

Item No. 9**SCHEDULE A**

APPLICATION NUMBER	CB/10/00938/FULL
LOCATION	Land Next To River Hiz Adjacent West Platform Of Arlesey Train Station, Arlesey Road, Henlow
PROPOSAL	Full: 390 space car park with landscaping and access road to serve Arlesey Train Station
PARISH	Henlow
WARD	Langford and Henlow
WARD COUNCILLORS	Cllr Clarke & Cllr Rogers
CASE OFFICER	Godwin Eweka
DATE REGISTERED	29 March 2010
EXPIRY DATE	28 June 2010
APPLICANT	Poppyhill Properties Ltd
AGENT	Wastell & Porter Architects Ltd
REASON FOR COMMITTEE TO DETERMINE	Cllr Clarke – due to significant local importance of proposal
RECOMMENDED DECISION	Full Application - Refused

Site Location:

The site to which this development relates, lies just off the A507 and measures about one hectare in size. It is situated towards the western bank of the River Hiz, with Glebe Meadows Nature Reserve (LNR) nearby and is adjacent to the western platform of Arlesey Railway Station, Arlesey Bridge and the Network Rail Car Park. The site also lies outside the 'Settlement Envelope' and partially within Floodplain Zone 3 and currently under vegetation with mature trees, mostly poplars.

Access is obtained to the site using a slip road from the A507, which runs east parallel to the adjacent highway before turning south running under Arlesey bridge and then looping back to re-join the A507 on its southern side.

The existing slip road is currently being used by commuters for unauthorised and uncontrolled parking along the route, which is congested on a daily basis, thus restricting vehicular movements from other sites which use the road. This access road is a single-width capacity, which makes parking difficult and poses danger to other road users in and out of the Train Station.

The Application:

390 space car park with landscaping and access road to serve Arlesey Train Station. The proposal would comprise the following facilities:

- Pay and Display system;
- Parking Attendant;
- Low-level fencing, comprising 'post and rail' type, with affixed directional signage for vehicle movement within the site;
- Waste Bins on various locations;
- Security timed lighting.
- 19 Disabled parking.

RELEVANT POLICIES:

National Policies (PPG & PPS)

PPS1 (Delivering Sustainable Development)

PPS9 (Biodiversity and Geological Conservation)

PPG13 (Transport)

Regional Spatial Strategy

East of England Plan (May 2008)

Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy (March 2005)

Bedfordshire Structure Plan 2011

Central Bedfordshire and Core Strategy and Development Management Policies (2009)

DM3; DM4; DM14; DM15; DM17; CS1; CS4 and CS17.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

DS7 Design Guide for Residential Development (Jan 2010)

Planning History

MB/09/00094

397 space car park with landscaping and access road to serve Arlesey Train Station. Withdrawn 7th April 2009.

Representations: (Parish & Neighbours)

Henlow Parish Council	<p>The Parish Council raises no objection and support the proposed development. However, the following comments are made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) The access is not sufficiently wide and one-way traffic will cause considerable problems. The access should be improved and needs to accommodate two-way traffic.b) Existing car parking in the access road needs to be prevented as soon as the proposed car park is operational.c) Very concerned about egress onto the A507 and suggest that the entrance/exit is improved.d) Ensure that lighting is low level and not intrusive to the location.e) Request that parking for bicycles is provided close to the station within these proposals.
Arlesey Town Council	<p>The Town Council raises no objection and support the application.</p>
Neighbours	<p>There are no comments received.</p>

Consultations/Publicity responses

Highways and Transport Division	<p>No fundamental highway objections raised. However, the impact of this development on the immediate surroundings, is inconclusive. A full assessment of the Highway Safety Implications are covered under a separate heading in this report.</p>
Environment Agency	<p>No objection, subject to conditions.</p>

Flood Risk

We have reviewed the hydraulic model for the site at Arlesey train station. We consider the model is over estimating the flood risk for the site due to the hydrological method and the floodplain geometry used. We would normally recommend changes to the model to give a more accurate picture of flood risk; this could ultimately save you costs in the long run. However, we have recently conducted new modelling for the catchment resulting in a change to the Flood Map.

