

17/07655/FUL

Consultations and Notification Responses

Ward Councillor Preliminary Comments

Councillor Zia Ahmed

I would like this application go to planning committee because local residents have lots of issues such as the height of the building blocks, the views and noise and traffic movement. In addition environment issues such as flooding and tree protection. The entrance is at the front of a school which already have a big problem with Grant and Stone big vehicles park outside already most of the school time.

Councillor Nigel Teesdale

As this is a major application which will cause major disruption to the Sands area I must insist on a site visit and the application to be determined by Committee if minded to permit.

Parish/Town Council Comments/Internal and External Consultees

Arboricultural Officer:

No objection in principle.

Revised Landscape plans in regards to tree species is acceptable.

Condition Arboricultural Method statement and Tree protection plan in regard that parking area which are within the root exclusion zones to the west of the site from the proposed Chapel Lane entrance.

As to units 1 to 5 which is within the public realm from Mill End Rd so it is important that the current vegetation is retained to provide screening and supplemented where necessary.

Landscape Officer

The planting proposals are comprehensive and broadly acceptable, subject to the following.

In order to minimise overshadowing of the property/garden of No. 1 Sandsdown Close, which is small and adjoins the site boundary, the proposed earthworks to the rear of units 7 and 8 should be extended into the corner between these units; shrub planting should also extend into that same corner between the two units while tree species should be moved away from the site boundary. This should allow for low-level screening by a new shrub canopy close to the site boundary / garden, with high canopy screening further away from the site boundary / garden and closer to the new buildings.

Planting adjoining the existing river and de-culverted watercourse is acceptable with regard to landscape amenity, but should be subject to comments from our Ecology Officer.

[Officer note: Amended landscaping plans have been received based on the landscape officer's comments and found to be acceptable.]

Ecological Officer

The proposals provide some space for wildlife within the undeveloped space and the biodiversity metric which has now been submitted in the report Ref: CSA/3374/01 shows that a small net gain in biodiversity can be achieved through maximising the ecological value of these spaces. Information on

how the ecological value will be created and managed has been outlined but a condition is still required to ensure the detail is produced and followed.

Control of Pollution Environmental Health

Identified Environmental Services issues relevant to Planning:

- Air Quality from additional vehicle movements effecting the health of local residents in the nearby Air Quality Management Area.
- Noise from commercial units causing nuisance to local residents
- Light from commercial units causing nuisance to local residents
- Contaminated Land

Conclusion:

Air Quality impacts of the use of the site on the nearby Air Quality Management Area has been a concern. A lot of effort, in terms of negotiating with the developer, has been put in to overcome these concerns. I am pleased to see that the developer will now provide electric vehicle charging points for 17 parking spaces. This will go some way towards restricting the impact of air pollution caused by the use of the site on local air quality management areas. There have also been amendments to the size and mixture of the proposed units which will inevitably reduce the number of vehicle movements.

It has been noted that the developer will restrict noise nuisance from the site by erecting an acoustic fencing around the perimeter of the site. This was proposed as a result of a noise survey and through the use of noise mapping software. The latter clearly shows that the proposed acoustic fencing is sufficient at controlling noise from the site.

The lighting report, in particular the horizontal lux diagram, demonstrates that light spill will not negatively impact on local residents. All light spill levels are below the limits stated within the Institution of Lighting Engineers' Guidance notes for the reduction of obtrusive light.

Due to the sites former industrial use, it is likely that some contamination will be found in the soil on and surrounding the site. However, it is recognised that the site will be covered in hard standing which will restrict the pollutants from reaching the surface. It is also worth noting that the proposed use of the land will not result in any sensitive receptors using the site and will not involve activities that will likely bring receptors in contact with pollutants.

Recommendation (with conditions if appropriate):

I have no objection to this application.

County Highway Authority

Summary

The proposals effectively seek to remove around 4,533m² of existing B2 floor space and replace it with facilities comprising of 8,470m² B1(c), B2 and B8 Employment floor space. In terms of vehicular entry and egress, the proposals will utilise the three existing access; one on Chapel Lane and two on Mill End Road.

