



Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council

Development Control
Gibson Building
Gibson Drive
Kings Hill
West Malling, Kent
ME19 4LZ

Highways and Transportation

Ashford Highway Depot
4 Javelin Way
Ashford
TN24 8AD

Tel: 03000 418181

Date: 9 March 2022

Our Ref:

Application - TM/21/02866/FL

**Location - Land East Of Little Preston Yard And North Of M20 Coldharbour Lane
Aylesford Kent**

Proposal - Construction of five buildings to provide six units for industrial processes (Use Class E(g)(iii)); industrial (Use Class B2); and/or storage and distribution (Use Class B8)) purposes, with ancillary offices and associated landscaping, car parking, servicing and access arrangements

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

Introduction

Kent County Council (KCC) Highways note that following this authority's initial consultation response of 27th January 2022 the applicant has submitted the following additional information:

- Transport Technical Note (TTN), dated 24th January 2022;
- Transport Technical Note (TTN), dated 10th February 2022;
- Transport Technical Note (TTN), dated 21st February 2022;

This response should be read in conjunction with this authority's initial consultation response.

Access

Vehicular

The applicant's response to this authority's initial consultation response is dealt with in the TTN of 10th February 2022. In summary, the TTN rebuts KCC Highways concerns and contends that the access arrangements as a proposed are acceptable for several reasons.

Firstly, the applicant contends that as this authority raised no fundamental opposition to the proposed access strategy during the pre-application stage any problems raised by a subsequent road safety audit (RSA) should not be addressed. As set out in this authority's response of 27th January whilst the proposed change of priorities is accepted in principle, given how the development would become the primary trip attractor, it is imperative that all problems raised in the RSA are fully addressed in the interests of highway safety.

In addition, KCC Highways would highlight the fact that the *'important notes'* at the bottom of the formal pre-application advice clearly states that any pre-application is given without prejudice to the formal consideration of a subsequent planning application.

Secondly, the TTN concludes that a low number of HGV's currently use Coldharbour Lane meaning that the likelihood of conflict with development traffic is limited. This conclusion is based on assessment of the combined development and existing traffic during only one hour of the day. Such a conclusion is overly simplistic, as it ignores the fact that the development will attract heavy goods vehicles (*HGV's*) throughout the day given the nature of the use that permission is sought for. KCC Highways do not agree with the applicant's assumption that HGV movements would be *'ad hoc'* or *'rare.'*

Thirdly, the applicant considers that the HGV forecasts presented within the TTN could potentially overestimate the potential for conflict owing to how the TRICS database classifies an HGV vehicle as anything above 7.5 tonnes. Given how the TRICS database does not differentiate HGVS by type i.e. rigid or articulated vehicle, it is appropriate to design the access for an articulated lorry on the basis that this is the largest vehicle that would require access to the development.

In addition to raising concerns about the proposed carriageway widths the RSA raised concerns about visibility from the existing National Highways Depot site access. The applicant continues to contend that as this is an existing situation and the proposals offer a marginal betterment to visibility, when compared to the existing situation, the impact of the development is de minimis and proposed access arrangements acceptable.

This approach ignores how the scale of development proposed will attract a significant amount of additional traffic, thereby further reducing any marginal benefit in visibility, given the increased propensity for conflict. KCC Highways do not consider the impact of the additional development traffic to be de-minimis.

Finally, the RSA raised two remaining problems (*problem 2.2.4 and 2.3.1*) relating to the existing access to the playing field. Whilst the fact that the applicant has now confirmed that they are willing to fully address these problems, for the avoidance of doubt the site access strategy drawing should be amended to include the retention/implementation of these features as suggested by the auditor. Given that access is being sought as part of the permission these issues require addressing as part of the planning application.

In conclusion, whilst KCC Highways raise no objection in principle to the proposed change of priority given the status of the RSA as independent safety check it is imperative that any issues raised within it are fully addressed. Consequently, the applicant should again reconsider their site access strategy to fully address all the problems raised in the RSA.

