

Added congestion

Overwhelming local opposition

TATE ACTION GROUP  
**TAG**

Gridlock on the bridge again

Does this look like brownfield to you?

**TAG - THORP ARCH TRADING ESTATE ACTION GROUP  
OBJECTION TO PLANNING APPLICATION 16/05226/OT**

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VOLUME 6

INFRASTRUCTURE

**Objection to Planning Application 16/05266 for 874 dwellings etc.  
Volume 6**

**INFRASTRUCTURE**

**1. BACKGROUND**

Over ten years ago an Inspector concluded that an application for 1500 houses on TATE was not sustainable, or capable of being made sustainable. Over four years ago Rockspring, at a Pre-application meeting to consider proposals for up to 1000 houses, were advised to go away and bring back plans for a larger, *more sustainable* solution. The numbers for housing grew from 933 to 1150, to 1700, to 1800, and finally 2000.

Their application was duly submitted in July 2013, and then withdrawn in January 2016, because they acknowledged that it was not deliverable.

***The key issue of this site is whether it is in a sustainable location with an acceptable level of infrastructure***

**2. LOCATION**

TATE is a remote rural site and is constrained by an inadequate public transport service. Bus services are poor, there are no rail connections and distances to any nearby facilities are more than 2km away.

The site is about as far as one can get from the LCC conurbation. The River Wharfe, running from east to west, acts as a natural barrier to the site. See map below.



Access to Leeds is either via a single track bridge through Thorp Arch to Boston Spa, or via the roundabout on the Walton to Wetherby Road..... both are well recognised to be already under stress, especially during rush hours.

The proposals to mitigate the effects of increased traffic include signalisation on the High Street of Boston Spa and over the single track bridge. Priority signs have been tried previously and abandoned very quickly because of the chaos this caused. The new proposal cannot work either. There are eight separate entry points to Bridge road and vehicles turning on to this stretch of road would not know whether to proceed or not. The local network would quickly become gridlocked.

The proposed traffic light cycle time of 90/120 seconds is exceedingly long, and would cause large tailbacks on the A659 road.

### **3. INFRASTRUCTURE**

The Design and Access Statement produced by DLA Architects claims the proposed development will be 'a compact, diverse, mixed use and sustainable community of sufficient scale to attract and support local facilities'.

The new local centre will include *provision* for a Class A1 convenience store and a parade of five retail units. It is unclear when these will be built (the school is not scheduled until 400 houses are completed). There is no evidence that a retail unit of this size, even when the site is fully occupied, is large enough to be financially viable, never mind five further units. It is likely that there would be over 1,000 residents on site before there were any facilities at all.

The Core Strategy requirement that the proposal should be within a 15 minute walk for local shops will probably not be met for at least 5 years into the build program, with just one or two shops. By that time travel and shopping patterns will already have become established. The nearest facilities are over 2km away and the settlement will thus be a car dominated dormitory. (Local services are compared below under Sustainability).

The Inspector at the UDP review in 2005/6 commenting on a proposal for nearly twice as many dwellings said 'the location is not, and has not been shown capable of being made, sufficiently sustainable to warrant residential development of such a scale'. 874 houses will not support anything like the infrastructure required to make the site sustainable.

The Inspector concluded that 'to add 3,500 residents who would need to travel for all but the very basic services would not assist or deliver sustainable development'. ..... 'TATE would become more of a dormitory settlement for workers in York, Harrogate and Leeds than one with a high degree of self-containment'. The proposed settlement of some 2,000 residents would be even more unsustainable.

#### 4. SUSTAINABILITY

It is worth noting that the Inspector's comments quoted above related to a scheme with proposals for a medical centre, a dentist, and a pharmacy. Likewise the transport proposals at the UDP included a 15-30 minute service to York, a bus-only route from TATE to Church Causeway and a bus only interchange within TATE. In addition the UDP proposal for the 770 bus service was for a 15 minute frequency in peak hours. The current undefined transport offerings are much inferior, merely proposing to divert the 770 service into the site.

One of the Core Strategy requirements is to be within a 5 minute walk of a bus stop offering a 15 minute service to a MPTI. This condition is not met by the current application, clearly showing the site is even less sustainable now.

Apart from the meagre offerings on site the nearest point for virtually ALL essential services is Boston Spa over 2km away. The applicant states that there are numerous facilities within close proximity and these would ensure that the development is sustainable. As in the previous proposal the applicant persists in claiming that numerous local services are within a 2km walking catchment area. They are not. Their distance calculations are as the crow flies, ignoring the course of footpaths and natural barriers such as the river. There is nothing available in Boston Spa within this walking distance. For example, Spa Surgery is a minimum 2.3km away (3.3km from the furthest houses). Boston Spa Comprehensive is a minimum 3.4km distant (4.4km from the furthest houses).

