

Substantive response of the Local Highway Authority to a planning consultation received under The Development Management Order.



Response provided under the delegated authority of the Director of Environment & Transport.

APPLICATION DETAILS:

Planning Application Number: 23/01000/FUL

Highway Reference Number: 2023/1000/04/H

Application Address: Hall Farm 16 Altar Stones Lane Markfield Leicestershire LE67 9PX

Application Type: Full

Description of Application:

Demolition of existing buildings and erection of 2no. buildings and associated parking areas, landscaping, access, solar panels, EV charging stations and other works for the purposes of car sales

GENERAL DETAILS

Planning Case Officer: Laura Ashton

Applicant: Mr Ravi Dhir

County Councillor: Cllr Peter Bedford

Parish: Markfield

Road Classification: Adopted Unclassified

Substantive Response provided in accordance with article 22(5) of The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015:

The Local Highway Authority does not consider that the application as submitted fully assesses the highway impact of the proposed development and further information is required as set out in this response. Without this information the Local Highway Authority is unable to provide final highway advice on this application.

Advice to Local Planning Authority

Background

The Local Highway Authority (LHA) is in receipt of a consultation for the demolition of existing buildings and erection of 2no. buildings and associated parking areas, landscaping, access, solar panels, EV charging stations and other works for the purposes of car sales. The site is located at Hall Farm, 16 Altar Stones Lane, Markfield.

The Applicant has submitted a Transport Statement dated 27 September 2023, authored by Vectio Consulting in support of the proposals.

It is understood the the site currently includes a three bedroom farm house with ancillary farm buildings set within 3.5 acres of land. The proposals are for the redevelopment of the site to provide a purpose built, state of the art facility for the sale of luxury cars.

It is understood the development site is split across two buildings. Building A for car storage and offices, and Building B for preparation and detailing work for the cars. Building A is to comprise a floor area of 1,330m² with storage for approximately 30-35 cars and ancillary office space. Building B would comprise of a floor area of 572m² which is to be used for preparation and detailing. Externally there would be space to store an additional 40 cars for sale purposes adjacent to Building A, as well as staff and visitor parking.

Site Access

The LHA understand that there are two existing vehicular accesses to the site. Both accesses are off Altar Stones Lane, an unclassified road which is subject to the national speed limit. One access is situated to the north of the site, whilst the other is situated to the southeast. Details of both site access arrangements are provided on Vectio Consulting drawing number 001 Rev A.

Northern Site Access

The access is situated at the end of Altar Stones Lane, which is a no through route, as shown in Figure 1.

