



17/1320/FUL | Construction of 61 dwellings with associated public open space, infrastructure and landscaping. | Land At Sandrock Gipsy Hill Lane Exeter EX1 3RP

5th October 2017

Dear Matthew

Exeter Cycling Campaign strongly object to the proposed development. We have reviewed all application documents and make particular reference to the External Works Plan (17014 L01.02) and Highways Works Plan (1135 0700 P3). We also note that the Transport Assessment dates from a previous application 2012 and does not take account of fundamental changes to the design of the highway network in the vicinity. Our full reasons for objection are below.

1. Negative Safety Impact on Pinn Lane Pedestrian and Cycle Route (inc. E4 Strategic Cycle Route)

Devon County Council (DCC) 'stopped up' Pinn Lane in 2014 to eliminate through traffic. This served two purposes:

1. To create a quiet pedestrian and cycle route providing a safe route to school and delivering on the adopted Monkerton Masterplan; and
2. To improve the safety and accessibility of the strategic E4 cycle route connecting the city centre with Cranbrook, Skypark and Exeter Science Park – the E4 route crosses Pinn Lane and includes Gipsy Hill Lane and Hollow Lane;.

At the February 2014 planning committee meeting in which the stopping up of Pinn Lane (13/5032/02) was considered, Ms T. Jackson, speaking in support of the proposal for DCC, stated that 'the key issue is Pinn Lane's crossing point with the Gipsy Hill Lane/Hollow Lane route which forms a strategic cycle corridor and a safe route to school; very important to make this junction as free of traffic as possible on safety and sustainability grounds' (taken from the published minutes on Exeter City Council's website - <http://committees.exeter.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=22855>)

For context, Pinn Lane is currently heavily used by people walking and cycling from Pinhoe to their place of work at the Exeter Business Park and Sowton (e.g. EDF, Met Office). It is also used by pupils and staff walking and cycling to/from St Lukes School and Exeter College Technology Centre via Hollow Lane, and is crossed by people cycling to/from their place of work at Exeter Science Park and Skypark on the eastern edge of Exeter. The volume of people walking and cycling along these routes is growing as the major urban extensions at Monkerton and Pinhoe are built out, and as new employment space is built at Exeter Business Park, Science Park and Skypark. The condition of these lanes is not optimal due to often narrow width, poor sightlines and lack of footways or cycleways. In several places Pinn Lane is too narrow for two cars to pass without forcing pedestrians and cyclists to stop and wait against adjoining hedgerows. The success of Pinn Lane and surrounding lanes as quiet pedestrian and cycle routes is therefore entirely dependent on the absence,

or extremely low volumes, of vehicle traffic. DCC's decision to stop-up the lane has largely succeeded in this regard, and any increase in vehicle traffic beyond that associated with existing dwellings and hotels accessed from the Lane would be detrimental and unacceptable.

According to the plans submitted with this application from Linden Homes, Pinn Lane will be the sole vehicular access for the proposed development. All traffic to/from the site will have to drive along the full length of Pinn Lane from its junction with Grenadier Road. This fundamentally undermines DCC's strategy and investment of turning the Lane into a quiet route for pedestrians and cyclists.

It also poses significant safety risks by increasing conflict between cars accessing/leaving the proposed development, and people walking and cycling along Pinn Lane. A particular danger spot is the junction of Pinn Lane, Gipsy Hill Lane and Hollow Lane, where people cycling along the E4 route cross Pinn Lane east-west. This includes children and staff walking and cycling to/from St Lukes School and Exeter College, and potentially the Ellen Tinkham School on Hollow Lane. The location where E4 crosses Pinn Lane is a high point, with the road dropping away either side. Visibility is therefore poor, and the risk of collisions is high as drivers will not be expecting pedestrians and cyclists crossing and vice versa.

A further area of the conflict would be created at the main entrance to the proposed development, where vehicles are given priority over cyclists just after the point where Pinn Lane has been stopped up. This contradicts all best practice in highway design and the hierarchy of modes. The proposed stop line for cyclists is also located shortly after an incline from the Tithe Barn Link Road and would significantly degrade the convenience and usability of the route. People cycling would lose all momentum and those using larger cargo bikes, tag alongs or adapted cycles in particular may struggle to restart on the hill.

In short, the creation of a new vehicle access from Pinn Lane (or Gipsy Hill Lane) would significantly degrade a crucial part of Exeter's strategic cycle network, which DCC have invested money to improve. More importantly, it would also increase the risk of collisions at the junction of Gipsy Hill Lane, Hollow Lane and Pinn Lane, which is key node for people walking and cycling to access school and work. It would conflict with the hierarchy of modes, local and national policies on sustainable transport. Ultimately it would not constitute sustainable development.

