

HARROGATE BOROUGH COUNCIL
DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
Consultancy Team: Landscape Architecture

Date: 20 September 2018

Development Control Response for Officer: Mike Parkes

Planning Application Ref: 18/00123/EIAMAJ

Proposal: Outline application for proposed Motorway Service Area to the West side of the A1(M) with vehicular over bridge to and from southbound carriageway and partial diversion of the A168, including associated infrastructure and staff access from B6265.

Location: Land Comprising OS Field 3300 Marton Le Moor North Yorkshire

CONTEXT

The site is located on the A1(M) north of Kirby Hill on the north side of the B6265 Boroughbridge to Ripon Road. The site has been subject to previous planning applications refused at appeal. This application differs in that the Motorway service area (MSA) will be located on just one side of the A1. As a result the land take proposed has reduced from previous applications which were for on line facilities on both sides of the motorway. Land take is still needed on the east side to provide a slip road and fly over and to accommodate the necessary realignment of the A168.

PROPOSAL

The proposal is for a MSA on the west side of the A1 north of the fly over for the B6265. The development includes a slip road and a flyover for north bound traffic on the east side of the A1(M) requiring realignment of the A168.

The application is an outline application but includes detail on the new junction and an illustrative landscape master plan and a landscape parameters plan. The scheme includes a building, parking for cars, caravans and lorries, a petrol station and a drive thru'. The development will require earthworks that will result and changes to land form within the redline boundary for the site. The outline proposals include building design that incorporates green roofs to help reduce the prominence of the development.

COMMENTS

The scheme is located in open countryside in Harrogate District Landscape Character Area (LCA) 81: Dishforth and surrounding Farmland. This is a large scale landscape punctuated by villages, hamlets and farmsteads traditionally surrounded by small fields. The open flat landscape has limited tree cover and there are extensive views across the area towards the North York Moors in the east. The A1(M) corridor dissects the area and there are a few large scale developments in the open landscape that are detractors. The LVIA submitted with the EIA provides a detailed description of the landscape at a local, regional and national level.

The impact of a scheme on landscape character and visual amenity is assessed by determining the sensitivity of the landscape or view to change alongside the scale of the change. The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Guidelines Third edition provides guidance on the assessment of effects and the method submitted with the LVIA has followed this guidance.

Landscape sensitivity is determined by assessing the value of the landscape and its susceptibility to change as a result of the proposal. A number of criteria can be used to assess the value of the landscape. In the case of the landscape receptor for this scheme the condition (or quality) of the landscape is medium. There is some fragmentation and loss of field boundaries and also a few

detractors but generally the landscape is in good condition. There are extensive views across the area which contributes to its scenic value. The B6265 is a tourist route to Ripon and Newby Hall and therefore has some recreation value. Overall the value of the landscape is assessed to be medium. The susceptibility of the landscape to the loss of the field alone is low. However the open rural landscape has high susceptibility to the introduction of large scale development that is uncharacteristic and would add to existing detractors in the area. The development would result in changes to landform on site, the introduction of a new building and extensive areas of car parking plus a fly over and new lighting. Therefore susceptibility to change as a result of the development is high. Overall landscape sensitivity to the proposed development is assessed to be medium to high.

The magnitude of change is large because this is a new development in an open landscape that will appear 'boxed in'. The proposals seek to link the development with the surrounding landscape through planting of native hedgerows and clumps of trees rather than screen the development in full. This approach is welcomed. Landform within the site and green roofs to the buildings are also proposed to help the development blend with its surroundings. The addition of a flyover that will be lit would add to the adverse effects of the existing flyover for the B6265 and the realignment of the A168 would widen the road corridor in this area. The type of development proposed is linked to the A1(M) corridor but would result in a considerable widening of the motorway's influence in the area resulting in a large scale impact on the local landscape. The LVIA fails to recognise that the effect of the scheme would cause significant harm to the local landscape as a result of widening the A1 corridor and extending its influence in this area.

The visual assessment submitted with the planning application has assessed the potential visibility of the scheme from agreed viewpoints. Overall the assessment has determined that none of the agreed viewpoints would experience significant adverse effects. However in my view the scale of the impact on views which are currently rural with no similar development visible has been underestimated.

The assessment states that the proposed development would be inconspicuous due to landform and vegetation cover. However the visualisations show that the development would be visible from several view points in a landscape where currently the view is of an open rural landscape where the A1 corridor is discernible but not prominent. The introduction of uncharacteristic elements to views where there are currently no detractors would have a larger scale of impact.

The LVIA has determined that the visual effect from viewpoint 11 is not significant. However, this viewpoint is on a tourist route that leads to Ripon Cathedral and Newby Hall and should be assessed to be of higher sensitivity as a result. The viewpoint is from the roundabout rather than the road bridge and so the views are oblique. From the bridge the scale of the effects would be considerably larger as there would be clear views onto the site and the impact would be significant.

Viewpoints 8 and 9 are high sensitivity receptors and the proposed development adds uncharacteristic features associated with the road corridor to the open rural view. The scale of change is medium and the overall significance is medium to high adverse and therefore significant.

Skelton Windmill is a listed buildings and a high sensitivity residential receptor that will overlook the site to the east. It is predicted that the development would result in significant visual effects from this property.

SUMMARY

The development proposal for an MSA in this area is an improvement on previous proposals as it's footprint is reduced and the services would be located on just one side (the west side) of the motorway. However this is negated to some extent by the need for a fly over to serve north bound traffic and the need to re align the A168 resulting in a widening of the A1 corridor in this rural open landscape.

Mitigation measures proposed may reduce the prominence of the buildings on site but the need for lighting and a new bridge with lighting across the A1 would increase the visibility of the development.

The widening of the A1 corridor in this location impacts on landscape character and would have a significant adverse effect on local landscape character.

RELEVANT LANDSCAPE PLANNING POLICY

National Planning Policy Framework July 2018

Section 3 Plan Making

Strategic Policies para 20

Strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development and make sufficient provision (in line with the presumption for sustainable development) for:

- d) conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.*

Section 12 Achieving well-designed places

Para 127

Planning policies and decisions should ensure that development:

- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities)*

Section 15 Conserving and enhancing the Natural Environment

Para 170

Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);*
- b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and trees and woodland;*
- c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access where appropriate;*
- d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;*
- e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should wherever possible improved local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and*
- f) Remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.*

Para 180

Planning policies and decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking account of likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development. In doing so they should:

- c) limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscape and nature conservation.*

Core Strategy (February 2009)

- EQ2: The Natural and Built Environment and Greenbelt

Saved Local Plan policies:

- C1: Nidderdale AONB
- C2: Landscape Character.

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