

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 10

# HIGHWAYS

## **Volume 10. Objection to Planning Application 16/05226 for 874 dwellings etc.**

### **Highway Objection.**

#### **Introduction**

This paper examines the information presented by the Applicant in their Transport Assessment - Report no. A096351 dated August 2016 and finds it to be delinquent in several aspects.

The trip rates used throughout the TA are examined and found to be lower than the current traffic levels and also inconsistent with the data presented in a previous application. These lower than reality figures skew the subsequent calculations for junction capacities and mitigations throughout the TA.

Consideration is given to the junction of Boston Spa High Street and Bridge Road where the existing traffic is seen to be significantly different to that predicted by the Applicant's model in terms of trip rates and delays. The impact on local access points along Bridge Road are considered along with the physical constraints of the road width, turning radii, bus stops, pedestrian access and crossings. Photographic evidence showing the extent of congestion currently experienced is compared to the predictions made in the TA.

Highway safety is considered in terms of the entire local network as compared to the Applicant's use of a handful of selected locations.

Finally cycling and walking to the site are considered and found to be impractical.

#### **Trip Rates**

The peak trip rates used by the Applicant are unrealistically low for a site as remote as TATE. Interestingly the trip rates quoted for the current traffic (with no development) are less than the same Applicant used in a previous application for 2000 houses when considering the 'no development' case. In the opinion of TAG the trip rates at TATE should be comparable to a site that is equally inaccessible and has similarly few amenities within walking distance. Accepted trip rates for developments in towns such as Wetherby, where far more facilities are available to residents, are greater than the rates used by the Applicant.

The low trip rates used by the Applicant have the effect of understating the impact of the development throughout their Transport Assessment (TA) and Traffic Flow documents rendering junction capacity calculations and subsequent mitigations meaningless.

The Applicant's choice of the AM peak period of 7:30-8:30am is out of step with the accepted standard period (DfT National Traffic Survey) of 8:00 – 9:00am. The choice of the earlier period by the Applicant has the effect of removing from the calculations the surge in traffic due to escorted trips to school. In a similar vein the absence of full day data hides the effect of escorted trips from school in the afternoon. The Applicant's previous application for 2000 houses gave trip rates for each hour of the day however this level of detail is conspicuous by its absence in the current submission.

#### **The 'Bridge Complex' - Boston Spa High Street / Bridge Road Junction**

The Applicant's description of the current traffic issues at the 'Bridge complex' does not reflect the every-day experiences of local residents. Nowhere in the Applicant's

submission is there reference to the dozens of queueing vehicles heading south with ensuing delays. As in the previous application the model has failed to replicate the observed traffic behavior of the Bridge Complex.

The proposed mitigation to install a traffic light system is in itself flawed being based upon an inadequate traffic model combined with traffic rates that are too low.

The cycle time of the lights (110 seconds AM and 90 seconds PM) assumes that both Bridge Road and the High Street are free of obstructions so that traffic may flow in response to the signals. In practice Bridge Road is effectively a single carriageway as there is on-street parking along the entire length of the southbound carriageway (see Fig 1). There is a Bus Stop on the northbound lane and several traffic entry points along its length including residential developments and a busy car park.



Fig. 1 – Parked cars along Bridge Road

The High Street has on-street parking near the junction (south-east bound traffic) and a Bus Stop (north-west bound) making the road too narrow to fit the proposed solution. The Applicant has made no mention of how the proposed traffic lights would work for residents of Pine Tree Avenue and Bridge Close or access to the car park. With the length of the cycle times there would be significant queues along the High Street that with the existing on-street parking would make it very difficult for traffic to merge from side roads such as Stables Lane and Clifford Road. The existing pedestrian crossing on the High Street has been removed by the Applicant presumably because the additional time the traffic is stopped would impact adversely upon their proposed mitigation.

Traffic figures presented in the TA and Appendices describing the modelling of the junction are inconsistent with figures quoted elsewhere. Modelling of the junction's capacity uses an AM peak figure of 132 vehicles (TA-part 2, App G) whereas in the "Traffic Flows" submission the number of vehicles across the bridge is quoted as 348.

