

From:Richard Timms
Sent:Wed, 23 Jan 2019 11:05:20 +0000
To:Planning Comments
Subject:FW: Planning Application 18/506656 FULL *for publication on the planning portal*

Please log and upload

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From: Rob Field (Cllr)
Sent: 23 January 2019 10:59
To: Richard Timms; James Bailey
Subject: Re: Planning Application 18/506656 FULL *for publication on the planning portal*

Morning Richard, James

I wish to formally raise my concerns regards the application above. Whilst sensitive to the need for new primary places, I and indeed a number of North Ward residents that would be within the catchment area have doubts over the application as proposed.

The traffic impact cannot be judged as other than severe given the current local traffic in the area and associated congestion issues. MBC should seek independent advice in relation to the scheme and its suitability in relation the requirements of Paragraph 109 of the NPPF.

No primary school ought to be developed in such a way as to make any method of travelling to the school than walking the most favourable. The proposal as is gives significant cause for concern in this regard as there is no likelihood of a safe walking route to the proposed site on the available footpaths. Not only would this put children and parents that chose to walk at risk but it is likely that many parents will conclude that to drive is the safer option, which will increase the traffic and associated pollution in an area that is already a traffic and pollution pinch point.

Furthermore, Car ownership is statistically lower in my ward than the average and so many parents would be forced to walk on a potentially unsuitable route. There is plenty of evidence that has recently received national coverage of the risks to the health of young children in particular of walking through pollution black spots and breathing in diesel and other exhaust fumes. The risk is particularly high for children in push chairs (of which there would be plenty owing to the need for parents to take younger siblings with them on the school run) owing to

the height that they are at in relation to the exhaust fumes. This risk will be exacerbated by the proposal to remove the 19 black poplars and a number of oaks from the northern side of Bearsted Road, without any replacements provided. It should also be considered that the Special Educational Needs cohort at the school will be from a significantly wider catchment area than is normal, and so those parents would most likely drive out of necessity.

The proposed improvements to the Public Right of Way will most likely lead to Shepherds Gate Drive becoming a default drop off point to the detriment of the residents. The local roads are residential estate routes and are not designed to support the high volume commuting traffic that this would cause. The impact on Weaving Heath is also unacceptable from an environmental perspective.

The proposal to remove the on street parking from outside Gidds Pond Cottages is also questionable as the application is unclear on how a suitable alternative that doesn't create concerns for security of residents' vehicles can be found. The on street parking also creates a traffic calming effect. KCC will not, as a matter of policy, put in traffic calming until a number of residents have been killed or seriously injured (for reference see Jade's Crossing on Detling Hill) and so the removal of the parking will more than likely cost somebody at the very least life changing injury or worse before suitable improvements are made if they are not included as a part of the planning application. This is equally applicable to the footpaths in the area as currently designed. Owing to the need for using multiple informal crossing points to successfully walk to the site on this road, I believe that a 20mph speed limit (common outside many Kent Schools) and significant traffic calming measures to make greater speed practically impossible need to be included in the scheme.

The range of practical access issues and their impact on pedestrians, residents and the local environment at the foot of the AONB means that there is a very serious question mark over the suitability of this site for a primary school as proposed.

As a post-script the planning policy position as relates to this application is problematic. As the most prominent field at Newnham Court Farm it was safeguarded from development through allocation as a nature reserve within both the 2017 Local Plan allocation and outline planning permission for the development of the medical campus. In addition to its prominence, in strategic landscape terms the field provides an open countryside buffer between the rapidly urbanising Newnham Court Farm and Bearsted. Further, the plans for the nature reserve included new significant tree planting while the application seeks to remove the only large trees on the site to create a drop-off point. This matter is made all the more significant by the fact that the application site is bounded on two sides by a designated Local Wildlife Site and ancient woodland. This policy position is further complicated by the fact that that though much development has taken place at Newnham Court Farm the application site has continued to be ringed with tumble-down reptile fencing and intensively mown. One would expect a phasing policy criteria or planning condition to be imposed by the local planning authority to ensure that the nature reserve was actually delivered - and it is very curious that this unfortunate state of affairs has been allowed to occur.

Kind regards,

Rob

CLlr Rob Field

Maidstone Borough Council (North Ward)



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https://www.maidstone.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/242557/Councillor-Privacy-Notice.pdf

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