

Transport Note

Subject: Review of Transport Planning Statement for AL/70/11
Site: Woodgate Centre, Oak Tree Lane, Woodgate
Prepared by: Fiona Thorp, Transport Planner
Checked by: Phil Bell, Director
Date: 10th October 2011

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This transport note reviews the Transport Planning Statement (April 2011) prepared by Russell Giles Partnership (RGP) in support of an outline planning application submitted to Arun District Council (planning reference: AL/70/11) for redevelopment of the Woodgate Centre, Woodgate to provide 940 sqm of commercial development (use class B1).

1.2 The Transport Planning Statement concludes that the proposed redevelopment will not give rise to additional traffic movements, given there is no proposed net increase in floor area. West Sussex County Council was consulted on the application as Highway Authority and responded in September 2011, indicating that:

"... whilst there could potentially be an increase in total vehicle movements as a result of the proposal... any increase would not be anticipated to have a negative impact on highway safety in this location."

1.3 Motion Transport Planning has been appointed by Arun District Council to review the Transport Planning Statement submitted in support of the planning application. In particular, this note considers the traffic generation associated with different uses within land use class B1 and potential implications of any possible increases in traffic resulting from the redevelopment proposals.

2.0 Traffic Generation

2.1 In order to consider whether the redevelopment proposals would result in a change in the level of traffic associated with the site, it is important to understand the existing use of the site, and whether any extant planning consents exist for further development. A comparison of the net change in traffic levels can then be estimated. The following paragraphs seek to establish the existing and consented uses of the application site, and consider the impact of the redevelopment proposals on traffic generation.

Existing Use

2.2 The transport statement states:

"The site currently comprises a selection of buildings which form the Woodgate Centre, with an overall GFA of around 940 sqm." (paragraph 1.2.1)

2.3 The Design and Access Statement (prepared by Planning and Property Consultants Ltd) indicates that a total of 1,703 sqm of floorspace currently exists at the Woodgate Centre, comprising a mix of residential, stabling and B1 uses. The existing site plan (also accompanying the planning application) indicates that this total floor area is comprised of 780 sqm of 'loose boxes' (stabling), 129.68 sqm residential and 794 sqm business units. Part of the residential accommodation and the stabling are outside the application site, but importantly all the business units are within the red-line of the application boundary. There are also two mobile homes located within the application site.

2.4 The actual use of the business units (within land use class B1) is not specified on the application documents. Land Use Class B1 of the Use Classes Order includes offices (B1a), research and development (B1b) and light industry (B1c). There are potentially significant differences between traffic levels associated within these uses, in particular between offices and light industry, as set out later in this review. Having visited the site it is apparent that the existing commercial units are most likely used for light industrial business purposes (land use class B1c).

Consented Development

2.5 There have been a number of planning applications at the Woodgate Centre over recent years. However, it is unclear which consents have been implemented. For completeness, the following paragraphs identify planning permissions relevant to the site, although these are not used to assess consented traffic levels. For the purposes of this review, the existing use of the site (as described above) has been used for considering changes to traffic generation.

2.6 Permission has been granted for B1 uses at the Woodgate Centre (applications AL/86/97 and AL/73/00), which include conditions to restrict the use of the buildings to B1, and ensure that no alterations are made to the buildings without further consent from the Local Planning Authority. In this regard, whilst the lawful use of some of the buildings is for B1 development, which includes offices, the existing buildings on-site are clearly not suitable for such purposes.

- 2.7** Permission has also previously been granted for the storage and maintenance of motor vehicles in connection with an outside catering business (approximately 40 sqm of hard-standing between existing buildings) (AL/58/02), conversion of circa 275 sqm equestrian use to a one-bed unit for holiday accommodation (AL/84/99) and further certificate of lawful uses for four mobile homes, and use of a building as a dwelling.