With regard to additional journeys from escorted trips to school the Applicant claims that there will be 63 primary school pupils from TATE who would attend Lady Hastings School. However this ignores the fact that the school is already at capacity so these additional children would need to be escorted further afield inevitably increasing the pressure on the Bridge Complex. The impact of escorted trips would in fact be more severe as Census data suggests for a development of 874 houses

around 110 extra primary school children would need to attend schools external to the TATE site.

It is clear from current and previous attempts that the Applicant has failed to provide a model that predicts the actual traffic flow and delays that occur at the Bridge complex. The model is clearly flawed and does not provide a framework upon which mitigations can be developed.

## Highway Safety

The Applicant has chosen to report accidents at a few selected locations on the local network that they note are “accident clusters”. Whilst it is acknowledged that accidents do occur around junctions, ignoring incidents elsewhere on the road network distorts the safety picture.

The road network comprises of substantially B and C class roads that are generally narrow, unlit, twisty and poorly maintained. Data provided for the previous application (Transport Assessment – Revised 29 November 2013) illustrates that the nature of the rural network has been to blame for a number of accidents. Both the width and bend of the road are clearly implicated in accident ref nos. 1013309 and 120551682. Common sense would suggest that an increase in the amount of traffic on the local road network will inevitably result in more accidents. There are a number of places that are known locally where the combination of road surface, bends, width and lighting makes for hazardous driving conditions not least when pedestrians and cyclists are in the vicinity.

Figs 2 & 3 show how long vehicles regularly cross the centre of the road at the top of Bridge Foot when travelling south where the road has a slight bend and high walls on either side.



Figs. 2 & 3 Southbound vehicles forced into northbound lane.

The carriageway narrows to 5.1m, with a 1.3m footway on one side only. The bend, narrow road and high walls gives poor visibility, particularly for north bound vehicles that are often forced to mount the pavement to avoid a collision. For pedestrians the narrow pavement and high walls mean there is nowhere to 'escape' when a north bound vehicle is forced onto the footway. The dimensions and layout of the road are shown in Appendix A.

## Photographic Evidence

Traffic movements around the Bridge Complex were captured on Thursday 24 November 2016 from 15:24 to 15:52. These can be viewed [here](#).

Vehicles regularly mount the pavement having turned into Bridge Road from the High Street due to queueing traffic at the junction as shown in Figs 4 & 5 below.



A vehicle mounting the pavement can also be seen mid-way through video DSCN3326. Being a busy pedestrian area it is clear that an increase in traffic numbers raises the probability of a serious accident occurring.

The length of time that a vehicle queues to at the Bridge Complex can be measured from the red car that is sixth in line in DSCN3325, this picture was taken at 15:51:04. At the end of video DSCN3330 the same vehicle is queueing towards the top of Bridge Road at 15:53:38 which is 2 minutes 34 seconds after it was first seen queueing on Bridge Foot. This demonstrates that the average delays of 28secs quoted by the Applicant for the peak PM hour clearly underestimates the actual position and the severe impact upon residents.

Video DSCN3324 shows the chaos caused when the no. 770 service bus turns onto Bridge Road from the High Street.

## Impact on Local Highways

The modelling used for the junction of Walton Road and Privas Way fails to predict the severe queues experienced at peak times. The applicant's claim that this junction is theoretically operating within capacity does not hold true against local experience where queues frequently exceed eighty vehicles. Incredibly the average delays on the Walton Road east arm are actually predicted to decrease (PM period) as a result of the development.

Once more the model presented is inconsistent with the previous application. The RFC figure of 0.52 for the Walton Road east arm is 13% less than for similar conditions the in the previous application.

## Cycling

The remote location of the site and the dangerous rural roads make cycle use an unattractive proposition. The current level of commuters using a bicycle is exceedingly low despite national cycle route NCR665 running from Wetherby to the site. This observation is not altogether surprising as apart from the summer months NCR665 is impractical for year-round use. It is unlit, icy in winter, covered in slippery leaves in autumn and enclosed by trees along most of its length making it slightly intimidating.

