

43/18/0122

RETAIL INTERESTS LTD

Formation of vehicular and pedestrian access with erection of security fencing, gates and barriers at Station Mills, Station Road, Wellington

Location: STATION MILLS, STATION ROAD, WELLINGTON, TA21 8NN

Grid Reference: 313526.121358

Full Planning Permission

Recommendation

Recommended decision: Conditional Approval

Recommended Conditions (if applicable)

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun within three years of the date of this permission.

Reason: In accordance with the provisions of Section 91 Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51(1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

(A1) DrNo P01 Site Location Plan
(A1) DrNo P04 Proposed Sub-Station Building Details
(A2) DrNo P06 Existing Site Plan
(A2) DrNo P08 Shelter Details
(A1) Long Section
(A3) DrNo P07 Rev A Proposed Site Tracking
(A1) DrNo P05 Rev B Proposed New Entrance
(A2) DrNo P03 Rev A External Surfaces Plan
(A2) DrNo P02 Rev A Proposed Site Plan

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3. There shall be no obstruction to visibility greater than 600 millimetres above adjoining road level in advance of lines drawn 2.4 metres back from the carriageway edge on the centre line of the access and extending to points on the nearside carriageway edge 43 metres either side of the access. Such visibility shall be fully provided before the development hereby permitted is

brought into use and shall thereafter be maintained at all times.

Reason: To ensure suitable visibility is provided and retained at the site access, in the interests of highway safety.

4. The proposed access shall incorporate pedestrian visibility splays on both its sides appropriate for the speed of approaching traffic and these shall be submitted to and agreed in writing the Local Planning Authority. Such splays shall be fully provided before the access hereby permitted is first brought onto use and shall thereafter be maintained at all times.

Reason: In the interests of pedestrian safety.

5. Prior to the access hereby permitted being first brought into use the proposed access over at least the first 12 metres of its length, as measured from the edge of the adjoining carriageway, shall be properly consolidated and surfaced (not loose stone or gravel) in accordance with details which shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Once constructed the access shall thereafter be maintained in that condition at all times.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and to ensure that access to the site is maintained.

Notes to Applicant

1. In accordance with paragraph 38 of the National Planning Policy Framework the Council has worked in a positive and pro-active way with the applicant and has negotiated amendments to the application to enable the grant of planning permission.

Proposal

Formation of vehicular and pedestrian access with erection of security fencing, gates and barriers at Station Mills, Station Road, Wellington.

Site Description

The site is an existing commercial complex of two factories, Reylon and Pritex, who had formerly operated as one enterprise. The site and commercial operations are being split up and the proposed development area represents the Pritex half of the site. It has extant car-parking bays, and is set lower than the adjacent road (Lillebonne Way/Normandy Row). The existing access to the complex is located off of Brendon Road and leads into the Reylon part of the site.

Relevant Planning History

None of relevance

Consultation Responses

WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL - Members of the committee expressed disappointment that the traffic situation in the town centre would not be completely alleviated but considered that any relief would be welcome, support the application.

SCC - TRANSPORT DEVELOPMENT GROUP - I refer to the above-mentioned planning application received on 4 January 2019 and after following a site visit on 25th January 2019 have the following observations on the highway and transportation aspects of this proposal:-

I refer to the above-mentioned planning application received on 4th January 2019 and following a site visit have the following observations on the highway and transportation aspects of this proposal:-

The application seeks consent for the formation of a vehicular and pedestrian access to the site known locally as 'Pritex' in Wellington. The application also includes the erection of security gates and fencing to the perimeter of the site and security barriers at the proposed new entrance.

The proposed new vehicular and pedestrian access would link the site with Lillebonne Way to the north west of Wellington. The road is currently not adopted highway, but has been designed to enable it to take large traffic as a distributor road.

The design and location of the proposed access is such that there is likely to be limited detrimental impact to highway safety in the immediate area. The security barriers are set sufficiently far from the boundary to allow large vehicles to leave the public highway while awaiting entry into the site. Due to the topography of the land it is suggested that the applicant make every effort to ensure that the security barriers are visible to traffic, with the possibility of an illuminated barrier with skirt.

It is noted that the gradient of the access is in the region of 1 in 15, it is recommended that the gradient is reduced to at least 1 in 20 to allow HGV's to pull away from the site with ease.

