



UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Member for Stansted North: Councillor Alan Dean



Planning Department
Uttlesford District Council
Cc: Essex Highways

9 November 2016

Your ref: UTT/16/2632/FUL

Our ref:AD09111601

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Dear Sirs

REPRESENTATION TO APPLICATION UTT/16/2632/FUL, 14 CAMBRIDGE ROAD, STANSTED CM24 8BZ FOR TEN DWELLINGS AND GROUND FLOOR RETAIL UNIT WITH INDEPENDENT 1ST FLOOR OFFICE AND 1.5 STOREY COMMERCIAL BUILDING.

The design behind this application is an improvement on three past schemes for which applications and appeals were made and lost. Nevertheless, it does not achieve the standard that is expected for this location.

Whilst this is not a planning matter, the proposed scheme probably does not achieve the best market match that could deliver an optimum commercial outcome for the landowner and his agents.

The applicant seeks approval to build ten large, expensive homes in an enclave plot immediately behind a large convenience store and other buildings with old and unattractive rear features to the east of the high street in Stansted Mountfitchet. The applicant proposes that access to the site will be via a narrow (4.8m) road with a footway only on one side. The left side of the access road will be hard up against the wall of the large convenience store.

Evaluation

The proposed design has many disadvantages that do not meet the requirements of Policy GEN 1, regarding poor access and compromised safety:

1. The access road will not be wide enough for commercial vehicles visiting the commercial properties to be able to pass with safe enough margins to avoid collisions.
2. Most pedestrian residents of the homes and their visitors would need to walk in the narrow roadway in the absence of a footway along the northern side of the access road. Pedestrians would be squeezed up against the wall of the large convenience store when walking to and from the homes, so compromising pedestrian safety.
3. Passing vehicles would also be squeezed up against the wall of the convenience store and would have to risk causing damage to their vehicles and the building.
4. The absence of a footway or other barrier by the wall of the large convenience store means that there would be no splays, normally of 1.5m width, at the throat of the road to provide certain clearer visibility of and for pedestrians walking on the Cambridge Road footway.
5. The approval of application UTT/14/1549/FUL for only three dwellings at the Wood Grill restaurant/former Yuva restaurant site directly opposite the current application site was conditional on the creation of 1.5m splays to avoid a blind egress. It would be wholly inconsistent for this requirement to be excluded from the current application.
6. Essex Highways is currently calling for the access at a nearby application site, the former Three Colts site, 86, Cambridge Road, Stansted, UTT/16/2771/FUL+LB, to meet a new standard of road width at 5.0m. The applicant at the Three Colts is expected to comply with that request. At least the same or wider width standard should be required for this application. 14 Cambridge Road is a much busier location for pedestrians and vehicles, both within the application site and immediately outside it, than is the case at no. 86. The site will have a shared residential/commercial use, not a simple, small residential use.
7. See Annexe for an extract from the new standard. The standard calls for 6.0m wide combined pedestrian and vehicular access. However, as the proposed development would be mixed use, and will have pedestrians transiting the site from a public car park, there is a case for avoiding a combined pedestrian and vehicular access. Instead there should be not only the footway shown on the southern side of the access road to serve the commercial building and car park users, but also a footway on the northern side to serve the residential properties and to provide the visibility spays at the mouth adjacent to the busy B1383. The proximity of the major B1383 highway calls for more stringent measures than those described in the extract from the Essex Design Guide annexed below.

8. A safe and workable access and egress from the site should not be sacrificed in order to maintain a street-facing retail unit for which there is questionable market demand, especially in an area where the market “push factor” is high owing to the traffic and parking congestion. The council should waive its retail retention policy in this location to assist the achievement of traffic and parking improvements that benefit the wider commercial vitality of Cambridge Road and instead help to change the market environment from a “push factor” to a “pull factor” by widening the access road.
9. In addition to the foregoing points about the actual access road set out above, I maintain my position at the last application and appeal that the entrance to the site and the exit from it into Cambridge Road is too narrow with poor sight lines; there would be a dangerous conflict with pedestrians and with passing vehicles and with parked lorries outside the Tesco convenience store and with buses at the bus stop immediately outside the site. The site does not afford a 70m unobstructed clear visibility because there is an HGV delivery bay located square up to the edge of the junction of the B1383 with the site access road.

I urge refusal of this application for the above reasons.

Marketability

I made reference above to the marketability of the application scheme. The disadvantages of this scheme at this location with its surrounding degraded environment are comparable with a current development in Lower Street, Stansted which is reported to be struggling to sell its residential accommodation. The demand for commercial units at this location may also be restricted by the poor traffic conditions. The location may be more successfully promoted for a development that contained apartments for more elderly members of the population. More elderly residents would benefit most from local services on their doorsteps and would be likely to generate fewer vehicular movements themselves. So whilst the latest scheme is better than previous ones it is still a wrong design in the wrong place.

Yours faithfully

Alan Dean

ANNEXE

The Essex Design GUIDE (2005)

Draft Services and Access Update (June 2016)

Street type	Street description	Guide to number of dwellings served	Carriageway width, cycle and pedestrian requirements	Target max driver speed	Visibility splays	Max gradient	Centre line radius	Kerb radii	Comments
F	Minor access	100 units on a loop or 50 units in a cul de sac	Combined pedestrian and vehicular surface of 6m. Maximum length around 125m for a cul-de-sac or 250m for a through route. Localised narrowing where appropriate.	20mph	Junction and forward visibility splays to comply with current policy standards; refer to DMRB or Manual for Streets	8%	min13.6m max 30m		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide direct access to dwellings • Tabled entrance and priority for pedestrians and cyclists across junctions • A straight section of carriageway to be provided from the entrance junction for 15 metres. • Street lighting not required
G	Mews court	20 units	Combined pedestrian and vehicular surface of 6m. Maximum length around 50m. Localised narrowing where appropriate.	20mph	Junction and forward visibility splays to comply with current policy standards; refer to DMRB or Manual for Streets	8%	min13.6m max 30m		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special junction detail featuring entrance ramp/table • Priority for pedestrians and cyclists across junctions. • A constricted entrance enclosed by buildings or walls for the first 8m back from the approach street (except for the 1.5m by 1.5m pedestrian visibility splays). • No doors, gates or other entrances may open on to the mews within this first 8m. • No projections over the net adoptable area of the mews court • No windows, doors or other projections should extend over public areas. • A straight section of carriageway to be provided from the entrance junction for 10 metres. • Street lighting not required