The Applicant's claim that "*The entire Wetherby town and Walton, Thorp Arch, Boston Spa, Cowthorpe, Tockwith and Tadcaster are within cycling distance*" is ludicrous in light of the dangerous and unsuitable nature of the local highway network. Realistically for any development on TATE the prevailing mode of transport would be by car.

## Walking

Once again the remote location makes trips on foot impractical. Boston Spa is over 2km from TATE whilst Wetherby is 4.5km along NCR665. The Applicant states that "in the general vicinity of the site, the footways are predominantly 2m in width..." however there are significant sections of the network with no footways and large stretches with narrow paths of no more than one metre width. Clearly this would present a safety issue should anyone chose to walk particularly at night as most stretches are unlit.

## Conclusion

This paper has highlighted a number of issues with the assumptions, methodology and assessments made by the Applicant in their Transport Assessment. Specifically:

- The traffic model presented does not reflect the observed traffic patterns throughout the local network and is particularly deficient at the 'Bridge complex' and the Privas Way / Walton road junction.
- Photographic evidence clearly illustrates that the actual traffic conditions at the Bridge Complex are far more severe than predicted by the Applicant.
- The trip rates used throughout the TA to describe the current position are seen to be lower than the actual traffic flows experienced at present.
- The trip rates used for current traffic conditions are inconsistent with figures from the same applicant for a previous development on the same site.
- The traffic model fails to consider the effect of the AM peak period by using the wrong time period.
- The traffic model does not consider the PM traffic as a result of escorted educational trips – this is known to be a problem locally
- The calculation of junction capacity is flawed by the use of trip rates that are too low and inconsistent use of data in the body of the TA and Appendices.
- The points of access to Bridge road and the High street have not been considered as part of the Applicant's mitigation.
- Additional escorted journeys beyond Lady Hastings School have not been considered in Bridge Complex traffic figures.
- The Applicant's use of accident data is seen to be selective and not representative of the entire network.
- Accident data presented previously shows that the nature of the rural network responsible for a number of incidents.

