

Comment for planning application 21/01123/F

Application Number	21/01123/F
Location	Hatch End Old Poultry Farm Steeple Aston Road Middle Aston Bicester OX25 5QL
Proposal	Demolition of existing buildings. Construction of replacement business units and associated external works. (Re-submission of 20/01127/F)
Case Officer	James Kirkham
Organisation	
Name	Janice Kinory
Address	Barn Cottage,Paines Hill,Steeple Aston,Bicester,OX25 4SQ
Type of Comment	Objection
Type	neighbour
Comments	<p>While a review of this application reveals that there has been a significant effort put into addressing the issues raised when the plan was initially rejected, there remain problems with it that cannot be addressed by architects and planning consultants due to the location of the site. The relationship of the site, pre-existing structures, the local streets and road and the topography of Steeple Aston create issues that are not resolved in this application and may not be resolvable. The proposed development sits just to the north of the village school and nursery. Particularly in the morning, overlapping with the start of most workdays, narrow Fir Lane already struggles to safely accommodate the current traffic composed of school buses and children being dropped off by their parents along with vehicles driving through the area as others head to work. There is no lollipop person to oversee the movement of children from the parking area at the village hall across the road to Dr Radcliff's School, so additional traffic in the form of the plan's projected 18 additional vehicles arriving at the site and 5 departing it each day between 8 and 9 am daily can only be perceived as an additional risk to the safety of the children. The Transport Statement includes a projection that 18.6% of people coming to the development will arrive by sustainable transportation. This is wildly optimistic. 8.3% are expected to arrive on foot. However, there is no walking path beside the road from Middle Aston, meaning that morning walkers from the north will be on the road at the same time as anyone taking their child to school. If the traffic is heavy, they will be forced to walk on the often-muddy verge. From the south, there is no pavement north of the entrance to the school, so morning walkers will be trying to share the road with the previously mentioned traffic or walking on the often muddy, steeply curved verge as they pass the school playing field, or the flatter but muddier verge to the north of it to access the site entrance. Anyone walking in Steeple Aston from the south of North Side road will be faced with the challenge of scaling the steep hills that divide the village in a north-south direction. While I anticipate that some people will walk to the site despite these issues, the number will be far lower than this projection, and those not walking will probably drive their cars, adding to the traffic problems. 2.6% of workers are estimated to come by public transportation and reference is made to the S4 bus and the Heyford rail station. There is no guarantee that either the S4 bus route or the Heyford rail station will continue to be economically viable during the full use-life cycle of the proposed buildings, so that casts a fundamental doubt over the basis for the estimate before other considerations are mentioned. The closest S4 bus stop to the development is on South Side near the junction with The Dickredge (the so-called Post Office stop), a substantial walk to the site involving the scaling of Paines Hill and the walk past the school discussed above. While the S4 bus route could deliver workers from locations along the A4260 to Steeple Aston, it does not connect with either Heyford Park or Bicester, two of the areas of greatest population growth in Cherwell District during the next 20 years and likely sources for workers at the site. Workers from either area would have to drive to the site unless they cycled, which will be discussed below. Arriving in Steeple Aston in the morning via the Heyford Rail Station would require that the individual either hire a taxi, walk or cycle to the development. Hiring a taxi, if one were available, would add two incremental car movements through the congestion zone discussed earlier. The transport statement disingenuously notes that it is only 980 metres from the station to the S4 Post Office Bus Stop on South Side. While this is true, they fail to mention that a good portion of that distance is spent climbing a hill from the Cherwell River to the village that is so steep that cars and trucks downshift to scale it. While it is possible to climb the hill on the muddy verge footpath or with a bicycle if one is very fit, it is a challenging climb that leads ultimately to a further climb on Paines Hill. The estimated 1.8% of workers using bicycles for their commutes will be very healthy from this workout if they approach from the south or east. Even those cyclists coming from Middle</p>

Aston will have to cope with hills and rising topography on the way home at night. The planning documents note that the site will have 34 bicycle parking spaces. As the Transport Plan estimates only 1.8% of the workforce is cycling, and if all of the parking spaces are used by staff at the site, there would be a total 1,870 people working at the development. The road traffic implications of this number for the village are beyond horrific to contemplate. The estimated 0.7% arriving at the site by motorcycle should be able to cope with the topography, but we must hope that their vehicles are not particularly loud ones as they scale Paines Hill. The development is touted as being planned with environmental awareness. However, despite global warming and Britain's hotter, drier summers, the buildings will not be air conditioned. In the future, will these buildings soon be as unusable as the existing structures? Will there really be a commercial demand for sweltering boxes passing as offices in the coming decades? Diesel and petrol engine car sales will be banned in the UK from 2030 yet there is no provision in this plan for electric vehicle charging points at the individual units or the central building. This is very short-sighted given the reasonably estimable economic life of the structures. The Construction Traffic Plan also raises concerns. The HGV routes proposed put the large vehicles onto the same road (South Side) as is used by the S4 bus and school buses. School buses and HGVs both will be using Paines Hill in this plan. Neither of these roads is wide enough for two large vehicles to pass each other. Even attempting to eliminate all parking on both roads would not solve the problem of the existing pinch points and limited visibility on segments of these roads. The alternate construction traffic plan using North Side, supposedly limited to smaller vehicles, is only one wrong turn of an HGV driver away from potential disaster. North Side twists and turns, limiting visibility, and has a single lane section. It is surrounded by conservation area homes and walls. As the construction staff travel plan is the exactly the same as the ongoing travel plan, all the same issues previously raised apply once more during the construction phase. This planning application is flawed and is not in the best long-term interests of the people of the parish of Steeple Aston. The proposal is inappropriate due to the site location relative to the village schools and the increase in traffic it would cause. The topography of Steeple and Middle Aston makes the projected sustainable travel plans viable only in the minds of those who have never actually walked or cycled in this area. The application is disingenuous and seeks to portray itself as delivering benefits to the people of the area that will never arrive. The only benefit will be achieved by the site developer. I would ask that this development application be denied.

Received Date

16/04/2021 14:01:47

Attachments