



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

DEV/SE/15/51

Development Control Committee

3 September 2015

Planning Application DC/15/0873/FUL

Land for New Access Road, A1088, Ixworth

Date: 29 April 2015 **Expiry Date:** 24 June 2015
Registered:

Case Officer: Gemma Pannell **Recommendation:** Grant permission

Parish: Ixworth **Ward:** Ixworth

Proposal: Planning Application – Introduction of a right turn ghost island junction on the A1088 to provide vehicular access.

Site: Land for New Access Road, A1088, Ixworth

Applicant: Persimmon Homes (Anglia)

Synopsis:

Application under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Associated matters.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Committee determine the attached application and associated matters.

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Background:

This application is referred to the Committee following consideration at Delegation Panel. This was at the request of the Ward Member and also as the Parish Council's objection is contrary to the officers' recommendation to approve.

Since the consideration at Delegation Panel, two meetings have taken place with the Ward Member, County Council member and the applicant and the second meeting was attended also by Suffolk County Highway Authority and Development Manager, Rachel Almond. The purpose of these meetings was to explore the previous decisions taken with regard to the proposal for a roundabout and how the current scheme was arrived at.

The application is recommended for APPROVAL.

Proposal:

1. Planning permission is sought for the construction of a right turn ghost island junction from the A1088, in order to provide vehicular access to a residential allocation. The application has been submitted in advance of the plans for the residential development, as it has been necessary for the applicant to seek confirmation that the access can be successfully achieved before investing in the preparation of detailed plans for the residential development.

Application Supporting Material:

2. Information submitted with the application as follows:
 - Planning Statement
 - Transport Assessment
 - Plans

Site Details:

3. The ghost island is to be constructed off the A1088, to serve the allocation of residential development off Crown Lane.

Planning History:

4. DC/14/0196/FUL – Planning Application – Improvements to A143/A1088 roundabout to provide vehicular access to serve potential future residential development. Refused under delegated powers, following an initial request for call-in to the Delegation Panel by the Ward Member, this was rescinded following receipt of the highways objection.
5. The reason for refusal is set out below:

Policy CS3 requires development proposal to address access and transportation arrangements. This is in line with Para. 32 of the NPPF

which requires planning decisions to be take into account whether safe and suitable access can be achieved.

It is not considered that a 5 arm roundabout design is the safest access arrangement for this development site. The proposed 5-arm roundabout design does not meet all the criteria of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges TD 16/07– which is the standard to which Suffolk County Council require junctions to be constructed.

As a result it is considered that the access proposed will be less safe than an alternative four arm access arrangement for the adjacent future residential development site.

Accordingly, as a result of the conflict arising from the proposed design with the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges TC 16/07, it is considered that the proposal is contrary to the requirements of Policy CS3 and the requirements of the NPPF to provide safe and suitable access.

6. The site is allocated within the development plan document Rural Vision 2031 for residential redevelopment and comprises two elements: RV12b – Land off Crown Lane and RV12c – Land west of A143 and south of A1088.
7. RV12b – Land off Crown Lane is situated to the north of Crown Lane and adjacent to the cemetery. The site is also subject to adopted documents: Ixworth Concept Statement (December 2008) and Crown Lane, Ixworth Masterplan
8. The Ixworth Concept Statement and Masterplan describe and show the proposed access linking to the Walsham Road roundabout, however as planning permission has been refused for this, further discussion with the County Council has resulted in the submission of the current application.

Consultations:

9. Highway Authority: No objection – subject to conditions. See further comments in main section of the report.

Representations:

10. Ixworth Parish Council: The Parish Council have resolved to object to this application for the following reasons:

- Traffic concerns already on that stretch of road – there have been fatal accidents at the junction into Ixworth close to where this junction would be located.
- The A1088 is a 60mph road and it is well known that traffic travels at faster speeds than this.
- The junction would be between the markings indicating 200 metres and 100 metres to the roundabout notifying vehicles.
- Safety issues exiting the development.

The Parish Council object to this application as they feel the option previously agreed in the Crown Lane Masterplan is the safer and most acceptable option for access into the new proposed development and any future development in this area.

