



# LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

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For the attention of:  
**Emma Spandley – Case officer**  
Coventry City Council  
The Council House  
PO Box 15  
COVENTRY CV1 5RR

17 March 2024

Dear Ms. Spandley

**Ref: PL/2023/0001205/FULM**  
**Erection of 30 New Industrial Units (Use B1, B2, and B8) and Conversion of a Derelict Former Gatehouse into a small Office Unit at Alderman's Green Road Coventry.**

The Warwickshire Solihull and Coventry Local Access Forum (WSC LAF) wish to make the following additional observations to attach to their holding advice and recommendations, dated 01 March 2024, to **REFUSE** the above application. Their advice remains to **REFUSE** the application for all of the reasons as stated previously and within the content of this letter. Please read in tandem.

We welcome the use of a brownfield, derelict site and the conversion of a derelict former gatehouse. We are, however, concerned by the historic background of the site and as previously indicated the lack of up-to-date intrusive ground investigation reports on this clearly contaminated and potentially dangerous site. We refer again to MGL Design Associates report dated October 2023 where it confirms the local planning authority's willingness to accept, without question, a grossly out of date report published in June 2012.

The June 2012 report clearly laid out the potential hazards and dangers in detail and recommended intrusive ground investigations be carried out to include the sinking of boreholes, excavation of trial pits and the installation and monitoring of gas and groundwater standpipes.

The WSC LAF advise and recommend Coventry City Council, as the Planning Authority, ensures the results of all intrusive ground investigations, as recommended in 2012, are openly and transparently published, as part of the supporting documents for the application, prior to determination of the application and in language that an average member of the public can understand.

It is vital that the local planning authority understands that intrusive ground investigations protect the public from the dangerous effects of contamination and pollution by testing against the dangerous effects on human health and safety from ground gas, polluted water, questions the existence of aquifers and many other issues. We understand in the case of commercial premises these tests are not considered 'so important', however, Coventry City Council, as the Planning Authority have a duty of care and a responsibility to the many people who will work on and visit the proposed site.

The Climate Change Emergency and very clear ongoing threat of continuing escalation of extreme weather events including biblical increases in rainfall and flooding has raised the very real issue of potential changes to the already dangerously contaminated site including subsidence involving both mining, landfill and made ground including buried polluted spoil

and other contaminant risk, raise issues which require definitive resolution. Movement and subsidence caused by excessive runoff, flooding and standing water and the possible dangers from hidden contamination and geotechnical risks are likely to have been exacerbated by recent and extreme ongoing weather events over the past 12 years. WSC LAF advise that this cannot and should not be ignored.

The WSC LAF is concerned the possible unseen dangers and threats to human health and wellbeing is not being taken into serious consideration. We, therefore, strongly advise and recommend that up-to-date intrusive ground investigations should be undertaken prior to determination of this application.

The Coal Authority Report dated 10 May 2012 states and we quote:

*"In view of mining circumstances, a prudent developer would seek appropriate advice before any works are undertaken.*

*Therefore, if development proposals are being considered, technical advice relating to both the investigation of coal and former coal mines and their treatment should be obtained before beginning work on site. All proposals should apply good engineering practice developed for mining areas".*

We commend this advice and the caution it instills.

Similarly, traffic patterns and conditions have changed and increased, out of all recognition, over the past 12 years with heavy good and other commercial vehicles increasing in both size and weight. Furthermore, local authority failure to maintain local road surfaces ensures degradation is a serious safety issue with an increase in commercial traffic only adding to the already unwelcome situation. The proposed site will seriously increase both private and commercial traffic in the area. The proposed site entrance is on a relatively narrow road, close to a motorway under bridge with poor visibility.

The WSC LAF, therefore, advise and recommend an up-to-date detailed Traffic Report, to include road safety issues, is essential prior to determination of the application. This should include traffic management reporting on access and egress of the site, including splays, and a detailed audit of local road conditions surrounding the proposed site, taking into serious consideration the increased size of commercial vehicles using the site and the local road network.