General layout and access point use

The site plan shows that the aforementioned total floor space will be accommodated within 10(no) units of various sizes distributed across the site. Specifically, Units 1–5 would be served by the two accesses located on Mill End Road (with the intention to utilise the southernmost as an access point and the northernmost used for exit), and Units 6–10 using the singular Chapel Lane access.

On-site turning and manoeuvring

For the section of the site handed toward Mill End Road, an In/Out arrangement reduces (but not entirely removes) the need for dedicated space within the site for turning manoeuvres. Although the initial submissions only demonstrated a rigid vehicle's swept path analysis, a subsequent drawing showed the relative manoeuvres required for the access/egress of articulated vehicles.

A sole point of access for the section of the site apportioned to Units 6–10 is featured and has loading bays and internal hardstanding that will allow the largest of regular articulated heavy goods vehicle to enter the site, turn within and then egress onto Chapel Lane in a forward gear.

Overall comparative vehicle trip generation

Regardless of which entrance/exit point used, the extant/historical use of the site has/had a vehicle trip generation associated allied with the use of 4,530m² of B2 floor space. Although the results of an interrogation of the TRICS (Trip Rate Information Computer System) database have been included within the submitted Transport Assessment (TA), I have conducted my own analysis that utilises sites with characteristics and parameters more relevant to the site in question.

It appears that the applicant appears to seek a flexible level of the three employment land uses, which consequently makes it difficult to predict both the proposed development's overall traffic generation potential and the specific amounts attributed to the respective Chapel Lane and Mill End Road access/egress points. As a result, it is important to bear in mind that I have calculated the overall site trip rate in a '**worst case scenario**' (i.e. if the entire site was only used for just one of the sub-uses).

Taking a pragmatic approach, the site layout would seem to suggest that the B8 Storage and Distribution would be focused on the portion of the site accessed by Chapel Lane and the B1(c) and/or B2 uses located on the Mill End Road site. By my calculation, this would be around a 70/30 land use split of these respective uses.

The results show that the current lawful B2 use of the site could produce around 127 daily vehicle movements, of which 54 would be OGV movements (both rigid and articulated) equating to 43% of the site's total daily movements. However, the effective doubling of the site's land use increases its traffic generation potential accordingly. This specific impact is dependent on what mix is ultimately deployed throughout the site upon occupation. Another important issue to regard is that a B2 use (i.e. the site's current lawful use) often produces the lowest trip generation figure per 100m² out of the three Employment use sub-classes.

General network and specific junction capacity

The respective capacity analyses for the local junctions surrounding (and have been/will be frequented by traffic associated with) the application site shows in some cases that certain arms are either approaching capacity or beyond its theoretical operating limit. Nonetheless, and in reference to paragraph 32 of the National Planning Policy Guidance, developments should only be refused consent if their cumulative impact is severe.

When reviewing the submitted junction analyses, the actual developmental loading does not create a material impact upon these junctions. Simply put, the general traffic flows on the local network by all other journeys not associated with this site significantly overshadow those that the proposed development would add to the network.

Chapel Lane (as the A4010) carries around 10,000 vehicle movements per day, with Mill End Road subjected to around 6,500 vehicle movements per day. Even in a worst case scenario of a total B1(c) use of the application site, this equates to only around 6-7% of the total of the former and 10% of the latter daily flows. The most likely split of the site (70% B8 and 30% mix of B1(c) and B2) would reduce these figures to 4 – 5% and 7% respectively.

Parking provision

In terms of parking provision, and when using a worst-case scenario (a total use B2(b) floor space) for the highest Employment land use parking quotient, the split between the three potential use equates to a satisfactory parking provision in accordance with the County Council's Buckinghamshire Countywide Parking Guidance policy document.

Collision History

As can be seen from the map within Appendix E the TA, the collision stats for this area were obtained from Transport for Buckinghamshire. Reviewing the one-line summaries and allied locations, none can reasonably be attributed to use of the site's existing access points.

