

Officers Report

SOUTH 3/2/03

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| REGISTERED NUMBER: | 5/02/2112 – FULL |
| APPLICANT: | Stackbourne Ltd |
| PROPOSAL: | Construction of new access road |
| SITE: | Smallford Works, Smallford Lane, St Albans |
| DATE OF APPLICATION: | 28.10.02 |
| HISTORIC BUILDING GRADE: | Unlisted |
| CONSERVATION AREA: | No |
| DISTRICT PLAN REVIEW: | Metropolitan Green Belt |

Background

Smallford Works is located on the west side of Smallford Lane, the site area extending to about 5.2ha.

The land is used as depots for the storage of vehicles, plant, machinery, and materials, this use having taken place for many years.

The existing vehicular access is from Smallford Lane, opposite the junction with Sleapshyde Lane, this serving the whole of the site by an internal roadway.

It is proposed to provide a new access from Smallford Lane at a point 117m north of that existing, this leading into a new access road 75m long, connecting to the existing roadway. The new road would be 6.5m wide, and its construction would involve the removal of a length of about 18m of the hedgerow along the highway frontage.

Relevant Planning Policy

St. Albans District Local Plan Review 1994:

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| Policy 1 | Metropolitan Green Belt |
| Policy 24 | Unallocated Employment Sites |
| Policy 34 | Highways Considerations in Development Control |
| Policy 143A | Watling Chase Community Forest |

Relevant Planning History

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|-------------|--|
| 5/88/0175 | Development of business park – Refused 31.3.88 |
| 5/88/0852 | Development of business park – Refused 29.6.88 |
| 5/88/1880 | Development of business park – Refused 10.12.88 |
| 5/94/1656CE | Certificate of Lawfulness for Class B2 and B8 uses – Refused 18.5.95 |
| 5/95/1564CE | Certificate of Lawfulness for Class B2 and B8 uses – Refused 4.4.96 |

Representations

Colney Heath Parish Council

Would like the following comments and objections noted:

1. Members have grave concerns that this new access road will open the Smallford Works for further development. The site is in Green Belt and industrial development has previously been refused.
2. Members raise concerns about the long term plans for the site and suspect that the considerable investment required for the entrance is a prelude to other plans for inappropriate development of this Green Belt site.

3. The proposed entrance poses danger for road users. The entrance is within 25m of a tight bend, there are therefore poor sight lines here, particularly to the north.
4. The road has a 40mph limit but frequently vehicles travel at much higher speeds. There is a weight limit on the bridge to the north and Members are very concerned that heavy vehicles might be tempted to come south over the bridge from the Hatfield Road (this is already a problem). It would be dangerous for articulated vehicles illegally coming from the north to turn right at this point.
5. The present entrance already causes considerable noise nuisance for residents. Much of this is due to lorries without operators' licences or through frequent use outside permitted hours, e.g. 4am lorry departures and frequent Sunday use.
6. If permitted, Members believe the existing entrance should be closed and landscaped. They do not believe an emergency exit is necessary. Landscaping of the new road and footpath should be a condition of approval and the existing drainage ditch should be retained and improved as the area has been known to flood.

Adjoining Occupiers

Nos. 18-22 Smallford Lane, 1a Sleapshyde Lane were notified on 1.11.02.

Letters of objection have been received from the occupiers of 20 and 22 Smallford Lane, expressing concern in respect of additional traffic, causing loss of amenity, highway dangers, pollution, and loss of trees.

Consultations:

Hertfordshire Highways

Advise that any permission should be subject to a legal agreement to require the provision of the highway works as shown on the submitted drawing, to include the diversion of the highway ditch, the construction of a culvert, and the provision of a right turn lane in Smallford Lane.

Vivendi Water

Site is within the groundwater protection zone of Roestock Pumping Station and construction works should be done in accordance with British Standards and Best Management practices to reduce the groundwater pollution risk.

Discussion

The issues in this case are the highway aspects of the proposal, the effect on the amenity of nearby residents, and on the appearance of the locality.

Although the existing uses on this site do not have the benefit of planning permission, no enforcement action may now be taken, due to the passage of time. In the circumstances, it is considered appropriate that the best access possible should be provided, taking into account the above factors.

The existing access is poor in terms of position, as it is directly opposite the junction with Sleapshyde Lane, and therefore results in conflicting vehicular movements. It is also close to those residential properties on the eastern side of Smallford Lane, and the deceleration and acceleration of heavy vehicles entering and leaving the site, with associated increased levels of noise and pollution, must result in some detriment to amenity.