An acceptable alternative would be to provide vehicle access from the newly constructed Tithe Barn Link Road to the north. This would make best use of infrastructure, be in keeping with the distributor function of this road (connecting directly to Cumberland Way) and preserve the integrity of Pinn Lane as a quiet route forming a key link to E4. Exeter Cycling Campaign would have no objection to a revised proposal that gained vehicle access from Tithe Barn Link Road only, subject to side road priority for pedestrians and cyclists travelling along the Link Road and good connectivity to the new bidirectional section of E4 on Cumberland Way to the east.

Failing this, the next best alternative would be to create a dedicated pedestrian and cycle priority route running parallel to the main Pinn Lane carriageway. This could be in the form of a new path of equal width running parallel to the lane on the opposite side of the hedgerow, or a variation on the 'Dutch Rural Road' typology. To be effective, this would require a priority route to be created along the full length of Pinn Lane to ensure that the negative impact of increased traffic could be adequately mitigated. There would still be an increase in vehicle traffic on the Lane and negative effect in terms of

safety. As such this approach would be substandard and Exeter Cycling Campaign would expect to see a very strong justification and a much greater S106 financial contribution to improve sustainable transport infrastructure in the area.

2. Layout and Quality of Street Design/Surfacing

The majority of the site does not have dedicated footways, instead relying on layout to create a low speed environment. Exeter Cycling Campaign accept that this approach can be acceptable if the 'Home Zone' approach is done well through elimination of kerb lines and use of non bituminous/ macadam surfaces . However, the proposed development proposes standard black macadam surfacing on almost all roads and 0.5m services strips (see legend of Proposed Highways Layout). The elimination of footways while using standard macadam surfacing and flush kerbs to delineate service strips is often not understood by the general public, be they walking, cycling or driving. The service strips effectively look like extremely narrow pavements. Too often, it leads to cars parking inappropriately and a continued sense of vehicle priority among people walking, cycling or driving. People driving expect pedestrians to get out of their way, and people walking and cycling often feel like they are obstructing the road, as the materials used mirror those of a standard road for cars. Ultimately, the environment created is one that discourages walking and cycling and encourages vehicle use. We therefore strongly advise that a proper Home Zone approach is adopted with distinct surfacing, landscaping and elimination of kerblines and standard macadam surfacing to create a sense of pedestrian and cycle priority. If this is not adopted, then it is essential that a shared pedestrian and cycle path is provided along the spine road and that this is a minimum of 3m wide to comply with relevant DfT guidance.

3. Relevance of Previous Planning Permission and subsequent changes to highway network

Exeter Cycling Campaign note that permission has previously been granted for a similar development on this site. However, the baseline has fundamentally changed since that time:

1. At the time of the previous application, Pinn Lane had not been stopped up for vehicles, as discussed earlier in this response. It was therefore not a key part of the sustainable transport network as it is now;
2. The Tithe Barn Link Road had not been constructed. Therefore, an alternative and more appropriate vehicular access was not available, as it is now;
3. DCC had not started work on their strategic cycle network plan. This is now in place, with Gipsy Hill Lane, Hollow Lane and Pinn Lane forming a crucial part of this and providing links to the new bidirectional section of the E4 route starting construction this autumn on Cumberland Way.

On this basis, there cannot be a presumption that the principle of the development on this site is acceptable, as the degree of change in the area is such that the impacts of the scheme are now significantly greater.

Yours sincerely
Bridget Walton

for and on behalf of:

EXETER CYCLING CAMPAIGN

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Figure A (above). Looking south from the new TitheBarn Link Road towards Pinn Lane. The Lane was closed to vehicles at this location to allow pedestrian and cycle access only;

Figure B (below): Looking north along Pinn Lane, before the route was closed to vehicles. The cycle only access shown in Figure A is located in the foreground of the image shown in Figure B, with the proposed site access on the right.



Figure C & D: Looking south to the junction of Pinn Lane, Gipsy Hill Lane and Hollow Lane. Sightlines are poor with the access/exit from Gipsy Hill Lane and Hollow Lane concealed. This is a key node on the pedestrian and cycle network, used by commuters and children travelling to school. The need to reduce and minimise vehicle traffic at this junction on safety and sustainability grounds was stressed by Devon County Council in relation to application 13/5032/02.