Use of site accesses

It is difficult to assign movements to both the existing/historical and proposed uses of the site. Whilst the existence of the respective Chapel Lane and northernmost Mill End Road access points are not denied, photographic (both Streetview and aerial/satellite) and site evidence point toward the southernmost Mill End Road being the most regularly utilised access to serve the extant 4,530m² B2 use. Notwithstanding the access points could have been used at will. Therefore it may be prudent to look at the site's trip generation during the AM and PM peak periods.

AM and PM Peak trip generation

As stated previously within this response, I conducted my own interrogation of the TRICS database to give an overall comparative daily vehicle trip generation between the lawful and proposed uses of the site. Such extrapolations can be used to predict the individual peak hour movements that one could expect in the event of the implementation of the scheme.

Table 1.3 below shows the peak movements that are split into overall traffic and the goods vehicle (OGV) movements separated from that figure. Please note that, although the general AM peak includes the school peak period, an additional column identifies the school PM peak period that occurs earlier than the general PM peak period.

As one would expect, the proposed development produces an increase in vehicle movements in the peak periods in consideration of the additional floor space and uses, commensurate with the overall increase in daily movements, over the lawful use of the site.

You will note that the amount of goods' vehicles visiting the site during peak hours is still relatively low. For example, the number increases from 6 to 12 during the AM peak (both general and school peak) and from 4 to 6 during the PM school peak and from 0 to 10 during the general PM peak period.

Finally, most of the goods vehicles generated in the respective peaks are associated with the B8 use, which is likely to be largely utilising the Chapel Lane access.

Mitigation & Existing Network Issues

The Highway Authority finds that, particularly with regard to the brownfield re-use of an existing employment site, the proposals are acceptable in that there are no overall principle impediments in transport terms. Nevertheless, there are issues and elements identified here that require further discussion at this point or should form part of any development permitted.

I am aware of the local concerns pertaining to these proposals, specifically with regard to issues of vehicles parking on waiting restrictions (both commercial and parents with children attending Millbrook School), speeding during non-peak times and goods vehicles associated with the existing commercial sites on Mill End Road.

However, these are matters whereby either existing legislation can be used to combat legal infractions (i.e. parking and speed limit enforcement) or are not impacted by the scope of this planning application (parental drop-off/collection activities). Ergo there is very little that can be secured via planning permission outside of mitigation that can be fairly and legally secured to address existing issues. Nonetheless, the obligations that can be secured should minimise the development's cumulative impact on the local area and potentially contribute toward a safer environment for highway users.

Firstly, and whilst the site will utilise the existing access/egress points, they are (and historically have been) insufficient to cater for the types of vehicles traversing through them. As a result, I will recommend a condition that will ensure they are upgraded to our Industrial Access within the Highway specification. This will likely require removal or relocation of the existing pedestrian refuge on Mill End Road closest to its junction with Eaton Avenue.

Secondly, and in liaison with the School Crossing Patrol (SCP) Supervisor from our Transport Strategy team, I am aware of an existing SCP for Millbrook Combined School that utilises the pedestrian refuge outside Nos.33 & 35 Mill End Road in close proximity to the site's intended Mill End Road egress point.

Therefore, in order to safeguard pupil (and general pedestrian) safety when crossing the road, I will require any off-site highway works upgrading the aforementioned accesses to remove this feature in conjunction with the provision of a pedestrian crossing at some point between the site and the Millbrook School. It has also come to my attention that there is very little in the way of advanced signage to alert drivers to the school itself. As a result, the applicant will be required to investigate and potentially erect advanced school signage with flashing lights on each approach to the Millbrook School.

Therefore, in consideration that the proposals would not be detrimental to highway safety, convenience of use or local network capacity either by their scope or subject to identified mitigation, I do not have any objections to this application with regard to highway issues subject to conditions.

Environment Agency (south-east)

Objection maintained. Improvement to the width of the buffer zone however it is unclear where the buffer zone between the River Wye and the development is measure from – it should be from the top of the river bank. No details are provided with regards to ecological enhancements to be carried out within the buffer zone, including the river channel and how this would be managed in the long term.

