Appeal Reference: APP/B3438/W/17/3168607

Relating to Planning Application No:

SMD/2016/0400 For:

A change of access strategy at

Meadow Drive/Bank Street, Cheadle,

Staffordshire, ST10 1NR

Highway Statement

Prepared by

Progress10 Design

On behalf of

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council

Report No: P10-0053-NPC

Report No.	Date	Written	Checked	Approved
P10-0053-NPC	MARCH 2017	N.C.	C.E.C.	N.C

Mission Statement.

Progress10 Design have been commissioned by Staffordshire Moorlands District Council to provide a highway statement of evidence, with regard to a proposed highway access strategy at Meadow Drive/Bank Street, Cheadle, Staffordshire, ST10 1NR.

The proposal under planning application SMD/2016/0400, is to change the access strategy for the proposed residential development site, away from the negotiated and agreed access strategy under the original planning permission: SMD/2014/0471.

This report will reference the access strategy negotiated with the developer by Staffordshire Moorlands BC, under SMD/2014/0471, and then assess the proposed reversal of the agreed access strategy and identify supporting evidence to the reasons for refusal of SMD/2016/0400.

The report will provide conclusion on the proposals and reasoning, both regarding the negotiated and agreed access strategy, and the proposed return to the original access strategy, which the applicant was prepared to surrender in return for a resolved permission for development under SMD/2014/0471.

Personnel Statement.

My name is Nigel Paul Curtis and I am an Incorporated Engineer with the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation.

I have 40 years' experience in all aspects of highways and transportation with the last 20 years based: 18 years' on highways development control in Local Government, and 2 years' in private consultancy.

I have also served the C.I.H.T. as a mentor to applicants for professional membership.

Nigel Curtis I.Eng M.C.I.H.T.

Director

Progress10 Design Ltd.

Contents:

Proposal for a change in access strategy for a permitted residential development at: Meadow Drive/Bank Street, Cheadle, Staffordshire, ST10 1NR.

1.0 Introduction and general assessment.

Progress10 have produced the following report in order to support the presentation of evidence by Staffordshire Moorlands District Council (SMDC), in the case of a written representations appeal procedure, brought by Wrekin Housing Trust, against SMDC, under appeal reference: APP/B3438/W/17/3168607.

1.1 Development History.

Planning Application: SMD/2014/0471 (valid: 21/08/2014) proposed:

'*Redevelopment of redundant allotment land and buildings to affordable housing, consisting of 42 dwellings (30 new builds and conversion of 5-7 Bank Street into 12 flats).'*

This original proposal was only permitted after the planning committee resisted the original access strategy and the prospective developer met with the Local Planning Authority (LPA), together with local members, to negotiate a revised access strategy which moved away from the proposed Meadow Drive route and took a direct access from the A521 Bank Street.

This route of access was preferred by members of the planning committee who had serious concerns regarding highway safety in and around the 5 nearby schools at times of arrival and dispersal. The original proposal to access the site from Meadow Drive would have had impact on the highways around the 5 schools.

Progress10 note that the County Highway Authority had no objection to the original Meadow Drive access strategy.

Progress10 note that the County Highway Authority also raised no objection to the revised access strategy from the A521 Bank Street.

Planning permission for the proposed development was granted on 27/02/2015 after revised access drawings were agreed with the LPA and supported by the County Highway Authority for an agreed access strategy direct from the A521 Bank Street.

Note: This report is related to conditions: 2, 11, 12, 13 and 15 of SMD/2014/0471. The other conditions being planning detail based.

1.2 Planning Application: SMD/2016/0400 (valid: 07/07/2016) proposed:

'Variation of Conditions 2 (approved plans) 6 (approved glazing) 11(access plans) 12 (highway access) 13 (highway rectification works) 15 (revised access details) and 18 (planting plan) attached to planning permission SMD/2014/0471'

This application was refused on 20/01/2017, by planning committee members and against a recommendation for approval from LPA officers.

