

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF UP TO 74 DWELLINGS

**Land to the East of Ely Road, Claydon
Planning Application Number DC/18/00861**

Summary Review of Transport and Access Issues

(addendum to our report relating to application number 1856/17 dated June 2018)

Prepared on behalf of:

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In June 2018 THaT Consultancy were appointed by Barham Parish Council to review the transport and access issues associated with a proposal to construct up to 300 dwellings on land off Norwich Road in Barham (application number 1856/17).
- 1.2 Our findings and recommendations were presented in a report dated June 2018. Some of our findings and recommendations were site specific, others however related to the wider area; these are summarised below.

General Findings

- the emerging Local Plan and Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) has identified several potential residential development sites near Barham and Claydon. Together these total approximately 1900 dwellings.

[We understand that at present there are approximately 1600 properties in Claydon and Barham so the emerging residential development sites would more than double the size of the settlement.]

- The Transport Assessment submitted in respect of application number 1856/17 demonstrated that parts of the local highway network (particularly junctions in the village centre) will be operating at, or over, capacity without any additional development and that the additional traffic associated with the proposed development of up to 300 dwellings will significantly worsen the situation.
- The local highway authority commented that *“we have concerns regarding the number of trips created by the development [application number 1856/17] as this would create a considerable amount of additional traffic within a rural village location. The increase in trips and traffic would present a detrimental impact to the road network and landscape character of the area.”* [Our emphasis]
- The local highway authority also required a safe walking route to the existing primary school (Claydon primary school) to be assessed and identified in the travel plan to be produced in respect of the 300

dwellings scheme. It should be noted that the route referred to passes along Thornhill Road. We noted that a “serious” personal injury accident occurred on Thornhill Road in December 2015 and that Claydon Primary School is expected to expand by 25% in September 2019.

General Recommendation

- We recommended that the Parish Council should approach the District Council and the County Council to see if they will facilitate a coordinated approach to address the transport capacity issues in the locality to ensure that the transport impacts arising from the numerous developments in the area are mitigated in a sustainable, safe and fair manner.

Land to the East of Ely Road (Application No. DC/18/00861)

- 1.3 At its meeting on 4 July 2018 Mid Suffolk Development Control Committee A considered planning application number DC/18/00861. This application seeks permission to erect up to 74 dwellings on land to the east of Ely Road in Claydon. The application was submitted in outline with all matters except means of access reserved for subsequent approval. The local highway authority had no objection, subject to conditions, and the planning officer recommended that outline planning permission be granted subject to conditions. The Development Control Committee resolved to defer the application to the Referrals Committee.
- 1.4 Following the Development Control Committee’s decision Barham Parish Council instructed THaT Consultancy to review the planning application. Our observations are presented in this Statement.

2 OBSERVATIONS IN RESPECT OF APPLICATION NUMBER DC/18/00861

General Concerns

- 2.1 The application site lies within one of the areas identified in the emerging Local Plan as being potentially suitable for residential development. The 74 dwellings proposed therefore form a part of the approximately 1900 new dwellings identified in the Barham and Claydon area.
- 2.2 The traffic likely to be generated by this proposed development will be distributed on much the same local road network in much the same proportions as the 300 unit scheme to the north of Church Lane (application number 1856/17). We note that the applicant has estimated that approximately 10% of development generated traffic will travel via Thornhill Road (North) and the remaining 90% will use Thornhill Road (South). This means that approximately 90% of development generated traffic will travel through the village using the highway network that has been identified as operating at, or over, capacity without any additional development in the area.
- 2.3 Although this critical section of road network is evaluated in detail in the Transport Assessment submitted in respect of application number 1856/17 no such assessment has been undertaken in respect of application number DC/18/00861. The only junction modelling presented in the Transport Statement submitted in respect of application DC/18/00861 relates to the Thornhill Road/Ely Road priority junction. There is no assessment of the potential impact of development generated traffic beyond this junction.
- 2.4 This is perhaps not surprising given the relatively small number of additional vehicle movements involved. The local highway authority did not require the applicant to consider potential impacts beyond the Thornhill Road/Ely Road junction.
- 2.5 However, we know from the detailed computer modelling undertaken in the context of application number 1856/17 that parts of the local highway network are already operating at capacity. The relatively small amount of additional traffic on these critical sections of the local highway network arising from the proposed development of 74 dwellings will make an already poor situation slightly worse.
- 2.6 The likely effect of increasing traffic flows through the village, without any mitigation measures, will be to alter the character of the road network and give more importance to its “movement” function in preference to its “place” function.