Our modelling is now complete and we aim to publish the information at the end of July 2010. This information is an improvement on the data we have previously had available to ourselves and will show your site to be at a reduced risk of flooding and mainly outside of Flood Zone 3 (1 in 100 chance of flooding in any year). We have only just received the revised data and it is now available at

a small cost, this information could be used instead of reviewing your own model.

Please contact Graham Verrier (Flood Risk Mapping and Data Management Team Leader) Tel: 01480 483905 for the revised data.

Groundwater

Environment Agency position

We consider that planning permission should only be granted to the proposed development as submitted if the following planning conditions are imposed as set out below. Without these conditions, the proposed development on this site poses an unacceptable risk to the environment and we would wish to object to the application.

Bedfordshire and River
Ivel Internal Drainage
Drainage Board (IDB)

The Internal Drainage Board has written raising an objection to the grant of planning permission because the proposed development lies within 7 metres of a watercourse and would be contrary to the Byelaw. As such, it is likely to adversely impact on the Board's maintenance of watercourse 141 and the spread and levelling of arisings there from.

On the other hand, the Board has advised that if the Council is minded to grant planning permission, this should be subject to suggested conditions. The ramification of this proposal is further expanded in their comments:

This site is within the Board's drainage district, to the east of watercourse 141 and to the west of the main River Hiz. The site is partially within Flood Zone 3 of the main river. The flood zone extends from the main river some 110 m to 130m west of watercourse 141.

Whereas the Board's Byelaw provides that no development shall take place within 7m of bank top of watercourse 141 without the formal consent of the Board, the car park layout shown on drawing 2698/504 appears to indicate that the edge of the car park structure is within the Byelaw distance. An objection is, therefore, raised to the grant of planning permission because the development as proposed is within the Byelaw width and is likely to adversely impact on the Board's maintenance of watercourse 141 and the spread and levelling of arisings there from. This objection is to the structure of the car park, landscaping, fencing or any other obstructions which would impede watercourse maintenance.

The Board's Byelaw is shortly to be revised to in line with the other Board's in the Bedford Group and in line with the

Environment Agency's Byelaw. On revision, the reserved strip will be 9m wide from top of bank of the watercourse. If the proposals layout can be re-drawn therefore to show that there will be no encroachment into a reserved strip 9m wide along the top of bank of watercourse 141, then this objection will be withdrawn. I estimate that re-drawing of the layout is likely to result in a reduction of 10 car parking spaces.

The applicant's architect Wastell & Porter kindly provided me with a copy of the Flood Risk Assessment which I had previously requested from yourself. I am aware that the Environment Agency have called for additional hydraulic modelling which has been provided but at the time of writing this response to you I am not aware of the outcome. The historic flood level of 36.45m AOD in 1947, however, agrees with information held by the Board. If the EA are satisfied that the modelled flood levels of 36.80m AOD (1 in 100 year event) and 36.95m AOD (1 in 100 year + 20%cc) are a reasonable indication of the likely flood level, the Board will accept this finding. The FRA recommends a soffit level of 37.250m AOD minimum which gives a freeboard of 300mm between 1 in 100 year +20%cc flood level and soffit. Where water is passing under bridge structures the Board's recommendation is that 600mm be the required freeboard in order to deter floating debris from becoming wedged below the soffit.

Ecology Officer

I have read through this and the extended habitat survey accompanying application 10/00908. I am satisfied from the reports that there will be no immediate ecological impact from the developments, however I would hope that if permission is granted conditions are in place to secure a net gain to biodiversity.

The River Hiz is a County Wildlife Site and should be protected during any construction works to prevent damage to its banks and any polluted run off from entering the river. The habitat survey report discusses habitat enhancements for the riparian corridor to benefit water voles and otter and I would agree that these should be recommended should permission be granted.