Redevelopment Proposals

- 2.8** The planning application forms indicate that the proposed 940 sqm B1 commercial space is for light industrial purposes (land use class B1c). However, the Transport Planning Statement includes a number of references to offices, including:

"The development proposals are for the replacement of existing buildings to provide 940 sqm GFA of B1 Office land use." (paragraph 1.2.4)

- 2.9** The traffic generation analysis included within the submitted transport report provides a range of trip rates relating to the existing trip generating potential of the B1 commercial use of the site (B1c data indicating a lower trip rate and B1a illustrating a higher rate).

Trip Generation

- 2.10** In order to compare the existing and proposed level of vehicular traffic associated with the application site, reference has been made to the 'employment' land use category within the TRICS database (2011b v.6.8.2) for offices and industrial units, for all sites in England. Weekday surveys were selected for all sites located on the edge of town centre / town, suburban area and neighbourhood centre with floor areas up to 2,500 sqm (including older surveys from the year 2000 in order to ensure sufficient surveys were included).

- 2.11** Table 2.1 below provides a summary of the trip rates established from TRICS relevant to B1 land uses, having regard to the parameters outlined above. It is clear from this trip rate information that light industrial has a lower trip rate than office use.

Land Use	Morning Peak (08:00 – 09:00)		Evening Peak (17:00 – 18:00)		24 Hour	
	In	Out	In	Out	In	Out
Trip Rates (per 100 sqm)						
Offices	2.43	0.285	0.385	2.303	10.227	9.516
Industrial Unit	0.598	0.119	0.054	0.554	2.912	2.945

Table 2.1 – B1 Land Use Trip Rates

- 2.12** The trip rates set out in Table 2.1 are applied to the existing and proposed B1 floor areas for in Table 2.2 in order to be able to compare traffic generation of the two scenarios.

Traffic flows (Vehicles)	Morning Peak		Evening Peak		24 Hour	
	In	Out	In	Out	In	Out
Existing: 794 sqm						
B1c (light industrial)	5	1	0	4	23	23
Proposed: 940 sqm						
B1c (light industrial)	6	1	1	2	27	28
B1a (office)	23	3	7	22	96	89

Table 2.2 – Existing and Proposed B1 Land Use Traffic Flows

Net Change in Vehicular Traffic

- 2.13** It is evident from Table 2.2 that the existing B1 floor area (794 sqm) could generate a maximum of 6 vehicular trips in any hour. With regard to the redevelopment proposals, the new B1 floor area (940 sqm) could generate between 7 and 29 two-way trips in any hour, depending on the resulting B1 use. Having regard to the total daily vehicular trips, it is clear that the redevelopment proposals could therefore result in a net increase of between 9 and 139 vehicular trips to the site per day.
- 2.14** Whilst an increase of 146 sqm B1 floorspace (within land use class B1c) would not result in a material increase in traffic visiting the site, a change in B1 use (from B1c to B1a) would clearly result in a significant rise in vehicular traffic. The next section of this review therefore focuses on the potential implications of an increase in traffic under this scenario.

3.0 Traffic Impact

- 3.1** If the application proposals seek to redevelop the site with 940 sqm B1 office development, it is clear that this could result in a net increase in vehicular traffic visiting the site, compared to the existing light industrial use of the site. This section considers whether the impact of this additional traffic can be safely accommodated on the adjoining local highway network and access road, having regard to the amenity of adjoining occupiers.
- 3.2** Existing access to the Woodgate Centre is via an access road which continues off Oak Tree Lane. The Transport Planning Statement indicates that around 37 dwellings are served from Oak Tree Lane (34 within a residential estate, and three served by the access track).
- 3.3** In broad terms, residential dwellings generate around 6 trips per day¹. On this basis, residential units located off Oak Tree Lane (37 dwellings) have the potential to generate around 222 vehicular trips per day. In this regard, the redevelopment proposals for B1 office

¹ The TRICS database, 'houses privately owned' within England, gives a daily trip rate of 5.18 trips per dwelling

would increase the proportion of vehicles along the road by around 60%, based on a net increase in traffic associated with the site of 139 vehicles (as set out in the previous section).

- 3.4** This represents a significant intensification of use of both Oak Tree Lane and the access road leading to the Woodgate Centre, and it should be considered whether this would impact on the amenity of adjoining residential premises. Further implications of such an increase in traffic in relation to transport and highways are considered below.