The re-siting of the access to a position 117m north of that existing would improve highway safety by removing the conflict with the road junction, and also enabling a right turn lane to be provided. Heavy vehicles have to access the site from the south, due to the weight

restriction on the former railway bridge to the north. The new position of the access would mean that such vehicles would have to drive past four additional residential properties (Nos. 19 to 22 inclusive, Smallford Lane), but any detriment caused by this must be balanced against the advantages of the proposal as discussed above.

The main effect on visual amenity caused by the proposal would be the removal of some of the hedgerow along the Smallford Lane frontage, to the north and south of the new access. There is however a double hedge line along both sides of a ditch and the inner would be retained, providing screening of the site and retaining the rural character of the road. New planting should also be carried out, to ensure additional screening and to improve the visual amenity of the locality, particularly as the site is within the Watling Chase Community Forest, where Policy 143A encourages landscape conservation.

If the proposal is allowed, the existing access should be blocked up, in order to ensure that its use does not continue, and to improve visual amenity.

Subject to the above and the completion of a legal agreement with regard to the highway works, it is considered that the proposal would comply with Policies, 1, 24 and 34 of the St Albans District Local Plan Review 1994, and that on balance permission should be granted. This recommendation is made, having regard to the above and to the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998.

Recommendation

That the application be **GRANTED** subject to the applicant entering into an agreement within 6 months pursuant to Section 106 of The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 in respect of the carrying out by the applicant of highway works as shown on the submitted drawing No. 50663-001/745/P/03, to include the diversion of the highway ditch, construction of a culvert, widening of Smallford Lane to provide a right turn lane, and the provision of associated signage, lighting and road markings, and subject to the following conditions:

Conditions:

1. C003 (Time Limit – Full)
2. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby agreed, details of landscaping shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and the works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details within a period of 9 months from the date of the new access first being brought into use.
3. Within a period of one month from the date of the new access first being brought into use, the existing vehicular access shall be closed and blocked off in accordance with details previously agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reasons:

1. R003
2. R182
3. In the interests of highway safety, and the visual amenity of the locality and in compliance with Policy 34 of the St Albans District Local Plan Review 1994 .

Informatives:

1. The site is within the groundwater protection zone of Roestock Pumping Station, and the applicant is advised to contact Vivendi Water at Blackwell House, Three Valleys Way, Bushey, Herts, WD23 2LB (telephone 01923 248831) prior to the commencement of development.

2. The applicant is advised that in addition to the requirement of a bond to cover the cost of the works to the public highway, there will be a requirement for a bond to cover any claims arising from the Land Compensation Act in respect of the relocated junction.

Drawing Nos: 50663-001/745/P/03, Site Plan

O.S. Grid Reference: 519802.02 206881.38

Decision Notice Code: A1

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Report written: 15.1.03 RW

Bibliography

| <u>Title of Background Documents</u> | <u>Custodian & Tel. No</u> | <u>File Location</u> |
|---|---|--|
| St Albans District Local Plan Review, 1994 | Mrs W Burt 01727 866100 Ext. 2347 | Council Offices Civic Centre St Peters Street St Albans, Herts AL1 3JE |

Relevant Previous Planning Decisions

5/88/0175 Development of business park – Refused 31.3.88
5/88/0852 Development of business park – Refused 29.6.88
5/88/1880 Development of business park – Refused 10.12.88
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Consultations

Policy – 5.11.02
Hertfordshire Highways – 27.11.02
Vivendi Water – 19.11.02

Third Party Responses

Colney Heath Parish Council – 28.11.02
Mrs F Drion, 20 Smallford Lane – 18.11.02
C Labdon, 22 Smallford Lane – 19.11.02

Section 66 Parties

The applicant.

5/02/ 21 12

Issues

Depot

Depot

Depot

B Sub Sta

The Site

SMALLFORD LANE

0 20 40 60 80 100 120 140 160 180 200 Meters



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Smallford Works, Smallford Lane, Smallford

SCALE: 1:1250

DRAWN BY: JCM

Notes:

REF:



St Albans
 CITY AND DISTRICT

49

KEY



Area 1: 22.0m²

EL 5.00 SLO

Depot

Issues

Lake

50

Issued For Information

Stackbourne Ltd.