Both applications will result in the need for additional lighting and as both are adjacent to the River Hiz corridor there is a potential for such schemes to have a detrimental effect on bats foraging in the area. The use of artificial lighting should be kept to a minimum within the river corridor zone and buffered where possible to allow for minimal light spillage. The provision of bat boxes within retained trees as part of 938 is desirable.

Landscape Officer

I understand the principle of a car park on this site has been agreed but having studied the application documents

and visited the site I do have concerns regarding the proposals in relation to visual impact on local landscape character:

1. Capacity of the proposed peripheral planting to adequately screen and integrate development within the surrounding landscape.
2. Visual impact of lighting and CCTV.
3. Proposed internal site planting – growing conditions and species.

The site and surrounds lie within the Upper Ivel Clay Valley Landscape Character Area, as described in the Mid Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment. The LCA provides a description of landscape character, key sensitivities and provides guidance on landscape and development management. The LCA identifies the River Hiz and associated pasture and wet woodlands as providing a strong sense of place, forming important habitats and biodiversity corridors and offering valuable opportunities for recreation.

The LCA describes a landscape strategy for enhancement of water meadows and woodlands and to create new features to strengthen the river valley character including additional tree planting to screen harsh urban / development boundaries. The LCA specifically highlights the potential impact of car parking on the tranquil character of river corridors.

1. The capacity of the proposed peripheral structure planting to mitigate the development is doubtful and requires greater depth / width and variety of planting, including under-storey, to the east, north and west elevations.
2. The need for inclusion of lighting and CCTV is understood in relation to personal safety and security of property but the impact of lighting at night can be visually intrusive for considerable distances - and be detrimental to habitats and wildlife. Whilst I understand it is the intention to operate lighting on a timer basis the proposed 24 hour CCTV coverage will likely require adequate lighting levels throughout hours of darkness in order to operate effectively. This places an additional onus on the peripheral structure planting to reduce the visual intrusion of lighting from the site into the surrounding landscape.
3. The proposed planting within the site is of concern particularly with regard to the planting of trees

within what is in effect a concrete planter. Concrete is a highly porous material and will draw moisture away from planting. If the planters were tanked there is the likelihood that the planters would become waterlogged during winter leading to root rot. The design appears to offer no area for growth / penetration of roots (ref. Drawing No. PL05: there appears to be a solid concrete base immediately below the rootballs) which will result in trees not able to extract water or become stable and will result in loss of trees. Such a design would also impact on shrubs becoming established and thriving unless there was commitment by the Applicant to ensure an intensive landscape management plan for the duration of the site as a car park. The rationale supporting the proposed mix of trees and shrubs is not clear; Populus tend to have 'thirsty' roots and would not be successful in an elevated concrete surround.

Tree Officer

It would be preferable to incorporate additional species to include salix alba, salix caprea and alnus glutinosa in the area to the east and northern boundaries which are proposed to be planted with Black Poplar. Adjacent to the eastern boundary, there are a number of old pollarded Willows and it is hoped that the inclusion of salix alba on the eastern boundary could lead to future management of these new trees as pollards, to eventually replace the old pollards on the opposite bank. Full details are required of planting species, sizes, preparation of site, aftercare and maintenance.

Natural England

Natural England has no further comments in respect of any statutorily designated sites. The reason for this view is that we consider it unlikely that the proposal will have a substantial effect on the special interest features of any such sites. However, the proposed car park is located between two County Wildlife Site (CWS), lying directly west of the Rivers Ivel and Hiz CWS and approximately 250 metres east of Arlesey Road Pit CWS. The proposal may have implications for these sites (in particular increased pollution and flooding through surface water run-off, but also restriction of wildlife movement between the sites and increased lighting along the river corridor).

Based on the information provided in the previous Ecological report, Natural England has no further comment to the proposals with regards to legally protected/BAP species as we are not aware that they are likely to be significantly impacted by the development.

Access Officer

No comments received with regard to disabled access.