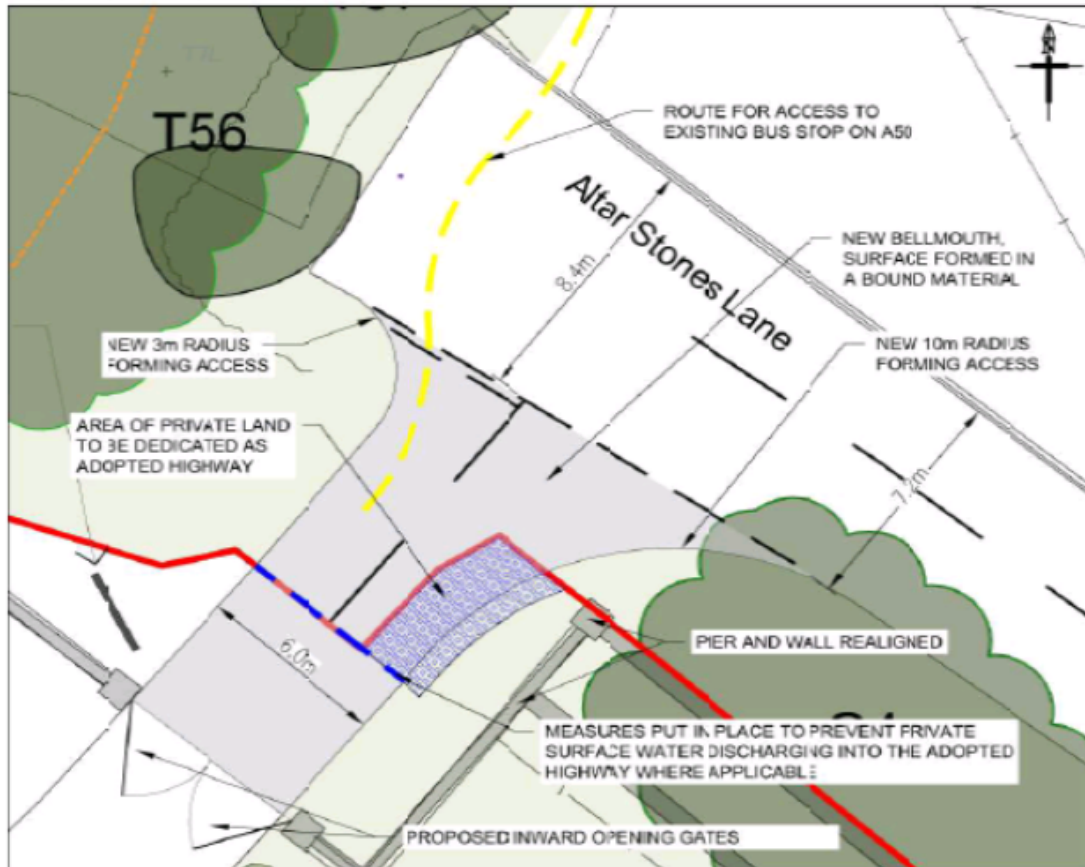


Figure 1: Proposed Northern Access.

As detailed within the TS and on Vectio Consulting drawing number 001 Rev A, the Applicant proposes to undertake improvements to the northern access. This includes the proposals to widen the access to a formal bellmouth arrangement with 6m wide access road, 10m radius bellmouth to the east, and 3m radius to the west. Part of the existing frontage wall in private land would be set back to facilitate the changes. The Applicant would also provide a drainage channel within the site to prevent surface water from flowing into the highway if required at detailed design. A set of inward opening gates are also proposed on the private access road, set back 6m from the adopted highway, and 15.5m from the access bellmouth give way line.

A vehicular visibility splay of 2.4 x 25m has been shown to the south of the access only. The Applicant has stated the splay would be suitable for vehicle speeds in a 20mph environment. Based on Part 3, Table DG4 of the Leicestershire Highway Design Guide ([LHDG] available at <https://resources.leicestershire.gov.uk/lhdg>), the LHA would usually require a visibility splay of 2.4 x 215m to be demonstrated in both directions at the site access for a road subject to the national speed limit, or a speed survey demonstrating that appropriate visibility can be achieved in line with the recorded speeds of passing traffic. However, under the site specific circumstances the LHA accept it is highly unlikely vehicles would be travelling in excess of 20mph on approach to the site access, given it is situated at the end of the road. As such, the LHA consider it would not be necessary for the Applicant to demonstrate visibility by means of a speed survey.

It is understood that the Applicant intends to dedicate an area of the proposed access/ turning head as highway as shown on the drawing, otherwise a section of the turning head would fall within private land.

Swept path analysis of a car and a refuse collection vehicle have been provided showing both vehicles turning left in to and right out of the site. While the Applicant has stated that vehicle transporters would not be required to transport vehicles to the site, given the land use of the site would be for car sales and the fact that the occupier or site requirements could change over time, the LHA consider it is reasonable that swept path analysis of a vehicle transporter is provided. At present, the LHA has no evidence that such a vehicle could safely access or turn within the site. The LHA therefore requests that swept path analysis of a vehicle transporter is also provided which shows such a vehicle arriving, departing and turning within the site.

The LHA would also request that an independent Stage 1 Road Safety Audit (RSA1) is undertaken of the site access proposals. A Designer's Response to any problems raised would be required, along with a revised drawing if necessary.

Southeastern Access

The southeastern access is located on a separate arm of Alter Stones Lane. This is also subject to the national speed limit and a no through route, however is a single track road.

2.0 x 12m vehicle visibility splays have been shown on the drawing, which would be suitable for a road with vehicle speeds of 10mph. The Applicant has advised that the southeastern access would be maintained in its current form, other than the removal of vegetation and potentially replacement security gates. It is stated that there is no intention to replace the existing gravel surface and that the access would not be used by staff or visitors/ customers.

On the basis the access does not appear to be proposed for use by visitors/ staff and given the short visibility splays, the LHA requests clarity as to situations where the access would be used, along with the types of vehicles which could use the access and the anticipated frequency of use. Given the main access to the north, the LHA also request clarity as to whether this access could be permanently closed instead of remaining available.

The LHA will give further consideration to the southeastern access following further information being provided by the Applicant.

Highway Safety

The Applicant has used Crashmap in order to ascertain Personal Injury Collision (PIC) data for Altar Stones Lane, a section of the A50 as well as a section of Whitwick Road and the slip roads leading to the A50. The full area is detailed within the Applicants TS. PIC data was obtained for between 2017 and 2021. The Applicant has identified a total of four PIC's which occurred between these dates, including one serious PIC and three slight.

The LHA advise that the Applicants subsequent analysis of the PIC's refers to four PIC's with slight severity, and no reference to a PIC which was serious in severity. Furthermore, the PIC analysis does not appear to consider the most recent five year period and the LHA are unable to find a record of the PIC which occurred in 2019, based on its own records.

