

Aude Pantel

From:
Sent: 19 April 2013 15:57
To: Spatial Planning
Subject: 130419- Revised DSA submission re changes Policy MM11 Policy MM11 page 46

Dear Sir,
Please accept this revised submission and substitute it for my previous one as agreed earlier with Mr Barlow

J d burnham

Planning Policy Team 19 April 2013
Wycombe District Council

by email

Examination of the Wycombe Delivery and Site Allocations Plan – Consultations of the partial revocation of the South East Plan

Dear Sir,

My comments concerning the Inspectors modifications following his examination of the DSA Plan are as follows:

Policy MM11 page 46 MR4 Portlands Gardens, Marlow.

I wholeheartedly support these most welcome, unexpected and locally unpublicised changes

If the changes are approved, the removal of the link road will produce a long list of benefits for Marlow. At long last, that removal and the other changes, will advance the prospect of a long standing neglected, derelict site at the heart of Marlow Town Centre’s Conservation Area, being developed with much needed housing, including affordable homes. The changes now proposed provide the optimum opportunity to design a layout which is free from the noise and pollution caused by through traffic, and unencumbered by the constraints of, having to re-provide on Portland Gardens the parking spaces displaced from West Street Car Park, or of having to provide rear servicing facilities to surrounding properties. West Street Car Park will be preserved, since there will no longer be any need to construct a new road junction which would have been so environmentally damaging, and the town’s historic rectilinear road pattern would be retained intact. The Brewery housing would be spared of the problems associated with through traffic.

It is astonishing that the link road and its protected line has been able to survive for the twenty three years since it was protected in 1990. How is it, that the road has until now, somehow emerged unscathed throughout endless rounds of consultation associated with the stage events listed below, when it should have been abandoned years ago?

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It is also extraordinary that against that background, it appears that at no time, has the idea of accessing the Portlands Gardens development exclusively from the South, been floated before.

The only explanation appears to be that Buckinghamshire County Council Highways (BCCH) Department were, or were seen to be, so adamant that the road was essential on highway grounds, that it stifled any debate on the subject. Faced with that situation the only alternative to frustrate the plan was to argue for Portland Gardens to be accessed from West Street, with a just a connection to the Brewery site (now Malthouse Way) for emergency vehicles. That was a pragmatic line to take. I did so myself. I was wrong to do so.

Below is a summary review of the key events that relate to the link road, and the endless rounds of public consultations throughout the intervening years since the line of the road was protected in 1990 .

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One of the town's most controversial planning application was for a large superstore on the combined Brewery/Portlands site. Public opinion opposed the scheme, and although in March 1994 the application was withdrawn, it became the catalyst for WDC to consider how these two large town centre sites should be developed

WDC set up a Working party in April 1994 and the Council adopted the Working Party's Brewery / Portlands report in March 1995 which set the following objectives;-

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- e) **That it is desirable that any development on the site includes the construction of the Pound Lane to West Street link road.***
- f) **That it is accepted that the link road will fulfil an important role in the highways network and to maximise this it is accepted that an alternative to the present protected line may be more appropriate, subject to there not being an excessively adverse impact on the fabric of the town and character of the conservation area.***
- g) That it is essential that the development of the site makes provision for rear servicing to as many properties in West Street/High Street as possible.*

Although no evidence was provided to justify those objectives, the link road remained, set in stone, frozen in the Wycombe District Local Plan to 2001 which the Council adopted in July 1995.

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This became the Marlow Parking and Transportation Study (MP&TS) which was to be, and still is, of major relevance when considering the changes to the link road.

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The following extracts are from The Council's brief for the study (2/98):-

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Identify the extent of problems relating to servicing arrangements in High Street, Spittal Street and West Street and opportunities for improvements.

Assess whether a convincing justification remains for the link road in the context of other measures which might be proposed, eg were the use of the suspension bridge to be further restricted or even closed, and having regard to the existing grant of planning permission for Berkeley Homes, the likely adverse impact upon the historic townscape and the necessary land take.

Assess where the balance of advantage lies in continuing to promote the new link road and review the line of the new link proposed in the District Local Plan. **Comment on what would be an appropriate scale and geometry of the new link road.**

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- (1) Reduced usage of the High Street
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The paper concluded with an explanation of the “Do-minimum” Approach and offered 4 Packages, which showed how different elements could fit together. The final strategy could contain elements from different packages.

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Package 2 built on Package 1, provided for the **construction of a new link road**; and for the use of the High Street to be limited to local traffic.

