

On pavement to avoid bus

Making narrow pavements narrower

THORP ARCH GROUP
TAG

Gridlock at the COMPLEX again

Protected outdoor sport greenspace

THORP ARCH GROUP - TAG
OBJECTION TO PLANNING APPLICATION 17/07970/OT
Contact Peter Locke, Chairman, tagactiongroup@gmail.com

OBJECTION

Section 4

**Misinformation in the applicant's
planning application.**

TAG objection section 4 - misinformation in PA 17/07970

Outline planning application for residential development with community facility. Land off Walton Road Walton Wetherby.

Introduction: TAG is the acronym for Thorp Arch Group. TAG has a mandate from over 135 people to oppose this development on Planning Grounds. The Thorp Arch Parish Council also held a well attended open meeting for residents to discuss the application on 18 January.

Opposition to the application was unanimous.

4.0 Section 4 - misinformation in the planning application.

4.1 Introduction

This application fails National and Local Planning Guidance on an industrial scale.

It also fails Leeds City Council Core Strategy requirements on many counts.

It conflicts with the Thorp Arch Neighbourhood Plan.

4.2 The Requirements

4.2.1 The NPPF states new developments should promote Sustainable Transport.... “ the transport system needs to be balanced in favour of sustainable transport modes, giving people a real choice about how they travel”

4.2.2 New developments should be located to “give priority to pedestrian and cycle movements and have access to high quality public transport facilities; and create safe and secure layouts which minimise conflicts between traffic and cyclists or pedestrians”

4.2.3 UDP Policy T2 says new developments should normally be “served adequately by *existing* or programmed highways”

4.3 The Reality

4.3.1 Location: This is a remote rural site and is constrained by an inadequate public transport service. Bus services are poor, there are no rail connections, services to Leeds and Harrogate are lengthy (1hr plus), expensive, and distances to any nearby facilities are more than 2km away.

4.3.2 LCC Core Strategy requires development : (i) to be in the Settlement Hierarchy, (ii) to have good highways and public transport links (iii) must meet accessibility standards and (iv) have access to good community facilities. It fails all these tests.

4.4 Accessibility:

4.4.1 Walking: The UDP states that new development should be encouraged into locations that are accessible by a range of travel modes – encouraging use of alternate modes of transport other than the private car.

4.4.1.2 UDP Policy T2 says new developments should normally be:
served adequately by existing or programmed highways
being adequately served by public transport
make adequate provision for easy, safe and secure cycle use
in case of residential development, be within walking distance of
local facilities

4.4.1.3 The Applicant states (TA 5.2.7) that “*the majority of the local amenities in Thorp Arch are within the preferred maximum distance of 1200m for access to local services and 2000m for commuting/education*” and “*Boston Spa is just outside of the preferred maximum distance for commuting/education trips*”

4.4.1.4 And goes on to say (5.2.8) that “*walking can be considered to be a realistic and viable method of travel indicating that the site’s location is accessible via this sustainable mode*”.

4.4.1.5 Apart from the Community Hall which is not required in this location, there are NO facilities available on site. The Core Strategy requires that the development should be within a 15 min walk for local shops. *There are no facilities within the villages of Thorp Arch or Walton which would be within a desirable walking distance of the site.* Boston Spa shops and services are over 2.4km distant.

4.4.1.6 It is worthy of note that, on their list of facilities and distances, (TA table 5.2), of the twelve Amenities listed within 2000 metres, four: Wealstun prison, LUFC ground, TABS ground, Walton cricket ground, are not accessible to the public (closed, or members only). Two are pubs. Two are churches. The library is NOT a lending library, and only accessible for reference purposes. The only publicly accessible locations are a playground, and the Thorp Arch Trading Estate.

4.4.1.7 The LEH school is included as ‘*within walking distance of 2000m*’, but at 1650m distance this is outwith the LCC criteria of 1 mile.

4.4.1.8 As to Boston Spa facilities and shops being “*just outside the preferred maximum*”, the “desirable” range is 400m, the “acceptable” range 800m and even the “preferred maximum” range of 2000m is exceeded by 20% !

4.4.1.9 Primary Healthcare/Education should be within a 20 min walk or a 5 min walk to a bus stop offering a 15 min service to an MPTI.

4.4.1.10 It is a 30 min walk to Boston Spa Surgery, nearly one hour to Wetherby, approximately 50 minute walk to Boston School and nearly one hour to Wetherby High.

4.4.1.11 In respect of education capacity the Applicant declares 21 Primary school places will be required. Lady Elizabeth Hastings school is shown as having 6 places available, Primrose Lane as 17. The latter is 2.9km away, much beyond the LCC criteria of 1 mile, as is Lady Hastings at 1650km. This is a solely car dependent proposal when it comes to considering how children will go to and from school.

