

Proposed Development by Cala Homes in Dollicott - Report on Roads and Traffic



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1. Introduction

Cala Homes are proposing a new development of 50 homes in the Buckinghamshire village of Haddenham. This proposed development is on the North side of the village, and the developer is proposing that the only vehicular access to the development is from a minor road called Dollicott.

This documents has been compiled by a group of local residents who oppose the suggested access arrangements to the proposed development, on the basis that:

- The additional traffic both poses an unacceptable additional risk for pedestrians and other vulnerable road users using Dollicott and the adjoining roads of Townsend and Rudds Lane.
- The only two junctions that traffic from the proposed development may use to get to more major roads are unsuitable for carrying additional traffic
- The additional traffic will fundamentally change the nature of the adjoining conservation area of Townsend Green, which is not only an area of historic significance, but provides a significant amenity for all of Haddenham.

The layout of the roads and the proposed access is shown in the aerial photograph in figure 1 below. All of the 792 meter road length, comprising Dollicott, Townsend and Rudds Lane, is narrow, with parked vehicles narrowing the road to a single track for much of its length. For pedestrians and cyclists, it is a very hazardous road.

There is a total of 296 meters of road with no footway at all, meaning that for over a third of its length, pedestrians are forced to walk in the road. This is not counting Townsend Green, which also has many pedestrians walking in the road, as they do not want to walk on the grass, particularly in Winter.

Townsend Green is slightly less well-known than Haddenham's other green at Church End in the South of the village, but is equally a conservation area, is surrounded by a number of very attractive listed houses, many thatched, and many of the local traditional wychert construction. The green itself provides a much-used amenity for the Northern side of the village.

Six points of particular hazard of the proposed development have been identified. These are shown on figure 1 below, and each is described in more detail in the following section of the document.

In addition, the residents commissioned a 1-week traffic survey at the exits of the road length into Thame Road and Churchway. The results of this survey are also discussed later in the document.



Figure 1 – Location of Proposed Development and Hazard Points

2. The Hazard points

2.1 Hazard Point 1 - Dollicott Junction with Thame Road



Thame Road is a busy through route. It can be seen from figure 1 that Dollicott has a significant bend into the lead-in to the junction, and, as the cottages fronting the road here have no off-road parking, there are almost always cars parked along the Eastern side of this stretch, narrowing the road to a single track. This means that Southbound traffic in Dollicott frequently has to stop, and back up to allow traffic turning in from Thame Road to pass, and residents have all experienced near misses at this point. Further traffic is likely to cause traffic turning into Dollicott to back up onto the Thame Road, causing further congestion. The footway is very narrow at this point, and only on the Eastern side of the road. Obviously there is significant pedestrian traffic both along Thame road and on Dollicott.

2.2 Hazard Point 2 – Narrowing by Wield Cottage



As Dollicott runs into Townsend Green, the road narrows considerably, and the footway along Dollicott comes to an end. This is just by Wield Cottage, which is a very pretty grade 2 listed thatched property, directly fronting the road. There is barely space for two vehicles to pass each other here, and the hazard to pedestrians is obvious. This is a frequently used pedestrian route, due to Townsend Green being extensively used by dog walkers, parents and toddlers and older children using it for football, cricket etc.

2.3 Hazard Point 3 – Townsend Green.



Again, vehicles are frequently parked along the green, narrowing the roadway to a single track, frequently causing vehicles to stop and back up. This is a popular walking area, due to the attractive houses grouped around the green, however there is no footway by the green causing many pedestrians to walk in the road.

As mentioned previously, the green is also used extensively by dog walkers, parents and toddlers, and older children playing football and cricket. With poor visibility caused by parked cars, the potential for a child to run out into the path of a car while chasing a ball or dog is obvious.

2.4 Hazard point 4 – Narrowing and S bend near Emmanuel Cottage.



As Townsend Green goes into Rudds Lane, the road has a very sharp ‘S’ bend. Sight lines around the bend are nil, caused by the high Wychert wall to the East side. There is no footway on either side at this point for a total of 226 meters, so pedestrians are forced into the road. There is not space for two vehicles to pass on the bend, and so it is extremely hazardous for pedestrians. Again every resident has experience near misses at this point in the road, both as a driver and a pedestrian. The West side of this stretch of road is fronted by Emmanuel Cottage, which is an attractive wychert cottage. Both the wychert wall and the narrow verge opposite were damaged by construction traffic attempting to negotiate the corner during the construction of the four houses at Roundhill View.

The main conservation area runs from Wield Cottage to Emmanuel Cottage, with further smaller areas along Rudds Lane, where there are also hazards to pedestrians, as can be seen in the photograph below.