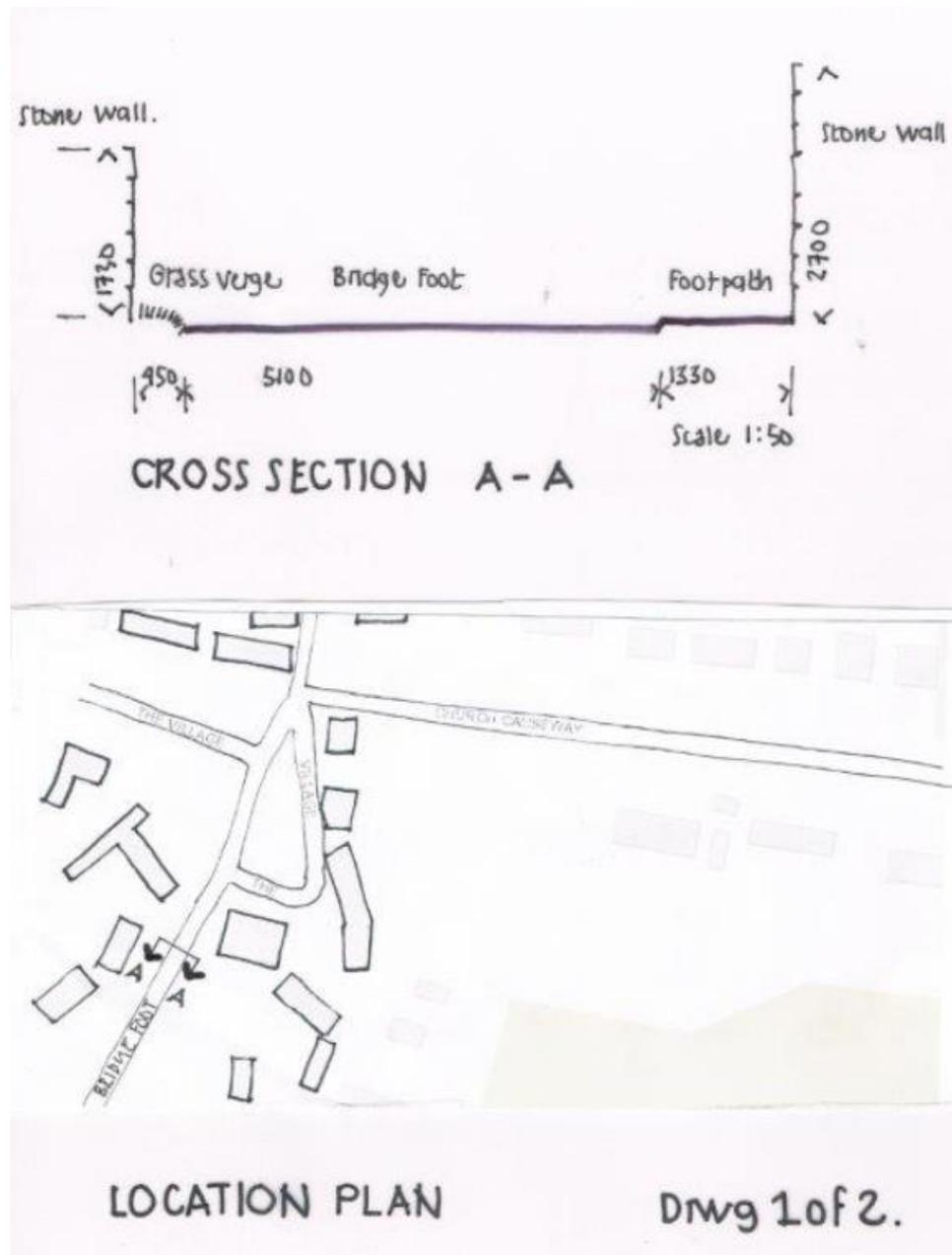
- The Applicant's claim that the sites location is easily accessible for cyclists from local communities is shown to be erroneous.
- The poor condition and length of walking routes to the site makes this mode of transport impractical.

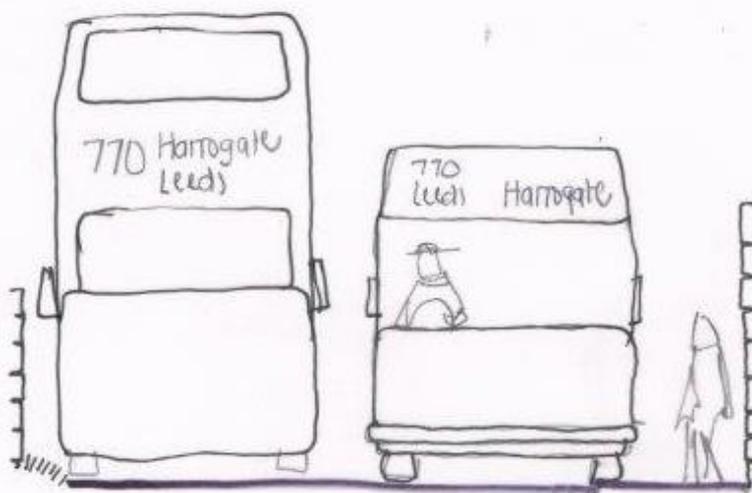
It has been clearly demonstrated that the local highways do not have the resilience to cope with the impacts of the proposed development. The site is too remote to be anything other than a commuter settlement that would create significant and unresolvable traffic issues for the local road network. The proposed development is unsustainable in terms of the local road network and as such is contrary to the aims of the NPPF and Core Strategy.

**Link to Photographic evidence**

<https://goo.gl/photos/MXV2qxN8hLT7jiDz9>

**Appendix A – Cross Section of Highway and Pavement on Bridge Road**





CROSS SECTION A-A

DMG 2 of 2.