4.4.1.12 The Applicant concludes that walking is a realistic and viable method of travel (5.2.8).

Given the distances involved to reach any local facilities this claim lies in the realms of fantasy. The results of a recent TAG survey in nearby Woodlands/Walton Chase saw strong evidence emerge regarding the lack of walking or cycling other than for leisure purposes. This is a strong indication that the outcome in the new development is likely to be minimal or zero. Certainly not the 18.2% claimed for walking in the Travel Plan(6.4.3) or 4.4% on a bicycle.

4.4.2 Cycling

4.4.2.1 The table 5.3 in the TA shows theoretical times by bike to various local centres. What it doesn't show is that the local road network is not cycle friendly. The difficulty of cycling safely on Bridge Road will be explored later. Although experienced leisure road cyclists do use these roads, the concept of allowing children to use them for school trips, particularly in winter when it would be dark, would be reckless in the extreme. The same applies to adult commuters, or for everyday local access to facilities.

4.4.2.2 As regards Cycling the TA states (5.3.5) that the site is well located to the national cycle network with National Route 67. It isn't. Although it is a very good recreational asset, it is completely impractical for year-round commuting or shopping uses.

4.4.3 Bus Service

4.4.3.1 The TA states (5.4.5) that the existing bus service provision is considered “appropriate and reasonable” for the size of development proposed. However the NPPF states that “*developments should be promoted in locations where they have access to high quality public transport facilities*”

4.4.3.2 The main service (70/71) links the site to Harrogate and Leeds but journey times are lengthy and expensive. There is a half hourly service to Leeds and Harrogate with journey times of around an hour and 40 minutes in duration respectively. The service only runs hourly on Sundays and Bank holidays.

4.4.3.3 This conflicts with LCC Core Strategy, namely a 15 min service to MPTI.

4.4.3.4 It completely fails Leeds Core Strategy Appendix 3, Accessibility Standards for smaller settlements and other rural areas.

4.4.3.5 Developments should also be within 400m of a bus stop. One of the stops being proposed is on Street 5 leading into TATE. However only 3 buses in the morning and evening peak hours pass into the TATE site, so it is doubtful if all of the development meets this target. If the Rockspring appeal succeeds the bus service will be diverted into the Trading estate meaning even less access to a bus stop for those houses closest to Grange Avenue.

4.4.3.6 Surveys of the recent (and similar demographic) residential developments at Woodlands and Walton Chase show virtually ZERO commuting bus use. There is no evidence supplied to indicate that this development would be any different.

4.5 Highways

4.5.1 Section 6 of the Transport Assessment, and particularly paragraph 6.10.3, make it clear that the applicants themselves do not believe that the current highways arrangements at 'the complex' (Thorp Arch bridge, Bridge Road, High Street/A659 junction) are suitable for the current traffic volumes.

4.5.2 The existing situation already exceeds the capacity of the complex. It is also dangerous. The number of cyclists who actually ride on the Bridge Road pavements is a testimony to the degree of difficulty in cycling on this steep and congested section of road.

4.5.3 Local residents are well aware of the Highways issues. Out of one hundred objections made to LCC, no fewer than 97 list Highways as part of the reasons for refusal.

4.5.4 The situation with proposed mitigation, involving narrowing of the north west pavement is unworkable.

4.5.5 This mitigation proposal is, against MfS and LCC guidance, and totally opposed by the local communities. Pedestrians should take priority. Creating a footpath with unobstructed width down to 0.9m, and width to obstruction (sign-posts, CATV cabinet etc) down to 0.66m is in itself completely unacceptable. Doing so when simultaneously creating two way traffic in a supposedly 4.8m carriageway, is ridiculous. The northbound traffic will have to hug the kerb to be able to pass opposing traffic. There needs to be a 'security buffer zone' between pedestrians and vehicles. With these pavement widths such a zone will not exist.

4.5.6 This will be dangerous for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists, notwithstanding that the Applicant accepts it is "*contrary to modern road user hierarchies as it puts vehicle users ahead of pedestrians*". (6.9.14)

4.5.7 The Applicant's position that "*the proposed development would not have a severe impact on the operation of the highway network both in terms of safety and capacity*" (8.2.1) is not borne out by the facts above.

4.6 Summary

4.6.1 The site is remote with limited access routes already showing severe stress.

4.6.2 The transport infrastructure is poor.

4.6.3 Walking and cycling are not viable alternatives.

4.6.4 There are NO on-site services.

4.6.5 Local services are far in excess of any approved walking accessibility standards.

4.6.6 The site will be a car dominated dormitory.

4.6.7 The development is therefore unsustainable.