11. Suffolk County Councillor Joanna Spicer: Object: *An access off a busy "A" class road situated between a roundabout and a staggered crossroads is quite unsuitable in my view. Traffic calming (rumble strips) had been installed there after other accidents.*

The Crown Lane masterplan established the expectation of a 5th arm off the nearby roundabout and there is a clear view locally that this plan should be retained.

12. St Edmundsbury Borough Councillor John Griffiths: *As the local Ward Member, I have to say that the more I look into this application and also the process involved in how it has apparently got to where it is the more very serious concerns I have on a number of fronts. Moreover, like me, few people in my Ward have been aware of this until very recently - which surely can not be as it should be.*

Please take this as my strongest possible objection both to the application as is, and to the manner and process it seems to have involved so far. I would have thought you / the applicant would be well advised to defer or withdraw it - certainly until such stage as you/they have had an opportunity to discuss it with the relevant Borough and County Councillor amongst others but that of course is up to you/them. And, as for County/Highways - who appear to have had every possible, and conflicting, view on this matter - I think the politest request I can make at this stage is for a full explanation of their current position (and why they believe this is the best possible way forward).

13. Neighbours: Letters received from the occupants of 14, 15; 55; 57; 59; 70 Thistledown Drive; 10 Coltsfoot Close; making the following summarised objections:

- Concern regarding positioning of site notice (*this has been addressed and two further site notices have been displayed and the consultation period extended accordingly*)
- Concerned about road safety of proposal
- Existing traffic speeds along A1088 are dangerous
- Accident data needs to be carefully assessed
- Should be a larger roundabout
- Concerns about visibility from the proposed access
- Ghost Island is too close to the roundabout
- Will lead to congestion on the roundabout
- Too close to turning to Bardwell
- Conflict with slow moving vehicles which use this road
- Concern about level of traffic generated by proposed development and construction traffic

Policy: The following policies of the Joint Development Management Policies Document and the St Edmundsbury Core Strategy December 2010 have been taken into account in the consideration of this application:

14. Joint Development Management Policies Document:

- DM1: Presumption in favour of sustainable development
- DM2: Creating Places – Development Principles and Local Distinctiveness
- DM3: Masterplans
- DM13: Landscape Features
- DM45: Transport Assessments and Travels Plans

15. St Edmundsbury Core Strategy December 2010

- CS2: Sustainable Development
- CS3: Design and Local Distinctiveness
- CS4: Settlement Hierarchy and Identity
- CS7: Sustainable Transport
- CS13: Rural Areas

16. Rural Vision 2031

- RV1: Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development
- RV12: Ixworth

Other Planning Policy:

17. National Planning Policy Framework (2012) core principles and paragraphs 56 – 68

Officer Comment:

18. The issues to be considered in the determination of the application are:

- Principle of Development and Impact upon Highway Safety
- Other Issues

19. Concerns have been raised, by Ixworth Parish Council and local councillors, regarding the proposal for a right turn ghost island junction on the A1088 and the report intends to explain the reasons for the recommendation made by the County Council as Highway Authority on 3rd June 2015, and to provide a review of the County Council's formal comments on this proposal as it has emerged since 2007.

Principle of Development and Impact upon Highway Safety

20. When providing local planning authorities with advice on transport matters, the County Council has regard to relevant policies and technical standards. In this case, relevant national and local policy includes:

- Chapter 4 of the National Planning Policy Framework – 'Promoting sustainable transport'.
- Relevant sections of the Government's Planning Practice Guidance.
- St Edmundsbury Borough Council's Core Strategy (adopted 2010), Rural Vision 2031 (adopted 2014) and the West Suffolk Development

Management Policies (adopted 2015).

21. This policy background guides decision makers to prioritise road safety as a key matter in decision making, among other considerations such as ensuring that preference is given to sustainable modes of travel.
22. Technical engineering standards are then used to determine whether detailed designs are appropriate and safe. The Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB), produced and regularly updated by Highways England (formerly the Highways Agency), is used by Suffolk County Council as the set of standards against which proposals such as these are assessed. Volume 6 is key in this application and to the previous application for a roundabout (ref: DC/14/0196/FUL).
23. Technical guidance is, when necessary, held up alongside studies of the performance of similar junctions. In the case of this application, County Council officers have used accident records from the local highway network and national evidence on the safety records of similar junction types to test the application against the standards in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges.