Trip Generation

It is noted that the applicant has now confirmed that the trip rates used in support of the recently consented Vantage Point development were in fact not used to assess the traffic impact of this development. Instead, the applicant has used revised bespoke trip rates as the applicant considers that the Vantage Point trips rate would not be representative, given their age and smaller average floor spaces.

The applicant's trip rates focus on sites in *'suburban'* and *'edge of town'* locations; however, KCC Highways consider the site to be located in an *'edge of town'* and not a suburban location. Revised trip rates should therefore be presented to reflect this fact. In addition, the site selection parameters include sites with much larger populations (*populations of 250,001 to*

500,00 and 500,001 or more) within a 5-mile radius of the site. The site does not benefit from such large populations being within a 5-mile radius.

Finally, whilst the 'industrial estate' use in TRICS typically covers industrial sites with several different units within it, KCC Highways note that Unit 2 will have a total gross internal floor area of 10,023 square meters. This differs to typical industrial estate uses in TRICS database and would lend itself to a larger single operator, such as those engaged in parcel/last mile delivery operations. The likelihood of use such an operator using Unit 2 is further increased by the site's proximity to the SRN.

Should a parcel delivery operator occupy the unit in question then Unit 2 is likely to generate a greater volume of trips than a traditional industrial estate. Consequently, to ensure a suitability robust assessment it is considered that this unit should be treated individually and assessed using bespoke trip rates. Alternatively, a condition should be imposed preventing its occupation by parcel/last mile delivery operators.

Trip Distribution

To better reflect the likely distribution of traffic the applicant has revised their trip distribution assumptions. As a consequence of the revised assumptions a greater percentage of traffic is expected to route via the strategic road network (SRN) via the M20 east and west. 81% of traffic is now expected to route via the SRN with the remainder routing via the local highway network. Importantly, these revised assumptions account for the fact that road users are likely to take the fastest possible route, as identified via the real time journey planner. KCC Highways therefore consider the revised distributions to provide a suitable basis for assessment.

It is also noted that the applicant has confirmed the reason for the apparent discrepancies in the distribution tables presented within the TAA. This reasoning is satisfactory, given how it confirms that in some instances the total trips associated with a MSOA account for less than 1% of all trips.

Baseline Assessments, Horizon Year and Tempo Rates

KCC Highways note that confirmation has been provided that Tempo growth factors for the census Middle Super Output Area (MSOA) that the development is in, Tonbridge and Malling Census MSOA 005, have been used for assessment purposes. This is satisfactory and addresses KCC Highways previous comments.

Committed Development

The applicant has excluded the extension of the Aylesford retail park as committed development. This on the basis that the TA that supported the development only included an assessment of the Saturday peak and PM peak weekday, with limited information on the distribution of the trips also available. A more detailed review of the TA in question confirms that Appendix G of the TA contains the TRICS outputs, which were agreed with KCC Highways at the time of the application. Consequently, whilst the TA may have been limited to assessing the junctions within the immediate proximity of the site, assumptions could be made about likely trip distribution using the agreed TRICS data. KCC Highways do not therefore consider that this comment has been satisfactorily addressed and require all committed development to be included in revised assessments.

Although the TN acknowledges the omission of the consented Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) as committed a development, it contends that revised assessments are not required to account for it. This is on the basis that as a result of the redistribution of trips away

from the A20 and to the M20 an adequately robust assessment has already been undertaken. It is unclear how this conclusion has been reached as an exercise to determine the volume of redistributed trips peak hour trips relative to the HWRC trips has not been undertaken. Should the number of HWRC trips be greater than the redistributed trips the impact would be different and further assessment required.

Traffic Impact

As highlighted within this response KCC Highways retain concerns about the applicant's trip generation forecasts. Consequently, until such time as these are addressed it is not considered that firm conclusions can be drawn from the applicant's traffic impact assessments. However, KCC Highways have the following subsidiary comments.