The LHA hold current PIC data up to at least the end of August 2023 and is aware of additional PICs which have occurred since the dates of the Applicant own analysis. Furthermore, the LHA holds record of a serious PIC which occurred in 2021, which does not appear to have been considered by the Applicant. The LHA therefore request the Applicant undertakes a further review of PIC data given the discrepancies in the analysis.

PIC data can be obtained from Leicestershire County Council by contacting NDI@leics.gov.uk, should the Applicant wish to do so.

Trip Generation

The Applicant has undertaken an assessment of the level of traffic the proposals could generate based on a first principles approach. This is on the basis that a total of 25 members of staff could be employed and could generate 25 arrival movements during the AM peak hour (which the Applicant states to be between 08:30 and 09:30 and 25 departures during the PM peak hour (stated as between 16:30 and 17:30).

The Applicant states that one to two new car deliveries per weekday would be forecast. These would be driven to the site by staff and not arrive on a transporter. In addition, one to two deliveries per weekday are anticipated, including post and package deliveries, along with 'preparation operation' deliveries on a monthly basis. In terms of customer visits, it is stated these would be strictly on an appointment only basis, with up to two appointments occurring at any one time.

The LHA advise that car showrooms are one of the categories that are available on the TRICS database, it is therefore suggested that the Applicant compares the suggested trip rates with those to other sites on the TRICS database. While the Applicant states the site is of specialist nature, there is potential for the type and price of cars sold on site to change over time. The TS also states that the Applicant has an existing site on Shaw Lane, it is unclear whether the proposals would result in a relocation of the existing business. Nevertheless, it may be possible for the Applicant to provide actual data in respect of trip rates, factored up from a survey of the existing site traffic generated by the existing development as further evidence of trip rates.

It should be noted the submitted Transport Statement details the site would be operational between 08:30 and 17:00 during weekdays and 08:30 - 15:00 on Saturdays, while the application form states 08:00 - 18:00 on weekdays and 08:00 - 15:00 during Saturdays.

Junction Capacity Assessments/ Off-Site Implications

The LHA advises at this stage that the Applicant may be required to undertake further consideration of the impact of the development on the Ratby Lane, A50 Leicester Road/ Leicester Road/ Markfield Lane roundabout (Field Head roundabout). This would include trip distribution

analysis and a capacity assessment of the roundabout. The LHA is aware that the roundabout is operating over capacity during the peak hours, and it may be necessary for the Applicant to contribute towards the Coalville Transport Strategy which would deliver improvements to the junction. The LHA will give further consideration to this following the submission of updated trip generation data.

Internal Layout

Details of the sites internal layout are provided on Thinking Buildings drawing number 0050 Rev P09. The TS details that the parking area adjacent to Building A would facilitate parking for 40 cars to be stored / displayed, being parked by site staff. The parking area adjacent to Building B would be for staff comprising of 22 tandem spaces, whilst the four parking bays on the entrance drive will be for visitors.

While it would be preferable for staff parking not to be fully in a tandem arrangement, it is accepted that staff familiarity and working patterns would mean that parking arrangements could be managed internally. As such and given the scale of the proposals, the LHA consider it is unlikely staff vehicles would be parked within the highway. The LHA consider the number of visitor car parking spaces to be acceptable.

Highway Trees

The LHA is aware of a group of highway trees fronting the site. It is noted the Applicant has submitted a tree survey report and the LHA note a number of trees would require removal to facilitate the site access. The LHA will give further consideration to the highway trees once it is satisfied the access is suitable to cater for a vehicle transporter accessing / egressing the site. It should be noted at this stage that the LHA may require remuneration for the loss of any highway trees.

Transport Sustainability

The site is somewhat detached from the village of Markfield and there are no footways or street lighting along Altar Stones Lane. A footway link is however provided to the bus stop on the westbound A50 which is served by regular bus services to Coalville and Swadlincote. While pedestrians are required to cross the A50, a bus stop serving regular bus services to Leicester is situated on the eastbound carriageway. Overall, given the scale and nature of the proposals, the LHA do not have any further comments in respect of transport sustainability.

Closing

Based on the above, the following information should be submitted to the LPA for consideration by the LHA:

- Swept path analysis of a vehicle transporter, along with a RSA1 of the site access;
- Clarification as to the level and frequency of use of the southern access as well as the type of vehicles which would use it, or preferably, a drawing detailing the permanent closure of the southern access;
- Further consideration of PICs on the surrounding highway network;
- Further consideration in respect of trip generation using TRICS and potentially actual data from the Applicants existing site.
- Consideration of the impact of the development on the Field Head junction may also be required.

Date Received
24 October 2023

Case Officer
Ben Dutton

Reviewer
DH

Date issued
23 November 2023