Members considering this new application at planning committee expressed concern at the proposed return to the original access strategy via Meadow Drive and cited the following reason for refusal: (Reason 1 of the Decision Notice dated 20-01-2017).

'1. The application proposes access to the site via Meadow Drive. This is a short residential cul-de-sac which is frequently used by other highway users such as those dropping their children off at local schools and by people working in the nearby town centre wishing to avoid parking charges. It is considered that the proposed development would have an adverse effect on highway safety by contributing further to the poor traffic flow and severe congestion in the area. This would in turn result in a real and significant hazard to people/children and other highway users thereby resulting in the provision of an unsafe access. As such the proposal would be contrary to policy T1 of the adopted Core Strategy and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.'

Progress10 note that the County Highway Authority had no objection to the original Meadow Drive access strategy and also gave no objection to the revised access strategy from the A521 Bank Street. It is therefore clear that they could not raise objection to the proposed return to the Meadow Drive access under **SMD/2016/0400** as their position was fixed.

1.3 Members rationale – the background to the reason for refusal cited at 1.2 above against SMD/2016/0400.

Members voted unanimously to refuse the proposal to return to the Meadow Drive access strategy for this site.

There was concern regarding the potential for an increase in hazard on the existing public highway, due to the existing congestion and poor traffic flow around the required access route which would use the residential roads local to the site.

Planning Committee members were unified in this view, and they gained support up to County Councillor level.

The prime concern was for road safety and in particular that of pedestrians, especially school pupils, who had to negotiate the congested residential parking and that of school arrival and dispersal traffic, which manifests itself throughout the day.

It was felt that an increase in vehicles negotiating these conditions, however small, could only exacerbate the current potential for hazard.

Also, with additional pupils making the same journey from the new development as well, the likelihood of pedestrian/vehicular conflict would increase again.

In addition, there was expressed concern that the local residential highway infrastructure was restricted in places which would carry the extra traffic and that this would also increase hazard on local roads close to the site though not in its immediate vicinity.

(**Note: Progress10** drew these notes from the observed committee video footage).

1.4 The structure of this report.

Progress10 consider that there is relevance between the merits of the agreed access strategy permitted under SMD/2014/0471, and the related difficulties with the practical and safe use of the potential return to the original access strategy proposal, from Meadow Drive, under SMD/2016/0400. This latest proposal is the subject of this written representation.

The following evidence will precis the merits of the agreed access and follow this with an examination of the proposed access strategy that is the subject of this inquiry and provide evidence to support the decision of the planning committee on their grounds for refusal.

2. SMD/2014/0471 – the agreed and permitted access strategy for the site.

The agreed access strategy from the A521 Bank Street was agreed between the prospective developer: Wrekin Housing Trust and SMDC after the original proposal to access the site from Meadow Drive was considered for refusal by the members of the planning committee.

Wrekin Housing Trust produced an access design which was agreed with planning committee members and is designated as drawing number: 2263-100 Rev D which is covered by Condition 11 of the Decision Notice related to this planning permission.

Progress10 note that there is reference to ‘adoptable design’ in Condition 11.

Staffordshire County Highway Authority had no objection to this access strategy.

2.1 A521 Bank Street access environment.

Bank Street forms part of the gyratory route for local traffic around Cheadle town centre. It is one-way with an east to west flow at the proposed point of access.

Bank Street is fed from Chapel Street which is two-way. The west to east flow on Chapel Street is fed from Cross Street which connects the A521 High Street to Chapel Street with a north to south flow only.

The A521 Bank Street has some residential property, some of which is terraced and supported by on street parking bays. Bank Street is relatively narrow, hence the one-way flow management to compliment the gyratory traffic.

There are wide footways on each side of the carriageway and the road carries a bus route and has street lighting. There is a total prohibition of waiting restriction on the south side of Bank Street which is only broken by a bus stop marking and the short length of on-street parking for the terraced property.