Coldharbour Lane Junction with A20 (Roundabout Junction)

KCC Highways note that a further TTN that specifically focuses on the impact of the development at this junction has been provided. Whilst the further TTN includes a revised capacity assessment based upon the enlarged roundabout arrangements that KCC Highways are seeking to bring forward, the roundabout geometries used in the assessment are incorrect. A copy of the geometrical drawing showing the correct geometric measurements for each arm of the roundabout is available upon request.

In addition, given the concerns raised earlier in this response about the suitability of the trip generation forecasts, a revised assessment using trip rates that are agreed with KCC Highways is required.

A26 Junction with Fountain Lane (Signalised Junction)

The TTN confirms that the development is anticipated to lead to an additional 8 two-way trips in the AM peak and 7 two trips in the PM peak. Whilst KCC Highways acknowledge that the impact of such a modest level of additional trips is unlikely to lead to a 'severe' impact, this should be reassessed using trip rates agreed with KCC Highways.

Parking

Car Parking

The applicant has confirmed that the incorrect TRICS data was appended to the TAA, hence the reason for the discrepancies in parking accumulation exercise. As highlighted earlier in this response KCC Highways have concerns about the suitability of the trip rates utilised for assessment purposes. A revised parking accumulation exercise is therefore required using trip rates that have been agreed with KCC Highways.

To derive the accumulation profile between 19:00 and 07:00 the applicant has assumed a level of trip generation similar to that between 07:00-08:00 and 18:00 and 19:00. Given the fact that the eventual end users remain unknown and lack of 24-hour TRICS data the use of this first principles approach is considered acceptable.

Lorry Parking

It has now been confirmed that 56 lorry parking spaces will be provided across the site in the form of lorry docks or dedicated spaces. This represents a shortfall of 35 spaces when compared against KCC Highways adopted standard, Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 4 (SPG4), Kent Vehicle Parking Standards, for B8 use (*storage and distribution*).

The applicant has concluded that this acceptable as the yard areas for each unit provide additional parking spaces; however, the amount of additional parking spaces provided in each yard area is not quantified. This requires quantification so KCC Highways can compare the overall provision against adopted standards and likely operational demands.

Personal Injury Collision Record

In accordance with this authority's previous consultation response the applicant has provided revised PIC data for the 5-year period up to 30th September 2021. This analysis confirms that during the period in question 43 collisions were recorded across the SRN and local highway network. Of the 43 collisions all were 'slight' in severity, except for 2 that were 'serious.' Driver error is a factor in a significant proportion of the recorded collisions. This analysis confirms a cluster of clashes on the Coldharbour Lane and M20 east arms of the Aylesford interchange roundabout. In addition, a cluster can also be identified on or close to the St Laurence Avenue arm of the junction.

In respect of Hermitage Lane's junction with the A20 and its associated link this has either been excluded from, or only partially included, within the scope of the assessment. It is unclear why this has been excluded as it is included within the scope of the agreed assessment. Additional PIC analysis that includes the area in question should therefore be provided

Summary and Recommendation

KCC Highways wish to maintain a **holding objection** to the proposals on the basis that the applicant should provide the following information/clarification:

- Amendments to the site access strategy to fully address all problems in the stage 1 RSA;
- Submission of revised PIC data and analysis that includes all junctions on the LHN within the scope of the assessment;
- Submission of revised trip generation forecasts for agreement with KCC Highways;
- Submission of revised capacity assessments for the following junctions using trip rates agreed with KCC Highways:
 1. M20 junction with Coldharbour Lane;
 2. Coldharbour Lane junction with A20, London Road;
 3. A20, London Road junction with St Lawrence Avenue;
 4. A20, London Road junction with Hermitage Lane
- Submission of revised capacity assessments that include all committed development
- Submission of a revised capacity assessment for the A20/Coldharbour Lane junction using trip rates agreed with KCC Highways and the correct geometrical parameters;
- Quantification of the amount of development trips that are anticipated to route through the A26, Tonbridge Road junction with Fountain Lane using trip rates agreed with KCC Highways;
- Submission of a revised parking accumulation exercise using trip rates agreed with KCC Highways;

- Confirmation of the additional lorry parking spaces available in each yard area.

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.