

Comments for Planning Application 135647/FO/2022

Application Summary

Application Number: 135647/FO/2022

Address: 550 Mauldeth Road West Manchester M21 7AA

Proposal: Erection of a new Lidl foodstore (Use Class E) with associated car parking and landscaping

Case Officer: Jennifer Connor

Customer Details

Name: Not Available

Address: Not Available

Comment Details

Commenter Type: Neighbour

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment:OBJECTION TO PLANNING APPLICATION REF 135647/FO/2022

Erection of a new Lidl foodstore (Use Class E) with associated car parking and landscaping

I am submitting an objection to the plan to build a drive-to supermarket on Nell Lane. I am a resident of St Werburghs Road, both my children have attended Chorlton High School and one is still there. This proposal is in completely the wrong location slap in the middle of a school zone. It will be unworkable and intensify existing problems on the highway infrastructure. According to research conducted for the Welsh Government, the proposal involves introducing an additional 3-4000 car journeys a day into this already congested school zone.

The objection is based on the following:

- existing traffic problems in the school zone will be exacerbated
- air quality will deteriorate further
- it will flood this area with new car journeys, contrary to Active Travel/Clean Air initiatives
- the Nell Lane entrance turning point is not workable without backing up traffic
- the volume of traffic will increase
- The risk to children and pedestrians caused by increased traffic. Accident data in the report is underestimated
- entrance will back up traffic at the junction of Nell Lane/ Mauldeth Road
- impact on the operation of Chorlton High School during the demolition of Lowry House;
- negative impact on Hough End Hall

SCHOOL ZONE: critical traffic issues on Nell Lane, St Werburghs Road, Mauldeth Road, Sandy Lane

You can only assess the impact of a new large out of town supermarket on traffic volume and highway infrastructure by taking into account the existing problems in the area and immediate environment. This area is a School Zone with 4 schools in the immediate vicinity.

There is an existing critical traffic problem around the many entrances to Chorlton High School, Chorlton High School South, Loreto High school and Chorlton Park Primary School which currently endangers schoolchildren and pedestrians and other road users. This is of major concern now and as local residents we have raised this continuously as an issue over the last 5 years with the counsellors and our MP. The area is subject to major traffic problems: slow moving queues, tailgating, idling traffic, traffic fumes, and at other times relentless speeding and accidents. So now we are asking that the planning committee take these factors into account as grounds for rejecting this proposal.

How do I know this? Because I live in a house on St Werburghs Road at the point at which it meets Nell Lane. This is located between the two main pupil entrances to Chorlton High School. So I look out of my window each morning and see hundreds of schoolchildren travelling to and from school, and the endless traffic queues during school times and recurring bouts of speeding at all other times. Almost all vehicles ignore the 20mph limit. I have seen council vehicles, traffic wardens, taxis, gritters and commuter traffic doing well over 30 mph. This morning I saw a yellow school bus travelling at high speed outside my house. I try and cross the road and have to dodge the fast-moving traffic travelling way in excess of the 20mph limit.

The planning application documentation glides serenely over this. Traffic Surveys were held on 2 days, Thursday 9 June, and Saturday 11 June 2022. So one of their Traffic Surveys was on a Saturday - when all the school were closed. The Transport Assessment glibly states: There does not appear to be any particular road safety issues that might be exacerbated by the proposals..

That show a complete lack of knowledge and engagement with this school zone site. Existing problems will be clearly exacerbated by the store proposal.

Impact on air quality in the school zone

The location of the proposed store will intensify existing problems. You don't need to be faced with statistical analysis or detailed traffic estimates to know that a new drive-to supermarket will result in a significant increase in traffic. The point of building an out of town supermarket is, it's a place for customers to drive to. This will bring with it increased traffic fumes, poorer air quality, which will create a dangerous environment for school children travelling to and from school and residents in the area. We know that cars produce fumes which affect children and we know that an increase in traffic will produce more fumes and we know that a drive to supermarket is designed to attract and increase traffic around the store so this really is unarguable.

The document does not address these issues. The original planning application document, and

documents submitted on the 16th and 31st January, only address the impact of the supermarket on the immediate vicinity of the Nell Lane/ Mauldeth Road junction. The problem with this approach is that Nell Lane isn't a separate element in this consultation. Nell Lane is part of a continuous route past 4 school entrances from the junction of Wilbraham Road/St Werburghs Road to the junction of Nell Lane/Mauldeth Road and on past Loreto School to the junction of Nell Lane/Princess Road.

The proposal seems to be completely oblivious to the traffic infrastructure and movement. It seems oblivious to the fact that the supermarket will be located within a school zone.