CONSULTING ENGINEERS

URS

Building

Scale: 1:500

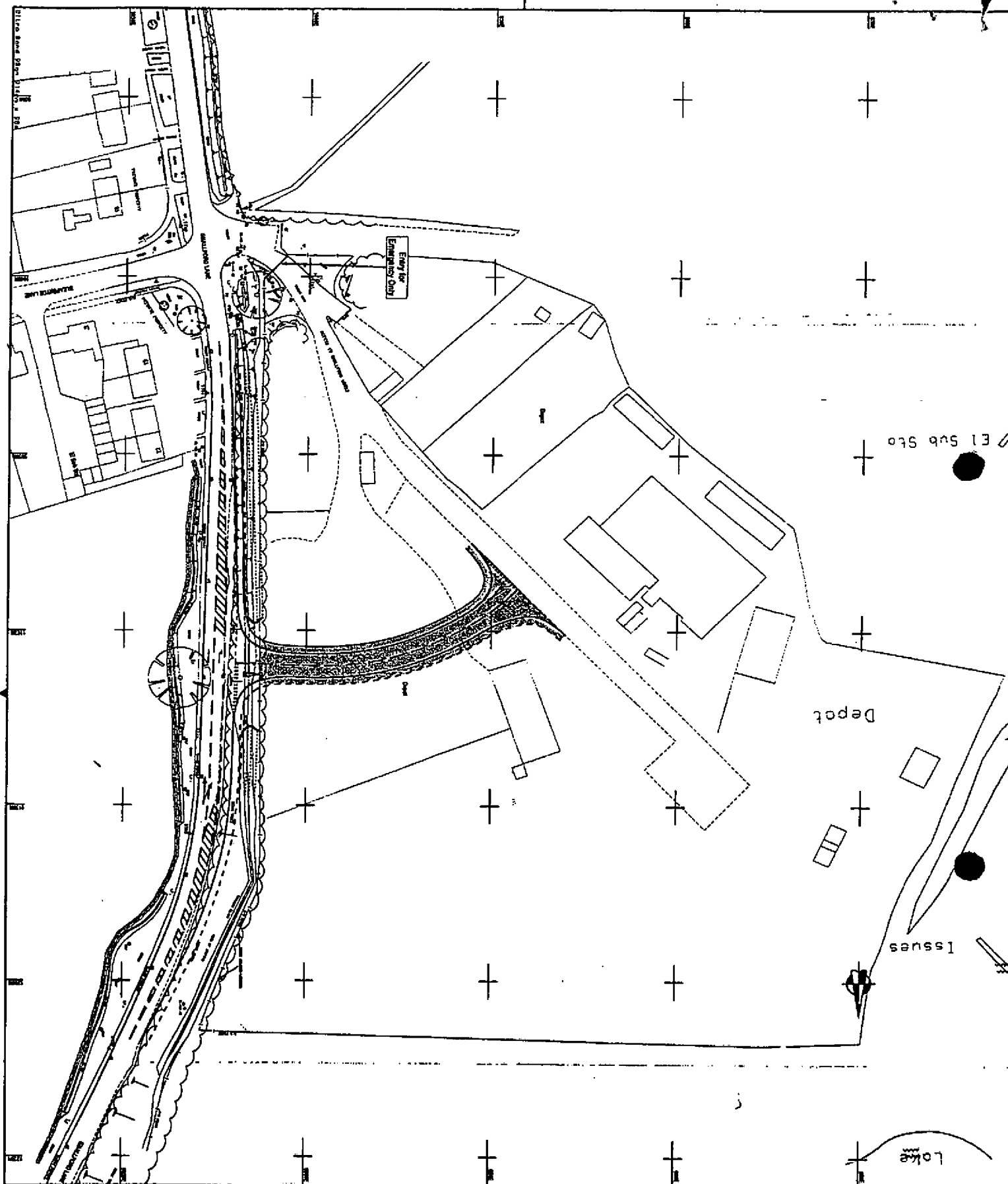
ASL: 100.00

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SMALLFORD WORKS
5/02/2112

Proposed Replacement
Site Access
Area

50653-0017/AS/PT/1



PLANS SOUTH
ALTERATIONS
3.2.03

A1 5/02/1260

1. Refe to Secretary of State.
2. S.106 Agreement.

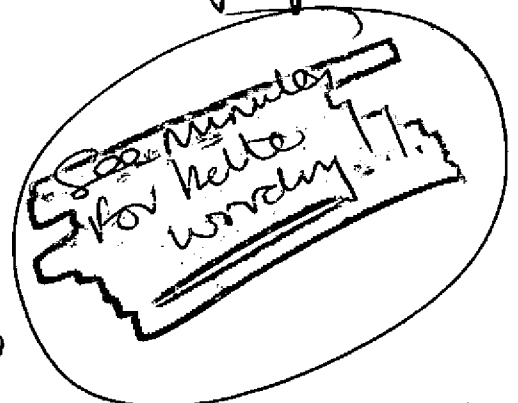
Add informative.

Accessible and appropriate accessibility to the facilities should be made available to the population of London Colney residents in terms of suitable timetables for different age groups.

A3 5/02/2049.

add condition 20

c79 obscure glazing and no new windows. Side elevation facing North and South.



A5 5/02/2112.

Section 106 Agreement.