



5 Woodlands Way
Ashtead
KT21 1LH
Telephone: 01372 274925
Email: rbennett@dsl.pipex.com

23 February 2018

The Chief Planning Officer
Mole Valley District Council
Pippbrook
Dorking
Surrey
RH14 1SJ

Dear Sir,

Planning Application; MO/2018/0004PLAMAJ

Location: Land at Langley Vale, South of Downs Road, and East of Headley Road, Headley Epsom

This letter deals specifically with the car parking proposals contained in the above planning application and offers an alternative solution to the proposed traffic route. It should be read in conjunction with our second letter, dated **26 February, 2018**, which also discusses the traffic route proposals but covers wider issues.

Car Park Location Selection Criteria

We have a number of comments on the PlanServ Sequential Test – Car Park report, dated April 2015, which we consider contains errors that have perhaps resulted in the wrong selection of a car park location.

- Number 1 (with a score of 8) was *Field at Junction of Headley Road/Langley Vale Road* (should say Downs Road to be correct). Number 2 (with a score of 7) was *Field along Langley Vale Road*.
- Both sites are outside of the Woodland Trust 0 to 4 miles criteria from the M25, but we assume that this indicates the Woodland Trust's priority to be line of sight to the nearest M25 junction.

- The Woodland Trust site size requirement is 3.5 hectares: both locations are above this requirement, but one has a positive score and the other a negative. The *Field along Langley Vale Road* should be a score of 8.
- The *Field at Headley Road* site has a walking distance of 644m to the nearest bus stop - on dangerous lanes, with no footpath - and it is marked down. The *Field along Langley Vale Road* site, although having an existing bus route along one side, is also marked down in the report. In our view it should have been a positive, so giving the *Field along Langley Vale Road* a final score of 9.

Conclusion: the *Field along Langley Vale Road* should have been the selected site of the car park, being clearly the winner in the sequential test. The importance of this will be clear later in these notes.

The preferred route for all vehicles to/from the A24 and hence M25

There are already Established Routes from the A24 to the area of the Downs:

- From Epsom and locations north; up Ashley Avenue and down Langley Vale Road.
- From Ashted and locations southwest (M25); via Woodcote Side and Wilmerhatch Lane discussed next. As well as being the existing established bus route, it is also referred to locally as the “Racecourse” route or also the “Derby” route.

Here below is the existing traffic sign on the A24 going north, just before Woodcote Side, Epsom.



Here below is the existing corresponding traffic sign on the A24 going south, for the same turning.



Here below is the entrance to Woodcote Side on the A24, to which the above traffic signs are directing traffic. Plus a double decker bus to emphasise we are discussing an existing bus route to the Downs.



It can be clearly seen that this is not a narrow constricted Lane of the type found in Ashtead.



Here below is the traffic sign immediately opposite Woodcote Side on the A24, both pointing the way home for visitors and assisting arriving visitors at the junction.



Here below is the point where Woodcote Side becomes Wilmerhatch Lane.

We cannot see that adding Woodland Trust traffic signs to the same posts, used for the signs shown in the photographs above, requires anything but common sense.



Here below is the Downs end of Wilmerhatch Lane (actually Headley Road, Epsom – not to be confused with Headley Road, Mole Valley, the subject of the planning application) where it meets Langley Vale Road, Epsom at its junction with Downs Road, Mole Valley.



Straight on across Langley Vale Road/Downs Road at the junction pictured above and into the fields behind, are two of the car park sites considered by the Woodland Trust:

- To the left the *Field along Langley Road*
- To the right the *Field at Junction of Headley Road* (Mole Valley)

It is reasonable to assume that this should be the opening or entrance for the Woodland Trust car park, whichever Field is eventually used for parking. The proposed visitor centre is located in the *Field along Langley Vale Road* so why is the associated car park not in the same field?

A new bus stop could be located at this junction mentioned above and with a more sensible car park entrance, so visitors on public transport can safely get access to the visitor centre and woods. (The local E5 bus could even circle though the car park stopping at the visitor centre, making it even safer.)

Clearly, we already have is an existing, established, full width, two-way route to/from the A24 used by:

- Single and Double Decker buses services to and from Langley Vale village, plus the Epsom Racecourse on race days.
- Coaches to and from the Epsom Racecourse.
- All other types of vehicular traffic to and from Langley Vale village, Epsom Racecourse and the Downs – cars, delivery trucks, etc.

The established route described above is fully suitable for all heavy construction traffic to/from any Woodland Trust site.

Meetings have occurred in the past with representatives from United Racecourses Epsom & Ewell BC, Reigate & Banstead BC, MVDC, associated Residents' Associations, The AA, SCC Highways and Police – all were involved in establishing this existing route from the A24 to the Downs. This was to protect residents of Ashtead and other conurbations around Epsom Downs.

Why does the Woodland Trust wish to overturn the combined experience of locals and expect that we will accept the opening of a new route to the Downs through the residential south side of Ashtead?

In summary the Woodland Trust should use existing established routes.

Consultation

Why are we now having to be put through the process of objecting and why has the Woodland Trust decided to ignore all and many requests to look into the issues that

were going to be objectionable to the residents of Ashtead? In this respect we should like to refer to a letter of 3 January 2015 from our Association to Mr Simon Bateman of The Woodland Trust recommending “The Derby route” that sadly was ignored at the time and has been totally disregarded in the meantime.

- At the few meetings to which Ashtead residents were invited, we were told that the Woodland Trust relied totally on their advisors and will go with their advice.
- There is no evidence that the Woodland Trust set criteria such as: avoid significant residential areas/roads, avoid narrow roads and tight junctions – because that was apparently not in their interest.
- In the Woodland Trust’s 2015 Scoping Report, the response phrases “Out of Scope” and “Will be covered under planning” was used for; drainage, car park entrance on Langley Vale Road site plus route access for coaches, caravans in the car park, anti-social behaviour, onsite security, statutory highways signage, tight narrow roads in the area, increase in visitors to the area and congested road junctions.

We have many misgivings about the planning application as submitted and recommend that a more detailed appraisal is undertaken with the adjoining Borough Councils immediately to reconcile our concerns and those expressed by the residents of Ashtead.

Yours faithfully

Roger Bennett

Roger Bennett - Planning Officer