at an early stage in the design process.

Across the county there are pieces of land next to private homes and gardens that do not look like roads or pavements but are actually part of the public highway. Some of this highway land

is owned by Kent County Council whilst some is owned by third party owners. Irrespective of the ownership, this land may have highway rights over the topsoil.

Works on private land may also affect the public highway. These include works to cellars, to retaining walls which support the highway or land above the highway, and to balconies, signs or other structures which project over the highway. Such works also require the approval of the Highway Authority.

Kent County Council has now introduced a formal technical approval process for new or altered highway assets, with the aim of improving future maintainability. This process applies to all development works affecting the public highway other than applications for vehicle crossings, which are covered by a separate approval process.

Should the development be approved by the Planning Authority, it is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure, before the development is commenced, that all necessary highway approvals and consents have been obtained and that the limits of the highway boundary have been clearly established, since failure to do so may result in enforcement action being taken by the Highway Authority. The applicant must also ensure that the details shown on the approved plans agree in every aspect with those approved under the relevant legislation and common law. It is therefore important for the applicant to contact KCC Highways and Transportation to progress this aspect of the works prior to commencement on site.

Guidance for applicants, including information about how to clarify the highway boundary and links to application forms for vehicular crossings and other highway matters, may be found on Kent County Council's website:

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/highway-permits-and-licences/highways-permissions-and-technical-guidance>. Alternatively, KCC Highways and Transportation may be contacted by telephone: 03000 418181

Yours Faithfully

Director of Highways & Transportation

*This is a statutory technical response on behalf of KCC as Highway Authority. If you wish to make representations in relation to highways matters associated with the planning application under consideration, please make these directly to the Planning Authority.