There is a raised zebra crossing provided for the existing pedestrian route from Meadow Drive to Bank Street and this crossing has advanced warning signs for traffic on approach.

The nearside features of: bus stops, on-street parking and traffic regulation orders mean that the southern footway is an ideal link to the nearby shopping streets for pedestrians and offers relatively quiet and safe refuge from the through traffic flow.

Submitted Transport Statements (TS).

The submitted TS's – each from a different consultant – show surveyed traffic flows for Bank Street to be 570vph for the average weekly a.m. peak flow. Evening peak hour flows are approximately 800 vph.

These relatively low flows will benefit the proposed access from Bank Street in what is a traffic calmed and low speed environment.

2.2 The agreed access strategy.

Wrekin Housing Trust agreed to design and provide the A521 Bank Street access strategy in negotiation with SMDC and members of the planning committee. This led to a granted planning permission for the development of the subject site.

This design incorporates a raised table junction with Bank Street which also accommodates the existing zebra crossing and provides slower traffic speeds for through traffic along Bank Street.

The proposed junction design with Bank Street would be located in the original position of the Meadow Drive junction prior to its closure and the revision of traffic flows around the town centre area.

It can be understood that the original Meadow Drive link would have put significant traffic generation onto the revised one-way arrangements and this is why the junction was originally closed.

It is also fact however that the traffic generation from the new development alone would now be considered non-material in terms of impact onto Bank Street, given the low level of traffic generation demonstrated in the Transport Statement provided with the planning application (GCA ref: 1/6290 Oct 2014).

This design would not allow through traffic from Meadow Drive, but does offer the opportunity for a joint use surface access to the new development which also adjoins existing footway infrastructure with Meadow Drive.

Progress10 *note that this is an opportunity to manage the design in accordance with Manual for Streets guidance and that this would offer the opportunity for formal highway adoption, without slavish adherence to more traditional, residential design guide requirements.*

2.3 Safe operation of the proposed Bank Street junction.

The A521 Bank Street operates safely as a one-way road. There are no road traffic crashes recorded in the last 5 years along its length (Crash Map data).

There are a number of slight injury accidents recorded in the general highway area, however it is noted that these RTC's tend to be clustered around junction nodes where there is greater interaction between vehicles and/or other highway users.

Progress10 consider that given the proposed junction provides egress visibility in accordance with standards and promotes low vehicle speed through the provision of a raised table junction, there is no reason why this junction design will not manage both pedestrian and vehicular traffic in an acceptable and safe manner, with the one-way flow. This junction design is very likely to operate safely in serving this small scale development.

Progress10 consider that this is an appropriate design to provide an access strategy to the permitted development and will provide appropriate transport planning for the site.

2.4 Access and egress routes from Bank Street.

The agreed junction will distribute the permitted development traffic generation onto the major road network, which converges on Cheadle town centre, simply and safely.

On site observations and anecdotal evidence agree that whilst the gyratory flow can be heavily subscribed at peak flow times, the gyratory manages the traffic volumes well and flow is maintained at a reasonable level.

The limited traffic generation from the new development would not have a material impact on the operation of the A521 gyratory flow.

In addition, it is an important factor that the approved access strategy would not place additional burden on the existing residential estate to the south of Meadow Drive, where junction turning movements have a complex relationship with peak hour highway users, from vehicles to pedestrians, especially at times of school arrival and dispersal.

3. SMD/2016/0400 – variation of conditions to allow a change in the permitted access strategy.

This recent application proposes the variation of a number of conditions, the majority of which are related to the agreed access strategy for the site under planning permission SMD/2014/0471.

In essence, this further proposal is to change the proposed access back to the original access strategy, which would access the development site from Meadow Drive and generate the development traffic through the residential area which hosts: a number of junctions, congested on-street parking and school arrival and dispersal traffic.

The route options for this access strategy are far more complex than the A521 Bank Street access and bring into play a number of highway management situations which will be considered below.