Deculverted channel noted but there is opportunity to achieve further ecological gain. Channel would be completely straight and in a very narrow corridor squeezed between development either side. No cross sections of the channel have been provided but from the information supplied the river bank would be very steep. Deculverted stream should be realigned so that it enters the River Wye

downstream of the Verco building. The channel should be designed so as to not be straight with a naturalised buffer either side – 10m from the top of the river bank.

Buckinghamshire County Council (Major SuDS)

No objection subject to the imposition of a planning condition and further information outlining the existing and proposed surface water run off at the site.

[Officer note: Formal comments not received at the time of finalising this report and to follow in the Planning Committee update]

County Archaeological Service

No objection.

Representations

Amenity Societies

Sands Residents Association

Initial comments: The Sands Residents' Association has severe reservations about this application.

It is accepted that this area is scheduled for employment use in the existing and emerging local plan. However whilst B1 uses are regarded as suitable for land adjacent to residential areas B2 is pushing the envelope.

The buildings in this proposal will back on to 24 or so residential properties, visible from many more and as designed will be overbearing in bulk. This is a very unneighbourly proposal, already off on the wrong foot with a pre-emptive tree felling operation.

The previous proposal for flats on this site at least gave some community gain, with school parking and a footpath route between Chapel Lane and Mill End Road. This application gives nothing.

Although the traffic analysis makes light of it, the exit opposite the school is very unsatisfactory, and here there is a chance to correct a very unsafe exit.

The landscaping, if adequate will considerably reduce the light available to the adjacent properties, so the assessment supplied has to be questioned. It takes no account of the fact that the screening will be between the buildings and the properties, and if it is adequate will reduce the subtended angles of daylight. The drawings in this document are to be questioned, with an apparent mix up between mm and m, and only guesstimates of the building heights in the adjacent properties. In spite of the mass of documentation, there is no properly drawn section of elevations through the site including the adjacent properties, and as scanned it is not possible to determine the exact heights.

Given the difficulties with the noise and odour from the Hillbottom Estate, which is much further away from residential properties than this proposal, there would need to be restrictions on usage.

The existing Translux operation has not been neighbourly with lighting problems and noise during night-time hours.

Surface water will need careful design given that the buildings will increase the slab area, and the adjacent Thames Valley Water bore hole. The whole site appears to be in flood zone 2.

It is worth considering that a more neighbourly design could come from siting the buildings adjacent to the factory, and not the housing, since the parking area would require much lower landscaping.

This is a poor development, and should not proceed as designed.

Additional comments: The Sands Residents' Association strongly objects to the revised plans that do little to ameliorate the problems with this proposal.

Specifically: The site is not suitable for this type of B8 warehousing operation due to the proximity of residential properties.

There would need to be a restriction in the operating hours, given the precedent of the restrictions on the existing smaller Translux operation, to minimise light and noise pollution.

Notwithstanding any limits on operations, any air handling or conditioning units would run continuously which would be unacceptable.

The number of HGV movements forecast would be concentrated on Chapel Lane and will make an unacceptable contribution to the already excessive pollution levels in West Wycombe Road, which has just been named as an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).

The type of low value employment, which this proposal will generate, will do little to create economic growth for Wycombe.

The treatment of the river does not seem to meet the environment authority requirements.

There appears to have been no soil testing. On previous applications, the presence of heavy metals was said to prevent surface water drainage to soakaways.

The bulk of the development adjacent to the residential properties is overbearing. The overlook drawings, particularly of the larger units, are not acceptable to the adjacent properties. These will seriously reduce the sunlight on to these properties. This also applies to the tall acoustic screens.

Councillor Darren Hayday (BCC)

Initial comments: Objection. Increased congestion associated with the proposed development and would result in the recent Bucks CC project on improving the junctions with West Wycombe Road impotent. Development will impact the safety of school children due to increased vehicular activity. Also noted that there has been lack of consultation over this application which in itself is inappropriate in a residential area.