- 2.7 When commenting on application number 1856/17 the local highway authority noted that:
- “The increase in trips and traffic would present a detrimental impact to the road network and landscape character of the area.”*
- 2.8 The computer modelling submitted in the context of application number 1856/17 shows how unstable traffic conditions can be when the highway network is operating at, or above, capacity. In these circumstances even small increases in traffic flow can have a disproportionately large impact.
- 2.9 This point is made, albeit in a different context, in Paragraph 6.1 of the Transport Statement submitted in respect of application number DC/18/00861, which states:
- “An RFC [ratio of flow to capacity] value greater than 1.0 means that a turning movement has a higher level of traffic flow than its theoretical capacity. As a result, flows breakdown and queues can be expected. An RFC below 0.85 is considered acceptable as there is still scope to accommodate future growth.”*
- 2.10 We suggest therefore that the District Council, in consultation with the local highway authority, has to decide whether or not it is prepared to permit new developments knowing that each development will have a small detrimental impact on the operation of the highway network in the village, but knowing that the cumulative impact of the various emerging housing developments is likely to be significant.
- 2.11 This is likely to be a particular cause for concern if the number of dwellings in the settlement doubles which seems possible given the emerging Local Plan and its supporting information.
- 2.12 It should be noted that the vehicle trip rates used in the Transport Statement in respect of application number DC/18/00861 are lower than those observed at Old Rectory Close and utilised in the Transport Assessment in respect of application number 1856/17. The trip rates used in respect of DC/18/00861 are only 76% of the observed figure in the AM peak and only 66% in the PM peak.
- 2.13 It is possible therefore that the Transport Statement submitted in respect of application DC/18/00861 has underestimated the likely number of vehicle movements that the proposed development will generate.

- 2.14 The survey at Old Rectory Close showed a daily trip rate of 5.394 vehicle movements per dwelling. If this daily trip rate is applied to the proposed development of 74 dwellings at Ely Road, then the proposed development can be expected to generate approximately 400 vehicle movements per weekday.

Site Specific Concerns

- 2.15 We note that the applicants are proposing a carriageway width restriction at the point where the proposed site access road meets Ely Road. This will be created by installing a 1 m wide buildout on each side of the carriageway. The buildout on the southern side of the carriageway will also act as a footway.
- 2.16 Based upon the information currently available to us it would appear that this arrangement is proposed because the applicants do not control sufficient land to provide a conventional highways layout at the point where the proposed new site access road meets the end of Ely Road.
- 2.17 The recommended minimum footway width is 2.0 m. This is what is proposed within the application site. A width of 1.0 m will enable an adult to walk on their own along this stretch of footway, but it is not wide enough to enable an adult to walk with a child by their side.
- 2.18 To address this concern the applicants intend providing an uncontrolled pedestrian crossing either side of the width restriction. The expectation, presumably, is that pedestrians walking along the south side of Ely Road/site access road will cross to the north side at the width restriction.
- 2.19 We think this is an unrealistic expectation, and that the reality is likely to be that pedestrians will step into the carriageway.
- 2.20 Given that the main pedestrian desire line is likely to be between the application site and Thornhill Road (south) i.e. the route to/from the schools and village centre, we suggest that the proposed site access arrangements are reviewed to ensure that the safety of vulnerable road users is not prejudiced.

2.21 Paragraph 4.5 of the Transport Statement states:

“...the proposed buildouts will also function as a traffic calming feature and entrance into the proposed 20 mph zone.”

2.22 As well as implementing a 20 mph zone within the site we suggest that it would be beneficial in highway safety terms to introduce a 20 mph speed limit on Ely Road and Thornhill Road as well. This will serve to constrain vehicle speeds on an important route to/from the nearby schools. The 20 mph speed limit could, of course, be extended to include the wider residential area.

2.23 We note that the automatic traffic count surveys undertaken by the applicant and presented in the Transport Statement show average vehicle speeds on Thornhill Road to be 26 mph, and the 85th percentile speed to be 32 mph. The speed limit is 30 mph.

2.24 The maximum design speed for residential streets should normally be 20 mph. Clearly observed vehicle speeds on Thornhill Road are well above this figure. However, given the width of Thornhill Road, its relatively straight alignment and excellent forward visibility, the observed speeds are what would be expected.

2.25 Thornhill Road is an important route to/from the schools to the south and is used by pedestrians, cyclists and motorists.

2.26 Given the increased use of Thornhill Road that will result from the proposed new residential developments in the area, together with the increases that will result from the expansion at the primary school, we consider it appropriate to implement measures now to make the route safer and, more attractive, to pedestrians and cyclists.

3 SUMMARY

- 3.1 The proposed development of up to 74 dwellings on land to the east of Ely Road (application number DC/18/00861) is one of a series of housing schemes in the Barham and Claydon area that are at various stages in the planning process. When considered in isolation this scheme will have only a very small adverse impact on traffic conditions on the highway network in the settlement. However, when the cumulative impact of the various schemes is taken into consideration it is apparent that the impacts are likely to be severe and that the character of the area will change.
- 3.2 We therefore recommend that the various public bodies should formulate a coordinated approach to address the transport capacity issues in the locality to ensure that the transport impacts arising from the various developments are mitigated in a sustainable, safe and fair manner.
- 3.3 The proposed site access arrangements serving the Ely Road site will put pedestrians at risk. We therefore recommend that the access arrangements are revised to ensure that vulnerable road users are protected.
- 3.4 Vehicle speeds on Thornhill Road are relatively high (an observed 85th percentile design speed of 32 mph) compared to 20 mph which is the recommended maximum design speed for residential streets.
- 3.5 Thornhill Road is an important route to/from the nearby schools. Given the fact that the primary school schedule to expand by 25%, and the additional housing proposed in the area (including the site at Ely Road) it is likely that Thornhill Road will become significantly busier in the future. In order to make it a safe and attractive route for pedestrians and cyclists we recommend that consideration be given to implementing a 20 mph speed limit on Thornhill Road and the surrounding area.