The Department of Transport guidelines, Manual for Streets, state that the distance of a walkable neighbourhood is within a ten minute walk or 800m radius.... certainly not 2km.

Commenting on the Inspector's finding that the site was unsustainable (in the Statement of Community Involvement), the applicant attempts to dismiss his comments as being 'in the context of housing needs at that time'. This is erroneous. Sustainability is key in any large housing development, regardless of housing need.

#### **So what has changed since the Inspector's report?**

Has the location changed? **No**

Have the Highways layout been improved? **No – it is worse. Access to A1(M) from Walton Road has been eliminated.**

Have the Transport facilities been improved? **No**

Have the on-site facilities been improved? **No**

Will the limited facilities eventually delivered serve the day to day needs of residents? **No**

Will there be a village centre with facilities similar to those in Boston Spa? **No**  
**...see below**

If one examines the shops and services that Boston Spa has to offer, it clearly shows how in comparison, the so called 'Village 'of Rudgate is completely unsustainable.

**Boston Spa Facilities:**

3 Primary Schools	A Secondary School
A School for the Deaf	4 Children's Nurseries
3 Churches	A Hospice
A Village Hall	A Community Centre
A Library	A Doctors Surgery
A Chemist	A Dental Clinic
A Post Office	Public Toilets
Sports Pitches	2 Convenience Stores
2 Pubs	A Wine Bar
7 Restaurants/Takeaways	4 Hairdressers
A Garage	2 Delicatessens
A Special Needs School	3 Beauty Salons
A Travel Agents	A Building Society
A Bakers	A Gift Shop
An Interior Design Shop	A Kitchen Design Shop
A Curtain Shop	A Carpet Shop
A Wedding Dress Shop	A Fitness Centre
A Newsagents	A Butchers/Greengrocers
An Opticians	A Tailoring Shop
A Hardware Store	A Flower Shop
2 Charity Shops	A Clothes Shop
An Art Gallery	2 Chiropodist
A PC Shop	A Scout and Guide Hall
A Farmers Market	Allotments

**TATE facilities:**

Premises for 1 convenience store and five other establishments with no indication they will be occupied. One can only conclude that residents of this new settlement will use their cars to travel elsewhere for all essential services.

**5. THE TRAVEL PLAN**

The objective of the plan is to reduce single occupancy car journeys. The appointment of a Travel Plan Co-ordinator is a key plank of this desired outcome.

The major issue here is how can the proposed Travel Plan Co-ordinator persuade residents to shift away from car transport given the overwhelming constraints of the site's isolated physical location and the lack of any real alternative modes of travel. The simple answer is that this will be an impossible task.

The public transport services on offer are inadequate.... no rail service, only one 30 minute service to Leeds or Harrogate (both of which are lengthy and costly), and no nearby shops or services within walking distance. Cycle route 665 is a leisure facility. It is totally unsuited for year round commuting or shopping, with no lighting and icy conditions with no gritting in the winter.

The results of a recent survey in nearby Woodlands/Walton Chase saw strong evidence emerge regarding the lack of walking or cycling other than for leisure purposes. This is a strong indication that the outcome in the new development, other than for leisure purposes, is likely to be minimal or zero.

The costs of this Travel Plan are not identified. Why? They must be considerable over a ten year period, more if the build out takes longer or the targets are not met.

It is also unclear who will bear the cost, given that there will be two or three developers on site. Will this be the house builders? Or Rockspring? If the former it is difficult to see any real interest from major builders.... certainly there has been none so far. The target is to educate residents and workers to reduce single occupancy car journeys by 4% and 5% respectively. Interestingly, the aim of the scheme considered by the Inspector was for a 15% reduction. The new meagre targets presumably point to the lack of any real hope of achieving a meaningful result.

Should the targets not be met the developer will have to commit a further (unspecified) sum of money to promote the travel Plan beyond its 10 year monitoring period, through the provision of additional Travel Planning Sessions for residents.

By this time the damage will have been done.... car dependency will have been entrenched for years.

## **6. SUMMARY**

- The site is remote with limited access routes already showing signs of severe stress
- There is no rail service
- The transport infrastructure regarding bus services is poor
- Walking and cycling are not viable alternatives..... walking distances for local services are far in excess of any approved walking accessibility standards.
- The on-site availability, if any, of shops and services is not sufficient to meet the day to day needs of residents
- The Travel Plan is unrealistic
- The site will be a car dominated commuter dormitory
- The development is unsustainable