2.5 Hazard Point 5 – the Duck Pond



Before Rudds Lane joins Churchway, there is one of Haddenham's three famous duck ponds on the South side of the road. The pond is almost immediately adjacent to the road, and there is no footway on either side of the road for a distance of approximately 70 metres. As well as there being a considerable amount of pedestrian traffic for the shop and post office on the corner of Rudds Lane and Churchway, this is a popular spot for parents to take babies and toddlers to feed the ducks. The ducks also frequently walk across the road, and there have been many duck fatalities, but as yet, thankfully no human ones. The danger of increased traffic is however obvious.

2.6 Hazard Point 6 – Rudds Lane Junction with Churchway



This junction is a complex one with the divergence between Churchway and the Stanbridge Road just a few meters to the North, and a cut-through almost opposite the junction. There is a well-used general store and Haddenham's only post office in a building on the Southern corner. This means that during trading hours (early until late) there is fairly chaotic parking on all of the approaches, and delivery lorries are also frequently parked haphazardly here.

The visibility for traffic turning right from Rudds Lane onto Churchway, or pulling across to go into Stanbridge Road is very poor. Despite the speed limit on Churchway, traffic frequently travels very fast along it, as it is a straight road, and so it is something of an act of faith pulling out onto this junction.

It is believed that Cala propose to improve this junction by making a build-out in front of the store. If people continue to park on the build-out it will in fact make visibility worse at this point. At best it will make a marginal difference as the vehicles parked behind will still obscure visibility to the south.

3. Traffic Survey and Expected Traffic Levels.

The residents commissioned a traffic survey in September 2014 from a nearby traffic data company – Clearview Traffic. Clearview put down a pair of pneumatic tube detectors close to the junctions at each end of the subject road. These are Dollicott junction with Thame Road, and Rudds Lane junction with Churchway. The detectors were left in place for a week, and the full results are provided in a separate spread sheet available from the author on request. The data includes volume broken down by vehicle class, and vehicle speed.

To summarise some of the main findings:

Rudds Lane Site

- Inbound weekday average of 352 vehicles per day, of which 315 were from 7am to 7pm. Peak flows are around 35 vehicles per hour.
- Outbound weekday average of 314 vehicles per day, of which 284 were from 7am to 7pm. Peak flows are around 35 vehicles per hour.

Dollicott Site

- Inbound weekday average of 427 vehicles per day, of which 369 were from 7am to 7pm. Peak flows are around 41 vehicles per hour.
- Outbound weekday average of 470 vehicles per day, of which 414 were from 7am to 7pm. Peak flows are around 45 vehicles per hour.

Vehicle Class Breakdown

- Cars accounted for between 75% and 87% of traffic depending on the site and direction.
- Light goods vehicles accounted for between 4.5% and 7.8% of traffic depending on the site and direction.
- HGVs accounted for between 0.8% and 7.6% of traffic depending on the site and direction.

Vehicle Speeds

- As the sites were so close to the junctions there are probably not many meaningful conclusions concerning speed that can be drawn out of these figures.
- The mean speeds varied between 13.6 mph and 16.7 mph depending on site and direction.
- The 85th Percentile figure was around 20mph for Rudds Lane, and around 17mph for the Dollicott site.

- We understand that Cala have proposed a sign-only 20mph speed limit on the stretch of road. It is thought unlikely that this will make any significant difference to the actual traffic speeds on this stretch of road.

How much traffic will the additional development contribute?

This is obviously open to speculation, however we understand that on average every home will have around 2 parking spaces, and so a reasonable assumption would be 2 vehicles for every house, given that there will be some on-street parking. This would easily in the long term generate 200 to 400 new trips per day, especially when delivery and service vehicles were taken into account.

We have no way of estimating the additional traffic that would be contributed by the construction work, but it will be considerable. We would assume that all heavy construction traffic would be directed via the Dollicott, and banned from using Rudds Lane and Townsend Green as a route.

4. Conclusions

1. The existing road has a number of hazards for vulnerable road users especially pedestrians and cyclists
2. These hazards would be considerably increased by the additional traffic that will be generated by the proposed development.
3. The junctions at either end of the road length are both poor in terms of sight lines, and both have issues of many parked cars. These factors make negotiating the junctions hazardous. Again this will be considerably exacerbated by the increase in traffic caused by the proposed development.
4. The additional traffic will be a significant increase on the existing levels on this route, and will change the character of Townsend Green which is a conservation area, with a very distinctive character, and which provides a much-used amenity for the whole village.

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