Level Crossing on Lidsey Road

- 3.5** Having visited the site, it is evident that there are existing issues with queuing and congestion around the junction of Oak Tree Lane with Lidsey road (A29), as a result of the existing level crossing to the north. Indeed, the submitted transport report identifies that two serious accidents have occurred in this location.
- 3.6** The above potential increase in traffic using this junction will increase congestion at this point, and create further delays and road safety issues for existing highway users. It is therefore considered that the redevelopment proposals could interfere with the free-flow of traffic and road safety of the adjoining highway network.

Access Road and Oak Tree Lane

- 3.7** It is understood that Oak Tree Lane is 5.5 metres wide. However, whilst the Transport Planning Statement includes swept path analyses for a 16.5 metre articulated vehicle accessing and turning within the site via Oak Tree Lane and the private access road, this does not appear to demonstrate that the access road is sufficiently wide to accommodate two-way vehicular traffic.
- 3.8** An increase in traffic using the existing access road could to increase the opportunity for vehicular conflict along the road. In particular, there are limited opportunities for passing, which could result in vehicles reversing along the access road, potentially long distances.
- 3.9** The Transport Planning Statement indicates that the access road operates as a shared surface. An increase in vehicular traffic using the existing unlit narrow access track is therefore likely to create a safety issue for pedestrians and cyclists accessing the site.

4.0 Policy Issues

- 4.1** Planning policy relevant to consider in assessing the redevelopment proposals is set out in Planning Policy Guidance 13 (PPG13, updated in 2011), the South East Plan (May 2009) and the 'saved' policies of the adopted Arun District Local Plan (2003).

Accessibility and Location of Development

- 4.2** PPG13, paragraph 19 refers to accessibility and states:

"A key planning objective is to ensure that jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services are accessible by public transport, walking, and cycling."

- 4.3** Paragraph 32 of PPG13 relates to B1 offices, and reaffirms that such development should be located as far as possible on sites highly accessible by public transport, walking and cycling.
- 4.4** Policy GEN2 of the adopted Local Plan relates to the location of development and indicates that development proposals, including applications for redevelopment will not be permitted outside the built-up area boundary where they are not consistent with other policies of the Local Plan. The site is situated outside the built-up area as defined on the proposals map.
- 4.5** Policy GEN7 sets out local policy relevant to the form of new development. With regard to transport, it is clear from this policy that proposals should seek to reduce the need to travel, especially by car; development should allow for the safe movement of pedestrians and vehicles; and provide parking for vehicles in accordance with adopted policy / standards.
- 4.6** The Transport Planning Statement sets out the opportunities for accessing the application site by the more sustainable forms of transport. However, opportunities for travel by public transport are limited given the site is situated 4 kilometres from the nearest rail station, and only 9 bus services per day call at nearby stops located along Lidsey Road (A29). It is important to consider the door-to-door journey of employees in considering whether alternative modes to the private car are attractive.
- 4.7** Further, whilst the site is accessible on foot, pedestrian links to the site, namely along the access road, are not lit, and operate as a shared surface. It is therefore likely that travel by employees to the site on foot will not be an attractive option, particularly in the darker winter months. This is further likely to reinforce car dependence for access to the site. The level of parking proposed (40 car parking bays), is further likely to increase the propensity for private car travel to the site.

- 4.8** It is considered that the application site is not in a suitable location for office development, having regard to national and local policy and the overall options for travel by sustainable means, notwithstanding the fact that the site benefits from an existing B1 use.