Additional comments: Objection. Proposed traffic movements and required road improvements would have a major impact on the overall traffic flow from Chapel Lane to the A40. HS2 construction traffic will also be using the same roads and cumulative traffic will have a severe impact. Unfair for the tax payer to foot the bill for any road scheme attached to potential planning permission. BCC should also not pay for any newly adopted road, ongoing maintenance or any further associated costs.

Friends of Millbrook School

Objection. Local roads under too much pressure already, concerns over increased levels of noise and pollution, parking for cars and lorries of the scale proposed inappropriate in residential area, Mill End Road entrance/exit close to school crossing patrol, Mill Lane and local roads used during the weeks by our families.

Millbrook School Parent Council

Mill End Road is the nucleus of many activities involving children and their parents/carers and the core

area for many community events and services. It is already a busy road operating at full capacity from lorries and large vehicles from Eros and Grant and Stone. To consider adding another industrial / commercial site is utter lunacy and the Parent Council of Millbrook School strongly object to the planning application.

A total of 26 letters of representation have been received from local residents objecting to the initial proposals on the following grounds:

- Impact on the amenities of local residents and local school children from pollution associated with the development;
- Increased congestion on the roads from HGVs associated with the development and subsequent impact on safety of local school children attending Millbrook Combined School on Mill End Road;
- Height of the buildings proposed out of keeping with the area and too close to residential properties;
- Overlooking into neighbouring gardens from proposed buildings;
- Loss of outlook from residential properties as a consequence of proposed development;
- Reduction in sunlight/daylight as a consequence of proposed buildings – particularly due to their height and positioning within the site;
- No consultation with local residents prior to submission;
- No considered for noise or congestion associated with the development;
- Impact on quality of life for local residents associated with proposed 24/7 operation of the site – particularly from a noise and disturbance standpoint;
- Impact of development on trees along site's southern boundary covered by TPO;
- Development is not beneficial to local residents and out of keeping in a residential area;
- Impact of lighting upon residential amenity during the night;
- Potential decrease in house prices of surrounding properties;
- Cumulative impact of commercial development upon traffic congestion and safety and convenience of pedestrians; particularly children during peak school hours (Grant and Stone, Verco factory and proposed development at site);
- Impact on local environment;
- Fumes associated with the development and impact upon health of local residents; particularly children;
- Poor quality of plans and lack of elevation/conceptual plans to give a full grasp of the impact cause by the proposed development;
- Impact upon protected species, particularly slow worms within close proximity to application site;
- Impact upon air quality – objection from Environmental Health noted;
- Little consideration given for groundwater and potential contamination of tributaries to River Wye;
- Site should be used instead for providing affordable homes;
- Highway capacity already at breaking point – potential for further accidents.

Following re-consultation with local residents, a further 26 letters of representation have been received objecting to the revised proposals. In addition to the comments listed above, the following further issues have also been noted:

- Do not agree that development would only be viable if allowed to operate on a 24/7 basis;
- Overdevelopment of the site;
- Proposed treatment of the river does not meet the Environment Agency's requirements – no soil testing

- Revised plans in relation to building heights and located do little to alleviate the impact of the proposals upon the amenities of neighbouring properties; particularly with regards to light, outlook and the loss of existing outward views;
- Little economic benefit associated with the development;
- Potential for the site to be better used for more creative, entrepreneurial purposes;
- Deculverting of the stream could potential affect the stream flow and result in flooding or the stream drying up;
- Limited information on how proposals would affected area to the immediate south bordering the site (i.e. rear of properties along Penmoor Close);
- Area unsuitable for this form of development – would be better suited in areas such as Cressex;
- 24/7 operation of the site should not be considered – inappropriate for residential area;
- Amended plans further highlight the impact of the buildings upon residential properties;
- Proposed noise barriers are excessive, out of keeping and will impact neighbouring amenity;
- No consideration for trees covered by TPO; particularly Willow tree;
- Lack of consultation with local residents;
- Amended plans for little to alleviate impact of additional HGV traffic associated with proposed development;
- Noise impact associated by the development; particularly from proposed 24/7 operations at the site.