3.1 SMDC planning committee reasons for refusal.

In unanimously refusing SMD/2016/0400 on the proposed reversal of access strategy, members of the planning committee gave the following reasons for refusal on highway grounds:

- Poor traffic flow.
- Severe congestion.
- In the interests of highway safety.

All relating to the residential roads south of Meadow Drive.

Listening to the planning committee discussion and the evidence provided by both public speaking and local and county councillors, it is clear that local knowledge provides compelling concerns over the local traffic situation around the residential area south of Meadow Drive onto which the development traffic would be generated.

3.2 Site visit details.

In terms of poor traffic flow and severe congestion, site visits by **Progress10** staff demonstrated that particularly at school arrival and dispersal times, traffic is severely congested.

Residential on street parking combined with the school arrival and dispersal traffic causes significant disruption to vehicle movements generally, and particularly in and around school arrival and dispersal times.

These factors were observed to create irregular turning movements at junctions throughout the local roads to Meadow Drive as well as at the junction of Meadow Drive itself. In addition, the amount of on street parking which manifests itself both for existing residential property and for school traffic forces drivers to use the opposite side of the carriageway to progress whilst passing these parked cars, or the centre of the carriageway where cars are parked on both sides.

The regular features of parental traffic were also evident with clusters of parents chatting on footways and/or the carriageway after pupil drop-off, meaning the congested parking manifests itself for a longer than necessary period of time.

In discussion with the local school crossing patrols, at the first site visit, it was established that the local constabulary had been attending the site in order to deal with the prolific amount of parking taking place on footways and verges around school frontages.

This type of parking and manoeuvring was witnessed by **Progress10** on site and one mini-bus taxi was photographed following pupils down a footway in order to pass opposed vehicles.

Incidences of vehicles mounting footways in proximity to pedestrians was high around 3 of the 5 schools and there were many incidences of pupils walking between car turning movements across junctions.

4. School arrival and dispersal traffic.

4.1 School numbers.

The volume of school arrival and dispersal traffic in this residential area is significant as there are 5 schools in the immediate vicinity of the Meadow Drive/The Avenue junction. They are (by distance to likely drop off):

- Cheadle Primary School - 406 places (approx. 150 metres).
- Bishop Rawle Primary School – 192 places (approx. 200m).
- St Giles Primary School – 210 places (approx. 225m to drop off)
- Painsley Catholic College – 1129 places (210 6th form) (approx. 300m)
- The Cheadle Academy – 800 places (approx. 100 6th form) (approx. 375m)

This equates to 2,737 pupil places between the 5 schools with an estimated 310 places as 6th form. It is reasonable to discount these places for drop off and pick up, therefore **Progress10** consider that approximately 2,400 pupils are likely to either make their trip to school by foot or by parental vehicle.

These figures are significant and site observations demonstrate that the related pedestrian and vehicle trips generated by school arrival and dispersal traffic do create a ‘severe’ impact on the local highway infrastructure at times of peak traffic flow.

Any exacerbation of the current severe traffic congestion should be considered inappropriate if there is, as in this case, an approved access strategy which would not impact on a situation already beyond practical observed capacity at times of school arrival and dispersal.

5. Causal factors of road traffic crashes.

It is recognised within the road safety industry that traffic speed is a major causal factor in road traffic crashes (RTC's).

Progress10 recognise that traffic speed at this site is not high under the congested conditions, however even low traffic speeds can be 'too high' for conditions where drivers are keen to make progress to work through a frustrating area of congestion.

There are three other prime causal factors for RTC's which are also given high profile in the road safety industry:

- Turning movements at junctions.
- Failure to stop (rear end impact).
- Vehicle wrong course and position (overtaking and using the opposite carriageway).

All of these causal factors manifest themselves in and around the local highway infrastructure of this site during times of school arrival and dispersal.

Site observations demonstrated a number of situations of potential conflict during those times. Drivers are often baulked at local junctions or held up when trying to pass parked vehicles and driver patience was seen to be eroded in a number of instances.