Parking Provision

- 4.9** Local Plan policy GEN12 indicates that parking provision in excess of maximum adopted standards will not be permitted. Arun District Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance on Parking Standards (October 2000) sets a maximum standard for B1 development of 1 car parking space per 20 sqm for up to 240 sqm (12 spaces), plus 1 space per 25 sqm for remaining floorspace, in this case a further 28 spaces. This equates to a total of 40 parking spaces. Ten per cent of total provision should be provided for visitors. Cycle parking should be provided at a ratio of 1 space per 8 parking spaces (i.e. 5 spaces). These standards are repeated in Appendix 2 of the adopted Local Plan (2003).
- 4.10** Parking standards set out by West Sussex County Council (November 2003, updated September 2010) indicate a maximum standard of 1 space per 30 sqm for B1 development (a maximum of 32 spaces), which is consistent with the aims of regional and national policy.
- 4.11** The proposals make provision for 40 car parking spaces, two HGV parking bays and cycle parking for up to 10 bicycles. The application forms indicate that the existing parking provision on-site is undefined. This provision is therefore in accordance with adopted local standards, but exceeds standards set out by West Sussex County Council.
- 4.12** The Transport Planning Statement indicates that this level of parking is proposed to ensure adequate parking is provided on-site, so as not to impact on the private residential road nearby. It is considered that the level of parking proposed within the application is further indicative of the limited options for sustainable travel to the site.

5.0 Summary and Conclusions

- 5.1** Motion has been appointed by Arun District Council to review the Transport Planning Statement submitted in support of an outline planning application for redevelopment of the Woodgate Centre, Oak Tree Lane with 940 sqm (B1) commercial development.
- 5.2** This note focuses on the potential increase in traffic associated with the redevelopment proposals and the implications of this increase. It is understood from the application documents that the redevelopment proposals will result in an increase of 146 sqm B1 floorspace. Based on the existing land of the site being B1c (light industrial), an increase in B1c floorspace would not result in a material increase in traffic visiting the site.

5.3 However, a change in use from B1c (light industrial) to B1a (office) would clearly result in a significant rise in vehicular traffic. This review demonstrates that in such circumstances, the redevelopment has the potential to result in a net increase of circa 139 vehicular trips per day to the site. This additional traffic equates to around a 60% increase in traffic using Oak Tree Lane, and may impact on the amenity of adjoining residents. It is also considered that this potential increase in traffic could impact on the free-flow of traffic on the adjoining highway network and be detrimental to the safety of other highway users.

5.4 In conclusion, it is therefore considered that redevelopment of the site with 940 sqm B1c would be acceptable in traffic terms, whilst proposals for B1a leads to concerns relating to highway safety, and possible concerns relating to residential amenity.

Neil Crowther

From: Phil Bell [REDACTED]
Sent: 21 September 2011
To: Neil Crowther
Subject: Woodgate Centre, Oak Tree Lane, Woodgate - AL70/11

Neil,

Further to our telephone conversation yesterday, I have now carried out an initial review of the Transport Planning Statement prepared by Russell Giles Partnership. Thus far, I am not convinced by the argument that the proposals will not lead to an increase in traffic movements. As far as I can tell, the existing buildings on the site are in B1c (light industrial) use which, while falling within the broad B1 use class, would generate significantly less traffic than the proposed B1a (office) use. It is noteworthy that RGP's 'high' traffic generation assessment is based on Surrey County Council's offices in Guildford, which gives an indication of the type of occupier they feel they might be able to attract. Even if the existing buildings were in office use, I assume that such an operator would not lease the buildings in their current form and therefore simply replacing the buildings with the modern equivalent would lead to an increase in traffic. On the basis of these points, I recommend that a more detailed review be carried out to include the following:

1. Liaison with ADC to verify the lawful use(s) of the site along with any planning restrictions.
2. Undertaking a site visit to further understand existing uses, verify car parking provision, check highway geometry on Oak Tree Lane, etc (NB permission will be required to access the site).
3. Carrying out a more detailed comparison of the existing and proposed uses in terms of traffic generation, car parking provision/demand, HGV turning provision, etc.
4. Assessing impact of any additional traffic and suitability of Oak Tree Lane and Lidsey Road (including level crossing) to accommodate such traffic safely.
5. Presentation of findings in a letter style report.

Our fee for this work would be £1,500 plus disbursements and VAT. We are able to commence work immediately and should be in a position to circulate our findings within around a week of receiving formal instructions.

I trust that you find this information useful and look forward to assisting you with this matter.

Regards,

Phil.

Phil Bell, Director
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