The proposal to flood the area with new car journeys runs contrary to Clean Air/Active Travel initiatives

Introducing new traffic flow into the School Zone goes directly against initiatives to actively reduce traffic in Chorlton like the new cycle lane; the council policy to encourage walking and cycling. Chorlton High School's own policy for pupils at the school to walk and cycle to the school and for parents not to drive. I quote from the school website

"We encourage students to travel to and from school either on foot, by bike or by public transport in order to minimise the impact of cars on our local community."

So the school is asking parents not to drive to school, to reduce congestion and improve air quality, but we have on the table a proposal to encourage people to drive past the school in much greater numbers to a large supermarket development. The proposal not only flies in the face of these initiatives, but It looks like none of these school/resident/pupil factors have been even considered.

The Supermarket Entrance/ turning zone from Nell Lane to the drive-to Supermarket will result in a dangerous traffic overload near the junction with Mauldeth Road

The proposal to locate the entrance on Nell Lane is a mistake. Chorlton High School has 2 pedestrian and 2 vehicle entrance/exits on Nell Lane (in addition to the morning and evening pupil entrance off St Werburghs Road). These are in constant use. The proposed turning point for drivers into the supermarket car park is only 40 metres from the nearest pupil/teacher pedestrian entrance to the school. Given that pupils at this school are age 11-16, this is clearly not safe?

The major Nell Lane/Mauldeth Road junction is about 30 metres from the entrance. Locating the car park entrance on Nell Lane immediately after the junction of Nell Lane/Mauldeth Road will create additional traffic problems at what is a hugely congested junction. This junction is an intersection of 4-way vehicular traffic and a 2 way tram route, with trams in both directions every 6 minutes. It is already subject to long tail backs. Photographic evidence shows tailbacks occurring regularly in the mornings all the way from the junction of Nell Lane/Mauldeth Road past the two main school entrances, over the Metrolink bridge to the junction of St Werburghs/Wilbraham Road. These will get much worse with a supermarket in the middle. The effect of additional traffic turning in and out of Nell lane near the junction will create unmanageable traffic problems with traffic

backing up in both directions.

The proximity of the proposed store entrance to the Nell Lane /Mauldeth Road junction is so problematic that no mitigation will be able to resolve it. Traffic will back up whatever happens. The Transport Assessment document at 11.6 states glibly:

"Site access arrangements onto Nell Lane will work well within capacity in ALL SCENARIOS with no queuing occurring"

Well, that's ok then. Nothing to worry about.

Increased Traffic Volume

Related research into LIDL and ALDI drive-to supermarkets conducted by the Welsh Government shows that shoppers are expected to make in the region of an additional 3-4000 car journeys a day. That is for a supermarket with the equivalent size car parking capacity of 85 parking bays. This is an extremely worrying number of car journeys which will be on top of the problems the area round the site experiences at present.

Traffic Accident Data Analysis (see photographs at the end of this submission)

In the view of the residents the frequency of accidents in the 'area' is an indicator of an overloaded traffic system. We are aware of this but the Data analysis in the planning application regarding accidents seems to be worryingly incomplete.

There are a number of clear omissions in this section.

1 Incidents are only recorded if they take place in the immediate vicinity of the junction of Mauldeth Road/Nell Lane not in the wider area (where traffic volume will be affected if the store is built.)

2 Accident Data has only been collected over a 5 year period of which 2 years were during the COVID Pandemic when schools were closed and people stayed at home and did not travel to work. So the stats do not reflect the situation.

3 The statistics quoted are 4 accidents in 5 years. 3 labelled slight, 1 labelled serious. This number of accidents recorded doesn't tally with those witnessed directly by residents which include 3 significant accidents over the last 14 months:

1 The car of a resident on St Werburghs Road being completely wrecked and written off after being hit at speed by a hit and run driver, 11 December 2021

2 A driver hitting and destroying planters on the pavement directly at the point at which the Chorlton High School and Chorlton Park Primary School lollipop crossing operates, 23 January 2023

3 A collision between a van and car directly outside the school gates attended by 4 police cars and 2 fire engines, 30 October 2022.

We have photographic evidence of all of these.

4 Incidents of cars seen driving onto and become stranded on the Mauldeth Lane Metrolink tracks. On the updated documentation on 30th January there is a comment by TFGM stating that

"the models (LIDL's) do not capture the effects of trams at the junction"

This is a very worrying omission and shows there is only a partial picture being presented.

Why is this important? It is important because the planning application underestimates the problems caused to the highway by the development of a new drive-to supermarket with 85 parking spaces.