Among the key impacts of the package was that conditions in the High Street would improve significantly, but **conditions adjacent to the new route worsen significantly elsewhere**.

Package 3

The main differences between this and Package 2 is that this package removed traffic from Marlow Bridge and the High Street.

Package 4

This differs from package 3 in that it removes on-street parking from the High Street, West Street and St Peter's Street and traffic is removed from the High Street and use restricted to access only within Spittal Street and the eastern part of West Street.

Among the key impacts of both Packages 3 and 4 is that;-

“conditions adjacent to the new route worsen significantly elsewhere,”

None of the plans associated with the packages showed the link road.

An urgent round of meetings were held to consider the Consultation paper. A MP&TS consultation workshop (5/99), then at a public briefing meeting in (6/99) H/F used 85 slides in a short presentation of the report, of these only 8 mentioned the link road.

- Pedestrianisation (of the High Street) is seen by some as a way forward-however it may only be successful if part of a package, including a link road.
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- Lastly there is an opportunity to construct a new link road to the west of the High Street. This would be funded by new development. Should this be built and what is its role.
- **With the link road conditions will worsen adjacent to the new route.**
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- **Conditions adjacent to link road worsen**
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Consultations continued with BCC/WDC/HF's document "Marlow Parking and Transportation Strategy (12/01)" and yet another questionnaire.

Of the document's three sections only "The Town Centre" is relevant here and residents universally rejected the wide-ranging options it offered.

The document's only reference to the link road confirmed the continued commitment to the construction of the road as one of the means to be adopted in order to meet the aims of the strategy. It was to facilitate rear servicing and/or enable the introduction of measures that reduce overall traffic levels in the High Street. Then the timing of the provision of a link road through Portlands was expected to become clearer when the Local Plan Inspector's recommendations were known in summer 2002.

Portlands Development Brief (adopted in September 2005) (PDB)

The PDB diagrams on Page 20 annotate the link road as follows; -

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Main access point at “The Lion” (now a Thai restaurant) pub

Road network to enable turning of larger vehicles prior to creation of all traffic through route.”

The diagrams indicate the requirement to retain a row of six terrace houses, and two large linear open spaces around the major tree groups. These are additional constraints to be considered together with the need to comply with Policy M5 of The Local Plan to 2011 (adopted January 2004) . Paras g,h,j repeated below;-

- (g) Completion of the link road between the former Brewery site and West Street through West Street car park consistent with the highways requirements and the townscape character of the Conservation Area;
- (h) The replacement in full of car parking lost from the West Street car park through the completion of the link road, at the time of the road construction, unless an alternative approach in accordance with Policy M2 can be secured;
- (i) Secure rear servicing to the frontage premises of High Street and West Street adjacent to the site;

The Diagrams on Page 21 notes;- “Proposed link road form and function to be agreed with Bucks County Council Highways”

Page 22 states that;- “The following urban design principles which will inform future design proposals;-

“The development should not be car dominated. Car parking has to be integrated in the design to create a car-reduced environment and a balance between enough spaces. West Street parking shall be retained on site, or replaced in compliance with policy M2 and M5 of the Local Plan”

“The development must demonstrate that it enables the deliverability of the link road pursuant to the requirements of Bucks County Council Highway Authority, whilst remaining sympathetic to the historic and tight morphology of Marlow Conservation Area.”

“Rear servicing should be considered and provided in accordance with the requirements in the Local Plan where it can be reasonably designed without compromising the quality of the development or the character of the conservation area.”

Only the removal of the link road with its junction with West Street and the retention of the West Street Car Park makes this a realistic possibility, otherwise compliance with these requirements is an unrealistic aim. How on earth can the requirements for parking and traffic be squared with the statement that **;-“ The development should not be car dominated.”**

That is plainly absurd as it clearly would be, if the link road was ever built.

“Vehicular access and circulation Local Plan policy M5 requires the completion of the link road between West Street and Malthouse Way. In consultation with Bucks County Council Highways, development will be required to make provision for the link road. The road should be flexible in its design so that it can be adapted to meet highway requirements and capacity changes in the future. In the first instance the road should make provision for buses,

pedestrians and cyclists. Feedback from the public consultation events highlighted a strong feeling that this should not provide a general through traffic route at this time, although its design should not preclude this from happening in the future. The road must be designed to achieve natural traffic calming and must be appropriate in its design to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The site has the potential for access by vehicles from West Street in the north and Malthouse Way in the south. The extent to which traffic is spread between these two access points will be decided in relation to the location of the no-through link for general traffic.”

