

Rachel Tibbetts

From: Paul Troop <pault@gclaw.co.uk>
Sent: 24 November 2021 13:45
To: Caroline Ford; Planning
Cc: White, Joy - Communities; bicesterbug
Subject: 21/03177/F Howes Lane, Bicester Comments

Importance: High

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Dear Ms Ford

Thank you for inviting us to give our comments on the above application. There are some positive aspects to the design. However, for the reasons set out above, there are some serious issues with the highways design from the perspective of cyclists which lead us to object to this application as it presently stands. Nonetheless, we believe that the issues could be overcome relatively readily, in which case we would withdraw our objections.

In particular:

1. The applicant should be commended for providing segregated pedestrian and cycle provision with horizontal buffers from the highway on the eastern side of Howes Lane. However, to comply with LTN 1/20, the Oxfordshire Cycle Design Standards, to ensure usability for both pedestrians and cyclists, and for comfort, consistency and coherence, the roadside provision on the western side, currently shown as shared and with no buffers, should be provided as segregated and with buffers. This segregation should be continued around the corner into the estate and current access road so as to avoid unnecessary transitions.
2. The applicant has correctly drawn a priority crossing over the minor road access on the eastern side of Howes Lane. However, to comply with current guidance, priority crossings would also be required over the minor road access points on the western side and on the minor access points to the estates on the current access road. To the extent possible given the likely motor vehicle use, the corner radii should be reduced to minimise vehicle speeds as well as the road distance that walkers and pedestrians need to cross. Furthermore, account should be taken of the different speeds that walkers and cyclists movements will take place at: provision of mid-point refuges for pedestrians (but not cyclists) might be advisable.
3. Given the 'stub end' of Howes Lane will not be used (save perhaps for turning movements) until Howes Lane is completed, there needs to be a disability compliant means for cyclists and pedestrians to cross over this stub end. Given the limited likely traffic movements, dropped kerbs on the eastern and western sides of the stub would be necessary to facilitate active travel movements to and from the southern side of the current access road and the eastern side of Howes Lane.
4. To the extent that bus stops are envisaged at any points on the development where there are cycle lanes, cycle bypasses should be provided to the rear of the bus stops so as to reduce conflict and promote the direct flow of cycle movements.
5. The crossing in the mid-point of Howes Lane currently shows what appears to be a shared area to the east merging into a cycle only lane with no apparent transitions. This will need to be redesigned, particularly if active travel on the western side becomes segregated provision. In terms of suitable crossings, given the likely future traffic on Howes Lane and the guidance emphasis on keeping pedestrian and cycle movements and crossings separate, thought might be given to providing a parallel crossing at this point. This would be a lower cost, demand responsive solution that would support walking and cycling.

6. Currently, the design shows ghost islands off Howes Lane combined with a pedestrian crossing and refuge. Given that the research indicates that such ghost islands reduce the accessibility for users of the minor roads (Windass, 2015), the applicant may wish to consider removing the ghost islands. Furthermore, ghost islands also pose a greater road safety risk as well as eating up much of the available highway space, so CDC planning and OCC Highways may consider that ghost islands are not advisable here.
7. Active travel routes to the proposed development should also be improved, as per LTN 1/20, which now emphasises the importance of safe and convenient cycle access to the development along existing highways:

'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, LTN 1/20, 14.3.12).

LTN 1/20 requires that schemes for cycle traffic to connect to new developments will be delivered as part of those new developments (14.1.1 to 14.1.4).

At present, active travel access to the proposed development across the large, unsignalised, Middleton Stoney Road roundabout is poor, consisting of uncontrolled crossings over high speed, wide, crossings. This makes walking and cycling access to the development extremely limited. At the very least, a contribution towards segregated parallel crossings over the Howes Lane arm of the roundabout should be provided.

8. The applicant has correctly indicated cycle storage, but this appears to be below that which would be required according to LTN 1/20 and in the wrong locations. Furthermore, given the significant increases in e-bike sales, and corresponding increase in value of such bikes, the cycle storage should be immediately adjacent to the entrance to each unit where it can be observed passively and provide reassurance to the owners and users of such bikes that their valuable possessions are not at risk of being stolen.

If you have any queries concerning the above, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Paul Troop
On behalf of Bicester Bike Users' Group

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