This kind of regular delay, especially for local residents keen to get to work, can induce drivers to travel more quickly beyond areas of regular delay, local to their homes.

It should also be noted that parental drivers do appear to be more tolerant of the congested situation they find themselves in.

Progress10 are mindful that this type of traffic situation is a regular occurrence at schools across the country, however the concentration of schools in this small area of Cheadle leads to a very concentrated version of school arrival and dispersal traffic and this in itself deserves greater consideration in this case.

5.1 Children and road safety promotion.

Research shows that there are many: child safety, motoring organisations, Insurance Companies and national newspapers, who have reported on the significant numbers of pupils injured or killed when travelling to and from school in traffic situations.

- **Making the Link** is a child accident protection trust which supports senior practitioners and policymakers working to prevent unintentional injury to children and young people in England. They have used Dept of Transport data to support their views that there is still much work to be done in protecting children from road related injury or death.
- The **Automobile Association** have shown within recent reports that 20% of child deaths and injuries nationally are related to school trips at arrival and dispersal times.
- **The BBC** recently reported that National Insurance companies indicated that*: 'More than 1,000 children a month are being injured on local roads around British schools, insurance industry figures indicate. Insurers also say 37% of local school areas had at least one child road injury each year from 2006 to 2011.'*
- **The Independent newspaper** has given supporting evidence to the national concerns over child road traffic crashes involving children around schools stating: '*Research shows more than half a million vehicle collisions on roads around schools in UK from 2006 to 2011, resulting in more than 85,000 child casualties.'*

National statistics do show a slow decline in the numbers of child/school injuries on public highways in recent years up to 2015 however the general consensus in the industry remains one for the need to continuously pursue improvements to child safety on Britain's roads, particularly around schools at arrival and dispersal times.

Indeed, **THINK Road Safety (Think.direct.gov.uk),** issued this statement in a recent publication on child safety when travelling to and from school and has developed education packs for schools on children and road safety management. The pack is aimed at Key Stage 3, age 11 – 14.

'Causes of accidents.

Introduction: Many people are unaware that the number of fatalities among young people caused by road accidents is higher than deaths from many other external causes, including some which receive much more publicity from the media.

There is a need for all those involved with children to teach clear road safety messages effectively and consistently, working together to help children understand and manage risk.

This is one of six Lesson Packs aimed at Key Stage 3. The others are:

• *Crossing the road safely on your own*

• *Planning a journey*

• *Challenging risky behaviour*

• *Cycle safety • Dealing with distractions Each Lesson Pack contains a Lesson Plan and a range of resources to help deliver the lesson.*

All the THINK! resources you need can be accessed via the THINK!

Resource Centre (http://think.direct.gov.uk/resource-centre).'

It is clear that at national level and through high profile and other national bodies, including Government, that requirements and initiatives to promote highway safety for children have high profile.

It is also clear that any proposal which has the potential to give detriment to child road safety would not comply with those requirements and initiatives.

Progress10 consider that in this case, the maintenance of the approved access strategy for the Meadow Drive site would be appropriate.

5.2 Taking a view of proposed access strategy from Meadow Drive.

Clearly, the issues surrounding the potential conflict between school pupils and other highway traffic at times of arrival and dispersal are a high profile subject across many organisations promoting road safety or having an involvement with it.

The causal factors noted above in this report at 5., are clear evidence of potential risks to highway safety, that pupils travelling to the local schools, particularly as pedestrians, have to negotiate on a daily basis.

In addition, there are other issues that manifest themselves around school arrival and dispersal times which can influence child behaviour and take attention away from the potential traffic hazards that have to be negotiated safely on a daily basis:

- The kicking of a ball.

- Showing off.
- Chase or run away.
- Hurrying in adverse weather.

To name but a few.

Clearly the mindful environment of pupils with a life full of distractions and learning puts them in a more vulnerable position as regular users of the public highway.

The above instances combined with: vehicle turning movements, vehicles in the wrong course or position, and emerging from between parked cars are all vehicle related manoeuvres which complicate the traffic environment for both the pupils and the drivers.

