

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	Stuart Ferguson
Address	Merlins,Fir Lane,Steeple Aston,Bicester,OX25 4SF
Type of Comment	Objection
Type	neighbour

Comments	<p>The present buildings on the site appear to date from 1954 when Spillers established a research (poultry) station as part of their Middle Aston portfolio. Apparently many of the research workers were housed by Spillers on their Middle Aston estate such that the daily traffic movements were small. Since Spillers departed (1969?) the site has almost by default morphed into a light industrial site. Thus the land is expected under various local and national policies to continue to attract light industrial/commercial use. However, it would be hard to imagine a site less well suited to such purpose, unless planners utopian dream of many people working very locally was to come to fruition. Matching local employment provision to the requirements of those who happen to live within walking distance is clearly problematic. This site is almost inaccessible to/from the north owing to single track roads through Middle Aston and access via Steeple Aston to the south also involves stretches of single track road within the village. For some reason the developers feel obliged to claim that approaching 20% of the workforce will arrive on foot/bicycle. The notions that some, as opposed to perhaps one or two, will walk along country footpaths, or up and down steep hills to/from a train station 2 miles distant with infrequent service/bus stops approx 20 min walk away with hourly service, with long journey times, only to Banbury or Oxford, are just not realistic. Residents of Middle and Steeple Aston tend to drive to the school and village hall that are adjacent to the site; why oud they walk to work? Thus we have to start from the position that close to 100% of employees and customers will arrive in single occupancy vehicles (car sharing defeats the purpose of the car in generating inflexibilities of work times and travel routes - most people don't want this). If it is a planning requirement to demonstrate c20% access by sustainable/public transport modes is deliverable then the application surely cannot succeed. Moving on to the demolition and construction aspects of the application, there is a lack of detailed analysis of the issues, although it has to be recognized that OCC highways apparently (!?) have no concerns, presumably because they have no local knowledge. The first problem is that the road outside the primary school and playgroup is heavily congested between 8am and 9 am (the road was jammed just last week for many minutes when a lorry carrying a skip tried to pass the school at 0830) plus from 2.30pm until around 3.30pm. There is some recognition of this in the application but it would need enforcing that no demolition/construction traffic could be allowed in those periods or whatever variation to them there may be from time to time. There are serious problems at all times on the routes for works traffic to access the site. There are many places where lorries and buses cannot pass; there are 6 school buses each day (am and pm combined) using Paines Hill and along Southside there are two buses per hour on the S4 route plus a school bus morning and evening. My understanding is that passenger carrying buses are not supposed to reverse without a banksman except under unforeseeable conditions. It is clear that buses and other large vehicles drive on to pavements, edges of gardens etc to pass by obstructions. Without detailed planning of schedules, the clash between buses and other large vehicles is going to cause not only traffic jams but also damage to roads and verges as well as even houses when they are 'straight on to the road'. The same problems would arise with regular large agricultural vehicles which additionally traverse the Northside route through the village. The infrastructure of the village, some of which may well not withstand the regular passage of heavy goods vehicles, is liable for significant damage, especially if there is unplanned/uncoordinated passage of lorries through the village. All these issues are insufficiently developed in the application. (In nearby Tackley construction vehicles were banned from the village streets with their bus routes but in that case, unlike Hatch End, the site could be approached from an alternative direction.) The application envisages that only 79 car parking spaces will be required for employees and customers but 34 cycle spaces will be provided. The latter seems optimistically large given the distances most will be travelling,</p>
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but more important 79 seems fancifully low. As category B8 and E use is being sought, a wide variety of premises use is likely, but given the inevitable lack of detail as to likely users, and recognition of the floor area to be occupied, there could easily be in excess of 100 employees on site but variable numbers of customer visits. There is never enough car parking provision anywhere and so more should be considered (97 in the original proposal where the floor space was somewhat larger). There is a danger that on street parking will occur (during construction it is probably inevitable). Uncertainty as to numbers accessing the site leads on to traffic issues. The application seems to imply that with 79 car parking spaces there will be only 20-30 extra car journeys passing the school between 8am and 9 am. A more realistic estimate would be approaching 100 as most will start work in that window. If, however, 20 % could be persuaded, in line with the tenets of the application, to come by foot (via bus stops or from the locality) then provision of a pavement to connect with the nearest pavement at the primary school should be required. If this were a residential requirement then a pavement would be obligatory and it seems odd if walking to/from a home contrasts with walking to/from an employment in needing a pavement. The road has a 60mph speed limit and walking along it in the dark especially is not an attractive prospect, thus discouraging anything other than car use. In summary objection to the proposal is based on lack of detail and/or realism about the use to which the site will be put, the number of employees/daily visitors, the prevention of damage to the village infrastructure and arguably most importantly the hazards for children attending the primary school and adjacent playgroup (during both construction and occupancy). The rigidity of planning policies seems to prevent any change in designation even when changed priorities mean that in other respects provision of employment opportunities without good public transport provision is not favoured. Of course circa 20 years ago this would not have been a factor/consideration.

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Attachments