

ACCESS

We submit that the use of Wensleydale Gardens in the short term for construction traffic and in the long term for emergency traffic is contrary to planning policy.

London Plan Policy 6.3 is concerned with the impact of new development on the local transport network. Policy 6.3A states:

“Development proposals should ensure that impacts on transport capacity and the transport network, . . . at a local level, are fully assessed. Development should not affect safety on the transport network”

Policy 6.3B “Where existing transport capacity is insufficient to allow for the travel generated by the proposed developments . . . boroughs should ensure that development proposals are phased until it is known these requirements can be met, otherwise they may be refused. “ We also refer to relevant DMP policies referred to in the Traffic section of this submission.

The objections of the DNA to the proposed access arrangements in the application centre on the proposal that Wensleydale Gardens will serve as the access for construction traffic and then replace access from Gloucester Road as the school’s emergency access.

SITUATION

Wensleydale Gardens, a wholly residential cul-de-sac with two hammerheads, was built in the 1960s and the access road is narrower than Wensleydale Road. As evidenced by the DNA Neighbour Survey, most of the residents there oppose the breaching of the cul-de-sac for construction purposes and then for emergency access. The reasons for the opposition are:

- the fear is that, despite, protestations to the contrary this may lead the school in future to press for permanent access. This is not an unfounded fear as it is clear from the Transport Assessment, citing the school’s own travel planning from at least 2008, that the governors were hoping not only to gain access for pupil drop off through Carlisle Park to the Gloucester Road site but also wanted to achieve access via other routes to the Gloucester Road site.

Wensleydale Gardens is unsuitable as an access either for construction vehicles or emergency vehicles due to:

- the limited carriageway width and the potential for damage to overhanging trees;
- the fact that the road in Wensleydale Gardens was not constructed as a main road expected to carry what would be intensive plant and HGV traffic for a substantial number of months;
- there is already extensive on-street parking by residents and commuters which means that cars are parked on both sides of the main access;

- the houses have shallow, unfenced front gardens so the impact of HGV traffic will be considerable and unpleasant.

USE FOR CONSTRUCTION TRAFFIC

Parking Restrictions Proposed: the applicant states (s. 7, Traffic Assessment) that extensive parking restrictions would be needed for the period of the construction. This would restrict the ability of residents to park outside their own homes.

- The house driveways are relatively short and any car larger than mid-size intrudes on to the pavement, giving residents no choice but to park in the road.
- In the hammerheads there is almost no kerb space for on-street parking, so that the limited amount of spaces that do currently exist are used to accommodate residents' cars, visitors' cars and in the summer when there are weekend sports activities or the cricket nets are in use a substantial amount of parking for Carlisle Park.
- Towards the south of Wensleydale Gardens, approaching the T junction with Wensleydale Road and close to the Denmead main site/pre-preparatory school, there is commuter parking every weekday, residents' parking and a great deal of parking by parents at drop-off and pick-up times for the school. As evidenced by the neighbours' survey, the road is frequently blocked as parents park and turn in the road and park on the bend at the mouth of the road. There are also problems with inconsiderate parking by some parents which prevents residents getting into or out of driveways.
- This proposal to restrict parking also takes no account of the impact this would have on access needed to provide care for elderly and disabled residents in the Gardens, many of whom have lived there since the 1960s.

Highway Safety – Access gate to Carlisle Park: the DNA wish to draw the attention of the Council to the existing, well-used pedestrian access to Carlisle Park. This lies about half way along on the western side of Wensleydale Gardens. It forms a narrow break in a solid hedge line of trees and already suffers from restricted intervisibility between vehicles travelling along Wensleydale Gardens and pedestrians who may be exiting from Carlisle Park. The situation is made worse by the lack of a pavement on the north side of Wensleydale Gardens, which means that everyone leaving the park must immediately cross the road to reach a pavement. This is not currently a major issue as the road and access is mostly used by local residents who know the situation, and also residents adapt their driving.

However, this park entrance creates road safety implications to be taken seriously if the cul de sac is to be breached and the road used by HGVs.

The Council should note that the school's Traffic Assessment incorrectly states that there is pavement all the way between Wensleydale Road and the Carlisle Park pedestrian entrance; this is untrue, as the park fence intrudes and the pavement stops opposite the entrance to the first hammerhead. It becomes a narrow concrete strip, often

overgrown. Thus all park users have to use the pavement on the east side to approach the park, and then cross the road. - in practice many walk down the road.

Possible conditions on construction traffic: If LBRuT is so minded to accept that Wensleydale Gardens provides the least worst option for construction traffic then DNA would ask them to impose conditions to protect the daily lives of the residents as far as possible during the period of construction, for example, restricting the size of vehicles which could be used to deliver materials and plant to minimise impact on houses which have very shallow open-plan front gardens; limit hours for deliveries from the 7.30-20.00 in the application to more reasonable hours; carry out a survey of the road and the houses alongside to assess likely damage and provide a baseline for judging if any damage occurs.

EMERGENCY ACCESS:

No justification for use as emergency access: all residents consulted in Wensleydale Gardens wish to see its status as a cul-de-sac restored after construction and that the school's aspiration for it to be retained as an emergency access should not be allowed.

The Gloucester Road access is currently the emergency access for the school and must therefore currently satisfy requirements for access. Despite this, the applicant claims that after construction a fire truck could not access the site safely.

We do not accept that this is the case, and understand that what the school has proposed is an aspiration rather than a response to a legislative requirement or standard. In addition, it will be seen that the design submitted makes access to the school more limited than currently. The proposed design should have sought to alleviate the pinch at the entrance point by alteration to the hall rather than making it worse. There is also no discussion of other possible steps which could be explored, such as fire hydrants, to improve fire safety and affect requirements for access.

Parking and access: if the access were to be retained after construction there could be permanent effects on parking and access for some residents in Wensleydale Gardens as parking restrictions such as yellow lines along Wensleydale Gardens might be needed to keep space clear for emergency vehicles. This, combined with pressures on parking and traffic mentioned above, would result in a significant loss of amenity for the residents.

Implications for future use for other types of access: The planning history of this site is one of incremental increase of the use of the site for purposes other than playing fields. Despite the promise that the re-developed school would house only 176 pupils there has been no consequent reduction in the size of the proposed building which could house over 200 pupils. Bearing this in mind, the residents of Wensleydale Gardens think it inevitable that the school will at some point seek to use this access for other, wider, purposes that open up the cul-de-sac to regular traffic flows. The residents are wholly against this as destructive of their amenity and regard the road as totally unsuitable for such use. Given the pressure on traffic and parking near any school, and the existing problems in Wensleydale Road and Gloucester Road, such concerns are valid

We submit that the proposals are inconsistent with planning policy and unnecessary. Construction traffic would be unsafe with a major impact on the amenity of residents, and the emergency access sought is unnecessary and self-induced, and again will adversely affect the amenity of residents now and in the future.