With so much to observe as a careful pedestrian or driver, this combination of events brings such a complex situation that details are likely to be missed at some point, and the focus of child injuries in traffic situations around school environments is clearly documented in the references above at 5.1.

5.3 Conclusion on causal actors.

Progress10 consider that any increase in this type of traffic/pedestrian situation can only exacerbate the potential for RTC's involving pupils travelling to and from school and should be avoided.

The causal factors considered above are not just common to this site in Cheadle but are common nationally and are the primary factors in child road traffic crash injuries on the public highway around local schools.

Despite the slow decline in injury figures it is a common opinion that more needs to be done to improve both road safety education for young highway users.

In the meantime, the current situation exists and any proposal which would increase the congestion hazard, and traffic flow conflicts, which manifest themselves in an area, should be avoided.

Progress10 consider that the evidence presented above does support the reasons for refusal which were contained within the resolution to refuse Planning Application SMD/2016/0400.

6. Access and egress routes from Meadow Drive.

In order to assess the appropriateness of the Meadow Drive access strategy in the SMD/2016/0400 application and judge it against the reasons for refusal in the decision notice dated 20/01/2017, site visits have been conducted to observe traffic conditions.

The residential roads south of Meadow Drive are treated with traffic calming schemes which utilise old specification speed ramps (as opposed to 'humps'), which have clearly been in place for many years, as the design suggests they date back to original guidance.

This type of feature can cause irregular vehicle movements, especially when parking or manoeuvring around obstruction at low speed.

The observed traffic conditions will be considered against the evidence above in 5., related to the causal factors of road traffic crashes recognised within national body reports from road safety organisations to government departments.

6.1 The Meadow Drive access strategy.

In contrast to the approved A521 Bank Street access, the Meadow Drive access strategy is far more complex and will create a significant increase in the opportunity for the escalation of potential hazard through pedestrian/vehicular or vehicle/vehicle conflict.

The multiple residential roads with regular private points of access and multiple junctions, combined with residential on street parking at all times, plus additional congested parking at school times, mean that the density of potential conflict situations is high.

In addition, some of the road connections back to the gyratory for access to routes to the: north, west and east are both narrow and tortuous.

Lid Lane and Watt Place are two narrow carriageways with limited pedestrian refuge whilst Charles Street also has some restriction in width.

In addition, the on street parking ensures that at all times the local residential roads have regular restrictions to width. This parking, especially at times of school arrival and dispersal, creates significant impediment to the available visibility when emerging from junctions and frequently puts the many circulating vehicles on the opposite side of the carriageway to negotiate parked cars and therefore in the wrong course and position.

Site counts showed 28 residential vehicles parked on The Avenue alone as an example of the regular parking congestion.

School Keep Clear markings and total prohibitions of waiting fail to effectively displace on street parking away from school frontages, with parents transgressing the controls on a regular basis. This is a 'forced' situation given the severe congestion that manifests itself every day in and around the school locations.

6.2 Egress routes for non-school traffic in the morning peak hour.

In order to take access to the north, west or east when considering the Meadow Drive routes, a driver must negotiate multiple junctions.

In the morning peak flow hour this will require the daily negotiation of the heavy traffic congestion associated with the traffic conditions related to school traffic and the increase in potential hazard that is created.

To travel west, north or south-west, the likely route from Meadow Drive would be via 6 junctions and 4 roads before the driver reaches the A521 gyratory and is able to distribute onto the strategic network.

To travel east the likely route from Meadow Drive would be via 6 junctions before the driver reaches either the B5032 or the A522 and is able to distribute onto the strategic highway network.

To travel south or south-east, the likely route from Meadow Drive would be via a minimum of 4 junctions before the driver reaches the A522 and is able to distribute onto the strategic highway network.