The sentence repeated below is clearly a sop to those long standing supporters of the link road :-

“Given that Feedback from the public consultation events highlighted a strong feeling that this should not provide a general through traffic route at this time, its design should not preclude this from happening in the in the future”

Considering the key stages and events outlined above, it is extraordinary to find that the link road has survived for 23 years without any real justification or design. Considering the damaging environmental impact the road, and the junction, would have on the conservation area, it is also extraordinary that BCC has never published any proposal for the road’s junction with West Street, or the design of its route across the West Street Car Park to the boundary of Portland Gardens. That element of design should have been an integral part of the PDB, there can be no excuse for its exclusion from the document. The possible need to acquire part of the adjoining Thai restaurant is another matter upon which silence has descended.

These are legitimate concerns stemming from the two roundabouts designed to BCC requirements in Pound Lane. One serving the Brewery housing estate at the entry to Malthouse Way, which is justified as it, serves the intensely used Pound Lane Car Park. The other roundabout at the entrance to the Wethered Park gated housing estate which is just as large and visually intrusive, is not at all justifiable. If the link road were to proceed, it raises the spectre of BCC insisting upon a roundabout similar to the one serving Wethered Park, for the link road’s junction with West Street. Such a roundabout would seriously and irrevocably damaged the charm of West street, its unusually long rows of listed buildings, and devalue the entire conservation area. The BCC Highways department’s apparent change of heart in supporting the changes to eliminate the link road is a most welcome and unexpected development.

The specific requirements of the PDB contradict the proposed changes being considered here. Therefore should the changes be approved then the PDB will need either to be revised or withdrawn, in which in the later case it, would have to be re-written, and re-approved. Failure to do so would create the potential for conflict between the Local Plan and the PDB, and even more delay, to the development of Portland Gardens. I hope that will not be allowed to happen. For my part, I fully endorse the changes.

The Local Plan incorporating the Adopted Core Strategy July 2008

The Adopted Core Strategy July 2008 includes a significant number of important deletions to the Wycombe District Local Plan to 2011 (As Saved and Extended (2007), which reflect the minimalist approach which residents preferred, as they comprehensively rejected the recommendations of the MP&TS, in correspondence and at public meetings.

Unfortunately time and other matters have prevented me from completing, or refining, my response but I trust that the above has confirmed my total support of the changes.

Were the link road to be retained within the local plan it would be a terrible indictment of Town Planning in the 21st Century.

Yours sincerely
J D Burnham (Mr)

Aude Pantel

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Sent: 19 April 2013 12:40
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Planning Policy Team 19 April 2013
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 Queen Victoria Road
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 Bucks: HP11 1BB by email

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Considering the key stages and events outlined above, it is extraordinary to find that the link road has not only survived for 23 years without any real justification or design. For given the damaging environmental impact the road, and the junction, would have on the conservation area, it is also extraordinary that BCC has never published any proposal for the road’s junction with West Street, or the design of its route across the West Street Car Park to the boundary of Portland Gardens. That element of design should have been an integral part of the PDB, there can be no excuse for its exclusion from the document. The possible need to acquire part of the adjoining Thai restaurant is another matter upon which silence has descended.

These are legitimate concerns stemming from the two roundabouts designed to BCC requirements in Pound Lane. One serving the Brewery housing estate at the entry to Malthouse Way, which is justified as it, serves the intensely used Pound Lane Car Park. The other at the entrance to the Wethered Park gated housing estate which is just as large and visually intrusive, but not at all justifiable.

The specific requirements of the PDB contradict the proposed changes being considered here. Therefore should the changes be approved then the PDB will need either to be revised or withdrawn, re written, and re-approved. Failure to do so would create the potential for conflict with , uncertainty, and even more delay, to the development of Portland Gardens. I hope that will not be allowed to happen. For my part, I fully endorse the changes.

The Local Plan incorporating the Adopted Core Strategy July 2008

The Adopted Core Strategy July 2008 includes a significant number of important deletions to the Wycombe District Local Plan to 2011 (As Saved and Extended (2007), which reflect the minimalist approach that residents preferred as they comprehensively rejected the recommendations of the MP&TS, in correspondence and at public meetings.

Unfortunately time and other matters have prevented me from completing, or I must admit refining, my response but I trust that the above has confirmed my total support of the changes.

Were the link road to be reinstated in the local plan it would be a terrible indictment of Planning in the 21st Century.

Yours sincerely
J D Burnham (Mr)

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