The Taunton Deane Borough Council adopted Core Strategy 2011-2028 identifies a need to provide a Northern Relief Road for Wellington, the Local Planning Authority are advised that whilst there are no highway safety concerns for this proposed development it is noted that the proposal does not deliver this Northern Relief Road and may, in fact, hinder the delivery thereof.

Taking the above comments into consideration the Highways Authority does not object to the proposal and should the Local Planning Authority be minded to recommend permission the Highways Authority would recommend that the following conditions are added to the permission:

- There shall be no obstruction to visibility greater than 600 millimetres above adjoining road level in advance of lines drawn 2.4 metres back from the carriageway edge on the centre line of the access and extending to points on the nearside carriageway edge 43 metres either side of the access. Such visibility shall be fully provided before the development hereby permitted is brought into use and shall thereafter be maintained at all times.
- The proposed access shall incorporate pedestrian visibility splays on both its

sides appropriate for the speed of approaching and to be submitted and agreed in writing the Local Planning Authority. Such splays shall be fully provided before the access hereby permitted is first brought onto use and shall thereafter be maintained at all times.

- Prior to the access hereby permitted being first brought into use the proposed access over at least the first 12 metres of its length, as measured from the edge of the adjoining carriageway, shall be properly consolidated and surfaced (not loose stone or gravel) in accordance with details which shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Once constructed the access shall thereafter be maintained in that condition at all times.

SCC - RIGHTS OF WAY - No comments received

LANDSCAPE - No objections

Representations Received

1no. letter of support received stating that the development would help to alleviate traffic problems in the town.

1no. letter received giving qualified support to the application if the existing entrance on Brendon Road is closed off, as a condition of any permission granted.

27no. letters of objection have been received (excluding cases where more than one letter was sent from the same household). These are mainly from residents on the new Longforth (Bloor Homes) residential development, the points raised are:

- The development will not relieve traffic
- An increase in traffic including by HGVs
- Traffic congestion
- An increase in air-borne pollution
- There are only 120 spaces (in other letters 112 spaces) for 190 cars
- Increased traffic including from HGVs will be a danger to children
- Figure 4.1 layout wrong
- The council should relocate Reylon site now
- An increase in parking on surrounding streets stopping existing residents and their visitors parking there
- Parking (and traffic/congestion) problems will get worse when consented school is built, congestion impacts, splitting site in half and creating new entrance only moves problems around, were not told when buying properties on the Longforth Farm development by Bloor Homes that a new access might be created

1no. letter of objection was also received from Wellington Town Councillor, and planning committee member John Thorne, who said that he has reconsidered his decision as a member of the planning committee (after the vote of support for the application) and now believes it should be refused after reading the information and consultation responses from the Somerset County Council highways officer about hindrance to the NRR (Northern Relief Road) which were not available at the time of the committee meeting. He has stated that he understands the concerns of residents and would only now support the application if the suggested conditions for closure of the first access on Brendon Road and for restrictions on hours are taken up, and that the local authority should get the owners of the Pritex site to sign a legal

covenant enabling continued access/egress for Reylon through the Pritex site after sale of the site.

Planning Policy Context

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications are determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The development plan for Taunton Deane comprises the Taunton Deane Core Strategy (2012), the Taunton Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (2016), the Taunton Town Centre Area Action Plan (2008), Somerset Minerals Local Plan (2015), and Somerset Waste Core Strategy (2013).

Relevant policies of the development plan are listed below.

ROW - Rights of Way,
CP6 - Transport and accessibility,
DM1 - General requirements,
SP3 - Realising the vision for Wellington,
SS3 - Wellington Longforth,

This takes into account the recent adoption of the SADMP.

Local finance considerations

None

Determining issues and considerations

This application is for a redesigned car park, with a new access. It is the result of a split in the businesses operating at the site and would enable separate accesses for Reylon (who currently have the only vehicular access to the site) and Pritex.

Principle of development

The site is in a pre-existing commercial use and is inside the settlement limits of Wellington so is likely to be supported for such developments. However the site has been allocated for redevelopment under policies SS3 and SP3 including the provision of the Northern Relief Road and re-location of the Reylon/Pritex buildings. This conflict with Local Plan policies is expanded on below.