Arlesey Conservation for Nature The Group have no objection in principle for the proposals for a car park on the Henlow side of the railway. The following comments are summarised below:

- The car park would be visible from the Glebe Meadows. Perhaps, subject to no riparian restraints being in place that some low level indigenous hedging could be planted to screen the cars.
- We have always assumed that on leaving the Station and the Glebe Meadows to return to Arlesey that you pass under the A507 using the road (with passing places) on the northern side of the bridge, then turn left onto the A507. We do not understand the need to go to Henlow and turn round at the roundabout. However, we do find turning left from Arlesey, you do have to make a U-turn. This is more challenging especially with trailer on when commuter cars are parked right up to the end of the road.
- Parking restrictions must be placed and enforced along the access roads with particular attention paid to the passing points along the northern access road.

Determining Issues

The main considerations of the application are:

1. Principle of the Development
2. Impact of Development on Character and Appearance of the Area
3. Impact of Development on Neighbouring Properties
4. Highway Safety Implications
5. Biodiversity Issues
6. Other Issues

Considerations

1. Principle of the Development

This development lies outside the settlements of Arlesey and Henlow respectively. The proposed development is assessed against Policies CS1; CS4; CS17; DM3; DM4; DM14; DM15 and DM17.

Policy CS1 of the Central Bedfordshire and Core Strategy and Development Management Policies (2009), states that Arlesey is categorised as a '*Minor Service Centre*'. As such, it is expected that the town will grow to bring forward large-scale new mixed-use development, including significant improvements in levels of service and local traffic conditions, together with substantial areas of new publicly accessible green infrastructure.

The proposed site has a number of planted trees, which are mostly poplars and covers an area of approximately one hectare in size. The northern extent of the site borders Kingfisher Way, a valuable Green Corridor.

The site is located opposite the railway station, to the North West of Arlesey. The site is outside of the Settlement Envelope, separated by the railway lines. It is considered that the site is detached from the settlement envelope.

The Infrastructure Audit, a technical document in support of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document, highlights the need for increased car parking for the rail station. However it does not state the level of need required.

Policy CS1 identifies that Arlesey will require significant improvements, in terms of service provision and local traffic conditions. This policy also identifies that enhancements will be undertaken at Arlesey Station, and additional railway station car parking space provided.

The Council's Highways team is working on a scheme to formalise the access road as a one way system, to widen the pinch point on the southern access slip road to accommodate caravans and commercial vehicles, close the left out facility at the northern access, and with the exception of the existing bays, to introduce parking restrictions along its length.

In considering this application, the Highways Officer visited the site on Monday 26th April, and found that the existing Network Rail car park located on the opposite side of the railway to the application site had capacity for a total of 97 spaces, and that there were 43 spaces unused. In addition, a total of 99 cars were parked on the access road leading to the station. In terms of the works intended to be undertaken by the Highways team on the access road, there will be space provided for 18 cars as part of these works, and this leaves a notional requirement for 81 parking spaces. However, when the vacant spaces are included within the existing station car park, the shortfall of spaces reduces to 38 spaces. Whilst this assessment does not take into account the likely increase in passengers using Arlesey station due to planned growth in the town and surroundings settlements, this proposal for a 390 space car park is significantly in excess of the current needs of the station, and that probably required for several years to come.

It is clear that commuters would rather park for free on the access road, given the number of vacant spaces in the Network Rail car park. With the implementation of parking controls, most commuters will have to choose between paying for parking, not using their cars to access the station, or attempt to park on existing roads around the station. To a degree, the extent that any new car park would be used by the public would depend on the costs associated with the use of the facility.

The Design and Access Statement states that between 2002 and 2007 there has been an average annual increase in the use of the station of 11%, and that there is a substantial lack of parking within the area of the train station. However, no detailed justification for 390 spaces has been provided.

There is significant support for sustainable development at both a national and local level, and the provision of accessible public transport is a key factor in meeting this aim. The Council would want to encourage the use of public transport, although the focus should be in accessing buses and trains either by

foot or by cycle. Clearly, there will be many people living in outlying villages who will have little alternative but to drive to the station.