All of these routes have the following impediment:

- Pedestrian and vehicular routes to school for approximately 2,400 pupils in morning peak flow.
- Pedestrian and vehicular routes from school for approximately 2,400 pupils in evening peak flow which can be more concentrated than morning times as the schools release pupils at similar times.
- Some narrow carriageways.
- Some highways with limited footway provision (single side provision).
- Junctions with restricted visibility, either by geometry or by on street parking.
- Footways restricted by vehicles parked on footways.

Progress10 consider that these site factors and the evidence in the report above recognise that an access strategy from Meadow Drive to serve this town centre development is not the most appropriate choice when the actual operation of the immediate highway network is considered. It represents poor transport planning even at this small scale of development.

When causal factors for RTC's are considered, choosing the Meadow Drive access route over the A521 Bank Street route is inappropriate in highway safety terms as the Meadow Drive routes provide significant opportunity for the types of highway user conflict related to the causal factors recognised in section 5., above.

Progress10 do recognise that currently the residential area does not have an injury accident record within the residential roads themselves, however Crash Map data does show that junction nodes on the A522 and the A521 (other than Bank Street), have RTC clusters with roads which lead from the considered residential area to those road junctions.

Progress10 consider that the frustration of residents negotiating the school congestion when travelling to work may contribute to haste beyond the area and this could lead to vehicles joining the strategic network, emerging with some haste instead of appropriate caution. It is possible that this is could contribute to the RTC clusters at the major route junction nodes.

The junction of Chapel Street with the A522 has a significant cluster of RTC's and **Progress10** note that this junction suffers from limited non-leading visibility. This is one of the junction nodes with a significant RTC record.

6.3 The Bank Street access and traffic generation from the town centre gyratory.

By comparison the central gyratory system for traffic in Cheadle constitutes the A521 and A522 roads. A number of routes radiate from this gyratory system which provide access to and from: Blythe Bridge, Uttoxeter, Stoke-on-Trent, Rocester, Denstone, Leek and Ashbourne.

The development site lies immediately south of the gyratory and the current planning permission allows for an agreed access onto the A521 Bank Street.

The approved access provides short circulatory routes to all of the roads that radiate from the gyratory to all of the above destinations.

The transition from site to major road network is immediate and this minimises the necessary negotiation of junctions and the potential vehicular/pedestrian conflict concerns, held by SMDC planning committee members, in their reasoning for the refusal of the return to the proposed access strategy from Meadow Drive.

Progress10 consider that the A521 Bank Street access is an appropriate and reasonable access to the proposed development site and the traffic generation from this site which is calculated in the applicants Transport Statement would be a non-material impact on the gyratory system itself.

7. Conclusion.

This report has considered the reasons for refusal which were resolved at the LPA planning committee for Planning Application: SMD/2016/0400.

The evidence in this report provides clear information to support the reasons for refusal, determined by planning committee members, on highway safety grounds.

The site has a resolved access which is accepted by both the County Highway Authority and the Local Planning Authority and this report shows that this access will distribute traffic efficiently and safely onto the major highway network, with no material impediment to existing traffic conditions. It represents good transport planning applied to small scale development in an appropriate way.

The proposal to revert to the original access strategy, which was originally refused against planning application: SMD/2014/0471, is shown to be a retrograde step in terms of: highway safety, traffic management and local transport planning.

The severe congestion and restricted traffic conditions which manifest themselves on the residential roads around the nearby schools south of Meadow Drive, provide no beneficial traffic conditions which would better serve the development.

The frequent environment of potential hazard to school children and other pedestrians, together with local drivers, should not have to sustain further congestion, frustration and delay than already exists.

Assessment of nationally recognised road traffic crash causal factors shows that those factors have high frequency on the proposed route from Meadow Drive to the major highway network past local schools.

Concerns already bring a constabulary presence to the site regarding: obstructive parking, congested traffic, hazard created by illegal parking on footways and verges and existing traffic regulation orders.

It is acknowledged that there are no current accident records in the vicinity of the school however national records demonstrate that the environment of school arrival and dispersal traffic is one of very high risk, especially to pupils and other pedestrians.