Design

The design for the re-arranged car park within the site would include plans to

remove an existing grass bank to create newly positioned parking spaces, with 'grasscrete' surfacing. This is considered to be acceptable and would not have detrimental impact outside of the site. The new access would be onto Lillebonne Way, a new and as yet un-adopted highway that is part of the Longforth Farm residential development. It was designed as a distributor road and has capacity for additional traffic and the new access is not considered to be significantly harmful to the existing streetscape. The proposed outbuildings within the site for cycle storage and electricity infrastructure are considered to be acceptable.

Highways

The site is adjacent to the Longforth Farm residential development and connects to the new road network and roundabout via Longforth Road. Improvements and new highways from this roundabout from the outskirts of Wellington have created a distributor roadway which was designed with HGV usage in mind. This does allow for removing of HGV traffic from the town centre and the proposal will to an extent at least continue with the process of traffic diversion. The application includes a Transport Statement which details public transport and pedestrian connectivity to the site, and proposed works include a covered bicycle shelter. Some preparation has therefore been done for making the development sustainable in regards to minimising traffic impacts through promoting sustainable transport choices as an alternative to private cars. So whilst the proposal is mainly concerned with new car parking arrangements and access to the Pritex half of the extant site by HGVs and other larger vehicles, it is acknowledged that the applicants have given due consideration to making the development sustainable. Impacts on the highway network are within acceptable limits and the works would help to divert traffic away from Wellington town centre which would be a net benefit. The initial designs for the new access included creating a cutting through an existing bank which drops down into the site from the roadway above. The gradient proposed was 1 in 15 this has been amended to 1 in 20. Subject to the revisions and conditions as suggested by the highways officer it is considered that the proposal is acceptable from a highways perspective.

Parking

Concerns have been raised about the potential for workers from the site using surrounding roads for private parking. As there are roads which do not have residents only restrictions this could not be stopped by the LPA or Highways Authority. However it is considered to be a relatively low risk as the allotted parking spaces within the site would appear to be enough to accommodate workers on shift patterns, although it is recognised that during change-over periods there may be some temporary on-street parking and/or traffic congestion. This is not however considered to provide sufficient grounds to refuse the application as any potential impacts would be likely to be relatively minor and time-limited.

Amenity

The site is already in use as a factory and with ancillary car and HGV parking. Harmful impacts on amenity are not considered to significantly increase given the

existing use of the site. It is acknowledged that there will be an increase in vehicular movements to and from the new access however the road was designed as a local distributor and has the capacity for a marked increase in vehicles utilising it. The amenity impacts are therefore considered to be acceptable.

Conflict with allocated site and Local Plan policies

The site proposed for development has been allocated under policies SS3 and SP3 of the adopted Local Plan, for a mixed use redevelopment including the relocation of the Reylon and Pritex factories to a new location, and for a new arterial highway known as the Northern Relief Road (NRR), with this route travelling through the Pritex/Reylon site. As such there is a presumption against development which could hinder implementation of the plan. However given that the proposed works are relatively minor and would not involve an increase in productive floor space at the site it is not considered correct to recommend refusal on conflict with policy grounds in relation to SS3 and SP3.

The agent has offered a letter of comfort dated 1 February 2019 stating that the policies envisaged a phased series of steps towards implementation of the masterplan, that the proposed works would not hinder future development of the site, and that the Highways Authority has not directly objected to the current proposal and as such there are no grounds to refuse the application or to delay a decision

Other matters

This application has attracted a considerable level of objection from local residents who would be directly impacted by the proposed new access and resultant traffic increase, with issues related to pollution, road safety, especially for children, congestion, and parking on residential streets near to the development highlighted as areas of significant concern. This includes one of the local town councillors, and a planning committee member, who initially supported the application at the Wellington Town Council planning committee but later wrote to the local planning authority objecting to the scheme and stating that the consultation response from Somerset County Council's highways officer was not available at the time of the committee meeting.

Conclusion

The proposed development includes an access and changes to the existing car-park to an extant factory site. The adjoining road is capable of handling additional capacity and has width for HGV movements. Whilst residential concerns are understandable the proposal is not considered to be significantly detrimental to amenity and the highways officer has commented that it would not significantly increase risks to highway safety. It is therefore considered acceptable and is recommended for approval.

In preparing this report the planning officer has considered fully the implications and requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998.

Contact Officer: Mr Alex Lawrey