Whilst Arlesey station and the rail service is a very important local facility, it is not considered that a need has been demonstrated for a car park of this size on land outside the settlement envelope. For the above reasons the principle of the development is not considered to be acceptable.

2. Impact of Development on Character and Appearance of the Area

As already evidenced in the submission of this application, there are concerns regarding the proposal in relation to visual impact on local landscape character especially, the capacity of the proposed peripheral planting to adequately screen and integrate development within the surrounding landscape, the visual impact of lighting, CCTV and the proposed internal site planting and the growing conditions and species.

The site and surrounds lie within the Upper Ivel Clay Valley Landscape Character Area, as described in the Mid Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment. The LCA provides a description of landscape character, key sensitivities and provides guidance on landscape and development management. The LCA identifies the River Hiz and associated pasture and wet woodlands as providing a strong sense of place, forming important habitats and biodiversity corridors and offering valuable opportunities for recreation.

The design of the large-scale car park would impact on trees particularly, loss of woodland and poplar crop and preventing them from becoming established and thriving. As already advised, the rationale supporting the proposed mix of trees and shrubs is not clear as Populus tend to have 'thirsty' roots and would not be successful in an elevated concrete surround.

As the proposed site lies outside the settlements of both Arlesey and Henlow, the adverse impact of such a large-scale car parking with flood lighting, Close Circuit Camera (CCTV), would result in harm to the character and appearance of the area in the absence of adequate justification for the number of spaces proposed.

3. Impact of Development on Neighbouring Properties

The proposed development does not adjoin any residential properties. The nearest residential properties are situated in Old Oak Close, which is at a considerable distance away across the railway foot bridge to the east of the Station. As such, there would be no adverse impact on any residential property.

4. Highway Safety Implications

In addition to confirming their intention to implement parking controls on the slip road which provides access to the station, the Highways team have highlighted that the car park would access onto the A507 which is the main east/west strategic Road. All traffic wishing to travel east will need to undertake a U-turns at the A507/A6001 roundabout. No assessment has been undertaken regarding the impact on the roundabout and they are therefore unable to determine the impact of the proposal.

Whilst they raise no objections to the proposal, the Highways team recommend conditions which would require the applicant to modify the southern access, and to undertake works to the access road to allow the implementation of parking

controls.

5. Biodiversity Issues

The Council has considered this proposal and is satisfied from the submitted reports that there will be no immediate ecological impact from the proposed development. This is confirmed from the comments received from Natural England. It is advised that the Council has, within its *duty to conserve biodiversity*, that it has exercised its functions under 'Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006', to have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.

6. Other Issues

It is advised that a similar planning application has been submitted by Network Rail to the west of the railway platform for 75 car parking spaces, 6 motorcycle spaces and 3 disabled parking. This application has been withdrawn due to inadequate and insufficient information contained in the submitted Flood Risk Assessment which resulted in objections from the Environment Agency.

In terms of this application, the Environment Agency has raised no objections in terms of flood risk and groundwater contamination, subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions.

Reasons for Refusal

The proposed development is considered unacceptable by virtue of its location outside the 'Settlement Envelope', its large scale and no adequate justification for the level of parking spaces proposed in such a location, thus resulting in detriment of the character and appearance of the area. The proposed development therefore, is contrary to Policies DM3; DM4 and DM14 of the Central Bedfordshire Core Strategy and Development Management Policies (2009).

Recommendation

That Planning Permission be refused subject to the following:

- 1 The proposed development is considered unacceptable by virtue of its location outside the 'Settlement Envelope' and the adverse impact it would have on the character and appearance of the area and local landscape, due to visual intrusion, impact of light pollution, its large-scale and a lack of adequate justification for the amount of parking proposed. As such, the proposal would be contrary to Policies DM3; DM4 and DM14 of the Central Bedfordshire Core Strategy and Development Management Policies (2009).

DECISION

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