Summary of the Technical Assessment

24. The current application (ref: DC/15/0873/FUL), for a right turn ghost island junction, is considered to meet the relevant national policy and technical standards such that the local planning authority can grant planning permission (with conditions).

Key safety issues considered have been:

- Traffic speeds,
- Visibility,
- The relationship between the proposal and other junctions and
- Accidents.

25. The proposal meets relevant DMRB requirements for visibility splays' to the maximum design speed of the road which is national speed limit of 60mph, and which demonstrate the detailed consideration given to this.
26. The ghost island junction is proposed between the roundabout on the A143 and a similarly designed right turned junction at the top of High Street. This allows drivers sufficient time to adjust from each junction and have good forward visibility to the proposed junction. The proposed junction has the required visibility required on the western side of the junction and has good inter-visibility to the eastern side to and including the existing roundabout.
27. Accident records, collected and used by Suffolk County Council and Suffolk Constabulary, show no fatal accidents in the vicinity of this development in the last ten years. Accident data pertaining to relevant local junctions has been considered. This shows significantly more injury accidents at the 5 - arm junction between the A1088, A143 and Stow Road (SE Ixworth)

than at the 4 – arm junction between the A1088, A143 and Walsham Road (NE Ixworth). It also demonstrates that the current right turn ghost island at the top of High Street has had significantly fewer injury accidents than the 4-arm roundabout.

28. This difference in the accident rate mirrors national data, which shows a marked increase in accidents per year as the number of arms on a roundabout increases. This data, from the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, is set out below.

Table 2/1: Average Accident Frequency at Roundabouts Between 1999 and 2003

No. of arms	No. of sites	Accident frequency (accidents per year)				Accident severity (% fatal and serious)
		Single carriageway roads	Dual carriageway roads	Grade separated junctions	All roads	
3	326	0.63	1.28	2.70	0.79	9.3
4	649	1.08	2.65	5.35	1.79	7.1
5	157	1.72	3.80	7.67	3.66	7.1
6	30	2.11	4.62	8.71	5.95	5.2
All	1162	1.00	2.60	6.28	1.87	7.2

29. It is this assessment of the current and previous applications which leads the County Council to recommend that a right-turn ghost island junction is a safer option for Ixworth than an increase in the number of arms on the current roundabout.

Previous Comments

30. A review of Suffolk County Council records on this matter reveals the following formal comments from the County Council on junction arrangements for accessing the land bordered by Crown Lane, the A143 and A1088.

27/11/2007 – Safety Audit of 5-arm roundabout proposal

31. This study was carried out by County Council road safety engineers, to assess the potential for a new five-arm roundabout at the junction of the A143 and A1088. The assessment assumed an increase in the diameter of the roundabout from 30 metres to 65 metres. The audit raised a number of concerns related to the number of arms on the roundabout, which is considered to increase the probability of collisions, and the size of the roundabout which is considered to encourage higher vehicle speeds and reduce lane discipline.

04/07/2008 – Comments on the Land off Crown Lane Concept Statement

32. *Re-build of roundabout at junction A143/A1088/Walsham Road to create five-arm access – The new five arm roundabout on the A143 will need to be a much larger roundabout than the existing four arm. A design has*

been submitted for road safety audit to our own safety engineering team and been accepted, but much more work is needed. It will have to be designed to comply with all the relevant DMRB standards and be built by the developer all under legal agreement and supervision of SCC.'

33. The above comments were submitted as comment on a draft concept statement for Land off Crown Lane. It accepted that a five arm roundabout could be made acceptable if safety concerns were allayed and if the requirements for the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges were met.

31/03/2014 – Highway Authority response to application DC/14/0196/FUL

34. This application sought to replace the existing 31m diameter four-arm roundabout with a 65m diameter five-arm roundabout. The County Council response recommended that the Borough Council refuse the planning application on grounds of highway safety, and explained why five-arm roundabouts are not preferred in principle, and why the specific design proposed was did not meet standards set out in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges.

35. Correspondence from 2008, between the applicant and a County Council Road Safety Engineer, was reproduced as part of the 2014 application. In an email exchange in 2008, the County Council Engineer appeared to support the principle of a five-arm roundabout, whilst still questioning details of the proposal. However, the 2014 letter explains that the 2008 correspondence did not consider the different characteristics of a retro-fitted roundabout. Furthermore, this advice was provided without the benefit of consideration of national evidence on accident rates at five-arm roundabouts. It is this evidence which leads County Council engineers to conclude that the right turn ghost island is the safest option for access to the sites allocated by Rural Vision 2031.

