



BICESTERBUG

B i c e s t e r B i k e U s e r s G r o u p

Submissions On Proposed Planning Application: 21/01454/F Graven Hill Surgery

**27 May 2021
Version 1.0**

1. ACCESS

1. Given that almost all patients will be from the Bicester area, and therefore within the distance that the current government guidance envisages should be accessible on foot or on bike, it is surprising that so little thought has been given to access by these means. Access to the site from areas other than Graven Hill is currently extremely poor.
2. The A41 overpass is inaccessible to walkers or cyclists, which cuts off access from all areas to the west such as Kingsmere.
3. Closer to the planned site, the provision is also poor, and would need changes to facilitate walking and cycling.
4. The Department for Transport's Local Transport Note ('LTN') 1/20 now emphasises the importance of safe and convenient cycle access to the development along existing highways:
5. 'Cycling facilities should be regarded as an essential component of the site access and any off-site highway improvements that may be necessary. Developments that do not adequately make provision for cycling in their transport proposals should not be approved. This may include some off-site improvements along existing highways that serve the development.' (Emphasis added, DfT 2020, 14.3.12).

1.1 London Road Crossing

6. The London Road is due to have a cycle and pedestrian path between GH and the railway, but the provision on the London Road from the railway to the Market Square is poor and there remains a big question mark about crossing the railway at London Road. The current consultation by East-West Rail only provides for a pedestrian overpass. This will be large, between 8-10 metres high, incorporating a long horizontal distance to be travelled of up to 400m, probably necessitating numerous energy sapping 180° switchback turns, and will be inaccessible or discouraging to most users. It is essential that a pedestrian and cycle underpass is constructed under the railway, as this would only be 2.4m high, and would be accessible by most visitors to the planned development.

1.2 Rodney House Roundabout

7. The junction to the entrance, the Rodney House junction, was designed and constructed by Graven Hill Village Development Company Ltd ('GHVDC'). It is dangerous and intimidating to all but the most courageous pedestrians and cyclists. Vehicles travel at very high speeds, there have been numerous accidents, the barriers (used for keeping pedestrians off the carriageway, not to protect pedestrians as the applicant erroneously states) have been destroyed by vehicles so repeatedly and in so many places that the developer has taken them out entirely in places, the crossings are poor and vehicles regularly drive over them when the pedestrian light is green, the light timings are ponderous meaning that it can take 5 minutes simply to cross the 75m from one side to another, and the desire lines are practically non-existent meaning that any pedestrian has to take a long, circuitous, and confusing route to attempt to navigate the junction. Currently it is the sole access route from many directions, but is so discouraging that most potential walkers and cyclists do not attempt to walk or cycle.
8. Changes would need to be made to support walking and cycling via the Rodney House Roundabout. Suggestions would include reducing the speed limit to 30mph (which would in fact be required by guidance given that London Road and the Graven Hill site entrance will both be 30mph roads); removing the pedestrian barriers (which, counter-intuitively, will reduce motor vehicle speeds); amending the timing of the crossings to expedite walking and cycling access; and widening the shared pedestrian and cycle paths to the current local and national standards.

1.3 Rear Access

9. Because of the disastrous design of the Rodney House Roundabout, most walkers and cyclists approach Graven Hill from the London Road via the Langford Cottages underpass and via a road over which GHVDC have rights of access. This road then passes by the rear of the site, where the former entrance to the Rodney House Social Club, and where the 'Haul road access' is planned for this construction. This route would provide a far more direct and coherent route for pedestrians and cyclists approaching from Bicester. In addition, the existing mature trees lining the access route would make an attractive and welcoming approach to encourage such visitors. The applicant should be required to provide access from this direction.

1.4 Mini-Roundabout

10. The current access route envisaged by the applicant is that cyclists will use Graven Hill North. It is inevitable that users will travel on the cycle path on the north-western side of the road, but the current mini-roundabout has been badly designed as it requires cyclists to unnecessarily enter the carriageway on the wrong side of the road at the point of the mini-roundabout. This is a serious issue that needs to be resolved by permitting cyclists to stay on the same side of the road and turn right into the access to the planned development.
11. It would also make sense to remove the route into the carriageway entirely, and instead provide a direct crossing of the road into the planned development to the other side of the road for those continuing straight on (such as schoolchildren who will be cycling to the primary school).

1.5 Shared Foot and Cycle Paths

12. The shared foot and cycle path to the proposed application is not compliant with LTN 1/20 which emphasises the importance of segregated provision.
13. Shared use facilities can create particular difficulties for visually impaired and other disabled people. Interactions between people moving at different speeds can be perceived to be unsafe and inaccessible, particularly by vulnerable pedestrians. This negatively affects comfort and directness and may amount to a breach of the public sector equality duty contained in the Equality

Act 2010. The DFT strongly advises against shared use footways (DFT 2020, 1.6.1, 6.5.4 & 9.4.1).

14. The DFT requires that at crossings and junctions, cyclists should not share the space with pedestrians, but should be provided with a separate, parallel, route (DFT 2020, 1.6.1). The local, Oxfordshire, county guidance also requires that off-carriageway facilities for pedestrians and cyclists should be fully segregated (OCC 2017, 2.1.3, 2.2.8, 3.4.6).

2. REFERENCES

Department for Transport. 2020. Local Transport Note 1/20: Cycle Infrastructure Design. The Stationery Office.

Oxfordshire County Council. 2017. 'Oxfordshire Cycling Design Standards'.

Oxfordshire County Council.

———. 2020. 'Bicester Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan'.