The WSC LAF is also concerned about the river Sowe tributary concrete culvert which crosses the site. It is clear from the MGL, Flood and Drainage Report Appendix 1 – Photographs, that the culvert shows marked signs of water stagnation and pollution which is highly likely to be as the result of ground water contamination. We believe the culvert should be the subject to a safety and ground investigation report prior to determination of the application as it will run under the proposed internal road system which will be required to take the weight of large commercial traffic on a daily basis.

Our PROW research on the footpath shown within the proposed site has produced the following:

The MGL Design Associates plan of the proposed site dated April 2023 shows an unmetalled path shown from within the site entrance at Aldermans Green Road. The footpath traverses a substantial portion including crossing the infant River Sowe.

The Ordnance Survey Sheet SP38SE (1:10,000) shows the route as a straight line whereas the MGL plan depicts a meandering line. MGL have clearly shown 'a user's desired' line which is not the true line of the path. We recommend and advise to avoid further confusion; the accurate and correct line should be used on all future plans relating to the application.

The path is the subject of a Definitive Map Modification Order (DMMO) application made under the provisions of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 received by Coventry City Council on 21 January 2008. The way is claimed as a footpath and is cited as CAPO 283A, the claim being a composite claim with the coterminous footpath CAP 283.

The claim is acknowledged by being depicted on the CCC Online Planning Map in the 'claimed PROW' layer. The route is listed as CAP 283A, status footpath and is 'currently part of a planning application'.

The application is listed as 'not validly made' because copies of the adduced evidence have not been supplied to the surveying authority.

Clearly this does not negate the existence of the historic path shown on the map, it subsists for now, as an unrecorded footpath.

The WSC LAF are concerned that no provision appears to have been made, in the planning application above, for the continuing and safe use of this historic public footpath which is clearly unacceptable. The nature of the proposed site has inherent safety issues due to the lack of size and, therefore, easy and safe manoeuvrability of large commercial and other vehicles around the site.

The MGL Design and Access Statement Concludes at page 21 8 (8.1) states and we quote:

"The application seeks full planning consent following on from the previous Outline Planning Consent on the same land. The new more detailed layout has been prepared to meet the need for parking and manoeuvrability within the site and meets the Councils requirements. 30 new industrial units are proposed which is a slightly smaller number than the outline scheme proposed but the total floor area is similar".

(Ref: Design - Proposed Site Plan page 19)

The Warwickshire Solihull and Coventry Local Access Forum are, therefore, deeply concerned that the above Proposed Site Plan fails to recognise the existence of, or make provision for, the historic public footpath which crosses the site. The dangerous issues are made clear in the paragraph from the Design and Access Statement reproduced above, which remind us that parking issues and manoeuvrability on the site have been previously questioned by Coventry City Council. It is also abundantly clear that while the number of units is 'slightly' smaller the total floor area is described as 'similar' which for openness and transparency should read there will be little reduction in the number of staff employed on site or the number of private and commercial vehicles accessing, egressing, parking, delivering to and manoeuvring around the site for work or business purposes each day. Some of these will, by the very nature of the businesses, be large commercial vehicles with poor turning circles and visibility. This is an accident waiting to happen.

It is, therefore, abundantly clear that the status of, and safe passage for all users of the historic public footpath is paramount and should form a vital part of the above planning application prior to determination.

The Warwickshire Solihull and Coventry Local Access Forum advise that all of the above recommendations, many of which are potentially dangerous to human health, safety and wellbeing, are carried out forthwith with up-to-date reports required to be commissioned and published, by the developer, for public examination before the above application is progressed to determination.

We are particularly disappointed by local planning authority failure to obtain up-to-date reporting on a site with so many inherent and potentially dangerous issues and the

acceptance of a submission with significant omissions including a lack of openness and transparency concerning the status and issues surrounding the safe use of the historic public footpath and protection of the River Sowe culvert both of which are an integral part of the proposed site.

The Warwickshire Solihull and Coventry Local Access Forum advise and recommend **REFUSAL** of application **PL/2023/0001205/FULM** for all of the reasons as indicated above and in our previous holding objection dated 01 March 2024.

We request an acknowledgement of receipt and your assurance that we will be kept apprised of the applications passage through the planning process. We may wish to speak at the planning committee meeting when the application is determined.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sheila Cooper". The signature is written in dark ink and includes a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Sheila Cooper

Chair Warwickshire Solihull and Coventry Local Access Forum  
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