



Area Planning Committee Wellingborough

16 February 2022

Committee Update Report

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UPDATE REPORT

**North Northamptonshire Area Planning Committee
(Wellingborough)**

16 February 2022

Report of the Executive Director Place and Economy

NW/21/01055/FUL 1-3 High Street, Wollaston

A further 2 letters of objection has been received from Wollaston Parish Council since the report was drafted. The key comments and concerns raised are set out below:

Letter dated 9 February 2022

"Thank you very much for taking time out to visit Wollaston and spend time with the Parish Council regarding the planning applications in Howard Road and High Street. It was very helpful for Cllrs Mitchell, Tew and Jones to also meet with Martin Draper as well. We fully understand the adopted policies that you must follow regarding parking beat surveys but would like to emphasise our dissatisfaction with the inaccuracies of the parking beat survey in relation to Howard Road, and would also seek further clarification of the anomalies applied to the all-encompassing "unrestricted" parking criteria and a lack of consistency.

As a matter of precedent, you may recall an application in 2018 for the development of a vacant factory in Eastfield Road, we have attached the relevant references. An initial application for 9 units was refused in January 2018 and a revised application for 6 units was also refused in Sept 2018. WP/18/00596 and WP/18/00057/PAP also WP/18/00236/PAJ refer.

Cllr Mitchell has been searching for the consultee responses to these prior approval applications online, but the relevant documents are no longer available. A parking beat survey was involved with this application, and initially Highways stated, "it would be difficult to sustain an objection".

However, after intervention Highways changed their mind and objected on safety grounds based on a lack of off-road parking and in regard to WP/18/ 00596 David Jones recommended refusal. It would be helpful to recap and find copies of the Highways responses as applicable to these applications. Could you please try to locate them from

within the archives and send copies or links to the Parish Council to review well before the High Street application is taken to Committee.

We see similarities to the applications now being considered. The Parish Council recalls the applicant took the Eastfield Road application to appeal and lost.”

Letter received 11 February

“Further to the Parish Council's recent letter, we submit this to be added to the late letters for next week's committee meeting regarding 1-3 High Street and in doing so, clarify the inaccuracies and anomalies referred to as a consequence of the recent joint discussion with councillors at the recent site meeting with yourself and Martin.

For the councillor's present, the site meeting provoked much interest and subsequent discussion raising questions about the integrity, reliability and application of parking beat surveys. For example:

the precision of the criteria (is it 5 metres or more parking clearance at all junctions) therefore, openness to interpretation. accuracy in taking measurements (in relation to dropped kerbs and allowing for visual clearance for residents accessing the road from their drives.

- the potential for inaccuracy biased towards the applicant. the judgement applied to unrestricted parking. - the allowances made for parking on pavements.
- the way the criteria, especially for unrestricted parking, is applied to individual roads for what might be safe and appropriate for one road may be different when applied to another. - specific examples being Council Street and then Howard Road and High Street both being thoroughfares.
- factors not taken into account are the volume and nature of the traffic. the position and contours of different roads (as in Howard Road with bends at both ends) recent changes in the Highway Code to avoid parking on pavements unrestricted parking on roads already too narrow.

All of the above apply to the two planning applications and will have an impact on our village. Reports appear to take little notice of residents' objections and their direct day-to-day experiences, and only if serious accidents or deaths have been reported and included in the data on which decisions are based. Instead, relying wholly on the shortcomings of these parking beat surveys.

The plans for Howard Road and High Street show that there is parking available off road in both cases, but both have chosen to ignore this. Hence, the loss of two spaces and three spaces respectively off-road creating demand for on road parking at the detriment of the nearby residents.

One survey included kerbside spaces that are too narrow and the other excluded them. In Council Street, the Howard Road survey calculated 105m metres and 21 spaces and the High Street survey for the same road 56 metres and 7 spaces.

The High Street survey indicated 81% stress level (119 spaces 22 unoccupied but 136 cars were parked) if all cars found the unoccupied spaces it would raise the stress level to 98%. When looking at an earlier application in Eastfield Road in 2018

(Oct2018WP/18/00596 Highways correctly refused on detrimental impact on Highway safety and capacity, the width of the road at 5.5 metres and double parking being major factors.

This surely must apply to High Street especially where the development site is adjacent to a junction and there is a pinch point in the street.

In summary, it is specifically a fact directly related to Wollaston that 14 extra cars will be parked in our streets in addition to those already imposed on College Street if these two pending applications are approved.”

Senior Highway Engineer –

“To address some of the comments I have set out some notes below which should make clear the Local Highway Authorities position:

To clarify the criteria for viable on-street parking spaces in close proximity to junctions is an offset of 5 metres, taken from the channel line / give way, line to eliminate encouraging indiscriminate parking blocking junction visibility for drivers and crossing points for pedestrians.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the parking beat survey produced to support application NW/21/01055/FUL dismissed spaces where the survey company felt it was inappropriate to park vehicles on that section of carriageway (too narrow), there were no restrictions in place to stop vehicles parking in these locations and therefore the survey methodology is considered robust. Should the parking that was considered inappropriate be cause for concern then this is an existing highway matter and it would remain challenging to defend a position that the additional impact of this development would demonstrate a severe impact in accordance with guidance under the National Planning Policy framework.

The Local Highway Authority acknowledges that the reliance of on- street parking for development is not appropriate, leads to disputes and is an amenity consideration. However, the impact of these two applications need to be considered individually and cumulatively against planning policies. In this case neither has so far demonstrated circumstances that can be considered a severe impact under the Planning guidelines, even when assessing on a worst-case scenario as outlined by the Parish Council. That said, we await any further data and surveys associated with the Howard Road proposals but the very high bar set by national planning policy to enable a sustainable refusal on highway safety grounds precludes such a recommendation in the case of the High Street site.

The LHA are also mindful that the potential backstop for the high street application is that it could remain a B1 office use and the net gain in parking demand could well exceed the modest increase that is being presented as part of this proposed re-development.

It is understood that the Howard Road application is undertaking a survey at the weekend to address the concerns raised.”

Condition 2 is to be updated with the updated plan references, to read as follows:

2. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following drawings/details:

Location and Block Plan 20-097-02 Rev A (registered 9 February 2022)

Existing and Proposed Plans 20-097-01 Rev B (registered 9 February 2022)

Reason: To define the permission and to conform with the requirements of The Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) (Amendment No. 3) (England) Order 2009.