There is no compelling reason to alter the permitted access strategy in favour of one which would exacerbate the potential hazard of the current traffic environment on the residential roads south of Meadow Drive.

The evidence in the report above brings clear and cogent consideration of the real life environment, which manifests itself in the considered highway area, and highlights the hazards that are ever present in real terms.

The site observations link clearly to national concerns over road safety in this type of environment, both in detail and principle, and the evidence in this report robustly supports the reasons for refusal resolved by committee members who sit on the planning committee for Staffordshire Moorlands District Council.

A small selection of the many photographs taken at the site visit are included in the attached appendix and show a small number of the concerning traffic habits.

Minibuses driving down footways and cars reversing onto footway areas to turn are just two examples of congestion driven traffic offences which cause significant potential hazard even before more normal but restricted and tortuous vehicle manoeuvres are considered.

The proposal to change the agreed access strategy for this site to a route through Meadow Drive holds significant flaws in terms of appropriate traffic management. This proposal would exacerbate traffic conditions which are severely congested and generate further potential for conflict between pedestrians and vehicles. It would create additional hazard and be a retrograde step in terms of highway safety concerns.

Progress10 consider that the evidence contained in this report does support the given reasons for refusal on highway safety grounds and that the evidence provides robust reason to dismiss the appeal for a variation of condition on access strategy for the development in question.

Nigel Curtis I.Eng M.C.I.H.T.

Progress10 Design Ltd. July 2016.

APPENDIX 1

PHOTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE OF

ROAD TRAFFIC HAZARD

Photographic evidence.

The report above records concerns regarding traffic movements and the potentially hazardous interaction between pedestrians and vehicles.

The following photographs record just some of the instances observed by Progress10 operatives at the site visit and explanatory notes are provided.

Photo 1:

There is an abundance of on street parking by residents in the residential area surrounding the 5 local schools. This photo shows the regular occurrence of vehicles parked on the footway and obstructing junction visibility which impedes safe turning movements:

Photos 2 & 3:

These photographs show the predominance of residential on-street parking and the obstruction to both footways and carriageways it creates causing pedestrians to have to walk between vehicles and cross the carriageway to or from between parked cars or within junction turning movements.

Photo 4 & 5:

These photos show the minibus taxi about to drop off school pupils and then driving down the footway to pass the opposed vehicle which is on the side of the carriageway the minibus requires due to passing residential on street parking.

Just about to drop off pupils.

Having dropped off pupils, driving illegally along the footway behind two pupils in order to pass the red car which is forced onto the wrong side of the road by on street parking (which also obstructs the opposite side footway). Many vehicles were observed making similar manoeuvres at the site visit and in the vicinity of school frontages.

Photo 6:

6. Note the confusion in this photo. The Volvo is turning left towards the blue VW from the wrong side of the junction mouth. The VW is actually planning to go straight ahead and park on the footway. The red car is obstructed and therefore obstructs the whole carriageway. In the background more pupils cross from between cars and actually in live traffic.

Photo 7:

The Volvo has got away and the VW is parked on the footway, brake lights on so probably in gear with the clutch in. The parent has got the pupil out on the road side of the car into the carriageway, meanwhile there is more congestion in the background mixing pupils with live traffic. Note the vehicle verge damage.

Photo 8:

This photo shows a parent with nowhere else to park (legally), reversing onto the footway and verge, to allow her son to get out onto the footway.

It is clear from this photographic evidence that there is a high risk of these situations being exacerbated if further traffic is allowed to generate onto these residential roads.

Distribution List:

Teresa Critchlow – SMDC

Ben Haywood - SMDC

File copy

Report No: P10-0053-NPC

Contact:

Nigel Curtis I.Eng M.C.I.H.T.

Director

Progress10 Design Ltd.

Bumble Cottage, 15, Back Lane, Brereton, Sandbach, Cheshire, CW11 1RP.

E-mail: progress10@btinternet.com