36. On the basis of the SCC Highway advice, the previous application was refused for the reason set out above. This is a material consideration and is not a matter that should be revisited as part of this application.

37. The application under consideration has the full support of the Highway Authority and therefore there are no material technical grounds for refusal of the application. It must also be noted, in any event, that a proposal cannot be resisted simply because there might or might not be a 'better' or more preferable solution, Rather, this scheme must be assessed on its own merits in relation to its particular impacts. When assessed on this basis it must be concluded that the proposal will not have an adverse impact upon highway safety, such that a refusal could be justified.

Other Matters

38. It is also important to consider the visual impact of the development as well as any impacts upon amenity. The proposal is to develop the access within and close to the present highway, of a design and appearance entirely commensurate with such a location. It can be concluded therefore

that there will be no adverse impacts upon character or appearance.

39. The access is close to existing dwellings upon Thistledown Drive. However, as set out above, the proposal is within the confines of a busy existing highway. It is not considered, given this, given the distance, and given the intervening soft landscaping, that there will be any material impacts upon amenity arising from this proposal in relation to outlook or noise arising from use of the access.

Conclusion:

40. In conclusion, the principle and detail of the development is considered to be acceptable and in compliance with relevant development plan policies and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Recommendation:

It is **RECOMMENDED** that planning permission be **Approved** subject to the following conditions:

1. Development to commence within three years
2. No part of the development shall be commenced until details of the proposed access (including the position of any gates to be erected and visibility splays provided) have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved access shall be laid out and constructed in its entirety prior to Construction and any other part of the development taking place. Thereafter the access shall be retained in its approved form. Reason: To ensure that the access is designed and constructed to an appropriate specification and made available for use at an appropriate time in the interests of highway safety.
3. The gradient of the vehicular access shall not be steeper than 1 in 20 for the first five metres measured from the nearside edge of the adjacent metalled carriageway. Reason: To ensure that vehicles can enter and leave the public highway in a safe manner.
4. The access driveway shall be constructed at a gradient not steeper than 1 in 8. Reason: To ensure that vehicles can enter and leave the public highway in a safe manner.
5. Before the development is commenced details shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority showing the means to prevent the discharge of surface water from the development onto the highway. The approved scheme shall be carried out in its entirety before the access is first used and shall be retained thereafter in its approved form. Reason: To prevent hazards caused by flowing water or ice on the highway.
6. Before the development is commenced, details of the estate roads and footpaths, (including layout, levels, gradients, surfacing and means of surface water drainage), shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Reason: To ensure that roads/footways are constructed to an acceptable standard.
7. The new estate road junction(s) with A1088 inclusive of cleared land within the sight splays to this junction must be formed prior to any other works commencing or delivery of any other materials. Reason: To ensure

a safe access to the site is provided before other works and to facilitate off street parking for site workers in the interests of highway safety.

8. All HGV traffic movements to and from the site over the duration of the construction period shall be subject to a Deliveries Management Plan which shall be submitted to the planning authority for approval a minimum of 28 days before any deliveries of materials commence. No HGV movements shall be permitted to and from the site other than in accordance with the routes defined in the Plan. The site operator shall maintain a register of complaints and record of actions taken to deal with such complaints at the site office as specified in the Plan throughout the period of occupation of the site. Reason: To reduce and / or remove as far as is reasonably possible the effects of HGV traffic in sensitive areas.
9. Before the access is first used visibility splays shall be provided as shown on Drawing No. 028/2012/01 Rev C and thereafter retained in the specified form. Notwithstanding the provisions of Part 2 Class A of the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or any Order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification) no obstruction over 0.6 metres high shall be erected, constructed, planted or permitted to grow within the areas of the visibility splays. Reason: To ensure vehicles exiting the road would have sufficient visibility to enter the public highway safely and vehicles on the public highway would have sufficient warning of a vehicle emerging in order to take avoiding action.
10. Development to be constructed in accordance with the approved plans.

Documents:

All background documents including application forms, drawings and other supporting documentation relating to this application can be viewed online:

<https://planning.westsuffolk.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=NNIQFQPDHY900>

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