Demolition of the existing building Lowry House

The document is worryingly unconcerned about the impact of noise and dust caused by the proposed demolition of the large multi storey Lowry House, directly next to an operational large-scale secondary school with 1500 pupils. This work schedule will include:

- Demolition of the existing building
- The associated groundworks, levelling the road surface/car park, building a car park
- construction of a new large scale supermarket building with new car parks etc

I am unclear how the school my children attend will operate taught classes during the demolition period with the noise and dust and the negative impact this will have on their schooling given the proximity of Lowry House to the school buildings. This is especially concerning to the children after we know that the current year 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 pupils have already lost 2 years face to face of schooling during COVID.

The proposal at 7.2 explains how it will minimise the impact of this on the mosque but astonishingly does not make reference to the school itself.

Why is this important? Because the proposal ignores major disruption caused to children's education by the necessary building work.

Noise Pollution

This is another problem. The councillors have asked for HGV deliveries to be before 7am and after 7pm. None of the councillors live on St Werburghs Road. As a resident I don't want delivery vehicles arriving before 7am. The noise will travel from the back of the supermarket across the school site.

Impact on Hough End Hall

It is also appropriate to mention the adjacent Hough End Hall. This Elizabethan building was constructed in 1596 and is Grade II* listed. This listing means it is a particularly important building of more than special interest. Only 5.8% of all listed buildings are Grade II*. It was listed for its special architectural/historic interest in 1952 by Historic England.

This is one of the oldest buildings in Manchester.

This imposing structure is one of the few remaining historic buildings in this part of Manchester and was built by Sir Nicholas Moseley former Lord of the Manor of Manchester and former Lord Mayor of London.

Is it appropriate to build a single storey drive to supermarket with car parking directly next to this

important historic site?

There will be major impact here: LIDL's own visualisations show how incongruous their blank store frontage, logo/branding etc will look. This will clearly minimise the impact and status of this Grade II* listed historic site. See images in the Heritage Assessment page 19.

Of concern is also the delivery point for ultra heavy HGV vehicles which is directly behind the historic hall building in close proximity (yards) to Hough End Hall - see access diagrams. We know the car park at the rear will be used for HGV deliveries. Heavy vehicle movement and vibrations could potentially damage the foundations of the structure further.

Manchester City Council's own policy, Heritage Through the City states:

The council will encourage development that complements and takes advantage of the distinct historic and heritage features of its districts and neighbourhoods

New Developments must be designed so as to support the council in preserving or, where possible, enhancing the historical environment, the character, setting and accessibility of areas and buildings of acknowledged importance"

Commenting on the negative impact of this development on the Hall, LIDL, at 6.2, acknowledge that the development will:

"sit negatively within the setting of a highly listed asset"

The proposal document ignores this and in the Heritage Impact Assessment section 6, concludes that the supermarket will be LOW BENEFICIAL in its Impact on the Hall.

I would conclude it will be HIGH ADVERSE in its impact for the above reasons.

This is a historic site, one of the oldest buildings in Manchester. I would argue that no aspect of the architecture of a standard format drive-to supermarket building will "preserve or enhance the historical environment .. setting " etc. There also is a clear risk to the building from continuous use by HGV vehicles,

Conclusion and Comments on Grounds for refusal based on Council Policy

IMPACT ON HIGHWAY SAFETY

The National Planning Policy Framework, 2.5 states:

"Development should only be prevented and refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety or the residual cumulative impact on the road network would be severe."

I have show that both of these will be the case if this proposal is given approval.

The impact on the road network would be severe and there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety. The priority should be ensuring Road safety and the safety of children and pedestrians.

NEGATIVE IMPACT ON A HISTORIC SITE

The City Council Heritage Statement states:

"New Developments must be designed so as to support the council in preserving or, where possible, enhancing the historical environment, the character , setting and accessibility of areas and buildings of acknowledged importance"

The situation here is clear. Even the planning document is forced to admit that the supermarket will

"sit negatively within the setting of a highly listed asset"

The proximity of a supermarket will undermine the status of a major historical asset.

This is one of Manchester's oldest and highly rated historic buildings and it will clearly be negatively affected by the supermarket proposal

Supporting images (see the version of this document sent by email)

Planters destroyed by vehicle driving on the pavement St Werburghs Road/Sandy Lane
23 Jan 2023

Residents car hit St Werburghs Road by hit and run driver 11 December 2021

Accident on Nell Lane outside the high school gates 30 October 2022

Traffic queuing towards Nell Lane/ Mauldeth Road January 2023

Traffic queuing on St Werburghs Road January 2023

Traffic queuing at the Metrolink stop on St Werburghs Road towards Wilbraham Road January 2023