

Contact Officer: John Hamilton Tel. No. 01865 815584

Divisions: Witney East, Witney West

PLANNING & REGULATION COMMITTEE – 23 MAY 2011

CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW ROUNDABOUT JUNCTION ON THE B4022 OXFORD HILL AT ITS JUNCTION WITH JUBILEE WAY, COGGES HILL ROAD AND THE PROPOSED A4095 COGGES LINK ROAD; TO INCLUDE THE PROVISION FOR PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE CROSSINGS TO LINK PROPOSED OR EXISTING PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE ROUTES; AT EXISTING TRAFFIC LIGHT CONTROLLED JUNCTION BETWEEN OXFORD HILL, JUBILEE WAY AND COGGES HILL ROAD, WITNEY

Report by Deputy Director (Growth & Infrastructure)

Location: Cogges link Road, Witney

Applicant: Oxfordshire County Council

Application No: R3.0039/11

District Council Area: West Oxfordshire

Introduction

1. Planning permission was granted for the Cogges Link Road (CLR) in Witney on the 7 April 2009. Construction of the road has yet to be commenced. Further work has now been carried out to assess the potential for improvements to the traffic signal junction layout at Oxford Hill/Jubilee Way (the north eastern end of the Cogges Link Road) and as a result the developer has concluded that a roundabout is a better solution for this junction. This application therefore seeks permission for a roundabout to replace the traffic light controlled junction at this northern end of the CLR. The application does not require reconsideration of the CLR itself.

Location (see plan)

2. The proposed CLR runs from the roundabout opposite Sainsburys on Station Lane, Witney, across the River Windrush in the west to east direction, passing under Stanton Harcourt Road through the gap between the existing housing in the Cogges Estate and the A40 to the south. The road then swings northwards to join Oxford Hill at a point opposite Jubilee Way. It is at this latter location that the new roundabout is proposed.
3. The main built up area of Witney lies to the west and north of the CLR. Major housing development has taken place in recent years in north east Witney which has its access via Jubilee Way.

Details of the Development

4. The permitted scheme for the CLR (see plan 1) modifies the existing alignment of the signalised junction of the B4022 Oxford Hill with Jubilee Way and Cogges Hill Road to accommodate the new CLR, under signals, opposite Jubilee Way. The existing Cogges Hill Road (leading into the Cogges Estate) was to join the CLR at a linked signalised T-junction.
5. The development now proposed is for the junction of the B4022 Oxford Hill with Jubilee Way and the proposed CLR to be constructed as a roundabout (see plan 2). The junction of the CLR with Cogges Hill Road would remain but would no longer be under signal control. The reason for this change to the approved scheme follows the assessment and traffic modelling exercises into junction improvements mentioned in paragraph 1 above. These assessments indicated that, based on 'high' traffic growth forecasts, by 2026 there would be significant queuing at this junction if signal controls were to be retained. The assessments further indicated that a roundabout solution would greatly reduce queuing and improve traffic flow through the junction.
6. Apart from the roundabout centred on the existing junction, development along the B4022 Oxford is proposed to extend from about 75m to the west of its junction with Jubilee Way to a position immediately to the west of the existing access to the Windrush Cemetery. There are footways adjacent to the road on both the north and south sides of the western arm of the new roundabout. A bus lay by, unaffected by this development is also on the south side. An on-carriageway advisory cycle lane is also laid out on both sides of the western arm to the roundabout.
7. To the east, there is an off-carriageway un-segregated shared use footway/cycleway on the north side of the road. The Windrush Cemetery is unaffected by the proposals.
8. The proposed development would extend 85m northward up Jubilee Way from the current junction with Oxford Hill. An off road parking area immediately to the west would not be affected by the proposal. There is an un-segregated shared use footway/cycleway along the west side of Jubilee Way.
9. About 195m of Cogges Hill Road is affected by the development. A footway is located on its western side beyond which is a wide, banked verge. On the east side of the road there is a narrow highway verge beyond which is a hedgerow marking the highway boundary.
10. The suitability of a roundabout at this location has been considered taking into account the requirements of pedestrians and cyclists. Pedestrian and Cycle Pass counts have indicated that the existing crossing facilities are only used occasionally. However, uncontrolled crossings at the same locations are to be retained as part of this scheme and they will benefit from flush kerbs along with enlarged refuge islands capable of accommodating a bicycle. Both

pedestrians and cyclists should find that the proposed arrangements make crossing easier and safer – for instance there will be good visibility and traffic will only approach from one direction (unlike the existing situation where traffic arrives in ‘platoons’ and from multiple directions).

11. All four roads leading into the roundabout benefit from street lighting. This will be retained.

Consultations and Representations

12. **West Oxfordshire District Council** – Planning, and Environmental Protection, raise no objections subject to the following observation:
 “In particular provision should be made for convenient access to the Cogges Link Road cycleway from those travelling down to the proposed roundabout from the A40 cycleway. It is suggested that a further crossing and extending the cycleway up to the roundabout would result in a more amenable route.”
13. **Witney Town Council** – make the following comments:
 “The new application for the proposed roundabout contained sufficient additional information to alleviate Witney Town Council’s concerns regarding the proposed roundabout at the Cogges Link Road junction. Members of the Council’s Planning Committee also received a more detailed explanation from Oxfordshire County Council which addressed their original concerns, therefore they wish to withdraw their objections and support this application. Witney Town Council did receive objections to this application. Members, whilst not specialists in the field, carefully considered the concerns raised but concluded that OCC had taken sufficient measures to address these issues. Nevertheless, we would request that the OCC Highway specialists take one final look at the concerns and either address them or satisfy themselves that the concerns are covered by the current proposals.”
14. **Natural England** – no comments to make on this proposal. However stress that the absence of comments or direct involvement on individual plans or proposals is simply an expression of priorities. It should not be taken as implying a lack of interest or indicating either support for, or objection to, any proposal. Would expect the LPA to assess and consider the possible impacts resulting from this proposal on protected species.
15. **Environment Agency** – There are no significant environmental constraints associated with this proposal. As such, they have no objection to the application. Recommend the following condition:
 “Development shall not begin until a surface water drainage scheme, based on sustainable drainage principles, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the planning authority. The scheme shall subsequently be implemented in accordance with the approved details before the development is completed.”
16. **Thames Water** – with regard to surface water drainage, it is the responsibility of a developer to make proper provision for drainage to groundwater courses or a suitable sewer. There are public services that cross, or run close to, the

site. Recommend an informative requiring the diversion of any Thames Water main that crosses the site.

17. **County Archaeologist** – The junction concerned lies within an area of some archaeological interest being located immediately north west of a Roman and Medieval settlement site. Recommend that should planning permission be granted, the applicant be responsible for implementing a staged programme of archaeological work. This can be achieved through an archaeological mitigation condition.
18. **County Forester** – No tree survey or tree protection plan has been submitted with the application. Such details should be submitted to ensure adequate protection measures for retained trees.
19. **County Ecologist** – No comments to make on this application.
20. **Transport Development Control** – The principle for the CLR has already been robustly assessed and granted permission in April 2009. The LHA's assessment for the principle of the scheme remains as one of no objection.

In terms of traffic impact this appears to be an improvement to the CLR scheme. Submitted plans do not provide a great detail of the type of roundabout to be built. It is stated that the appropriate design standard is to be used and the scheme will go through the normal design and construction processes and checks which includes a number of safety audits etc - which is acceptable.

A concern has been raised by third parties that the gradient of the hill will affect large vehicles turning into the CLR or Jubilee Way. The concern is addressed in the Design & Access Statement, although a more detailed plan showing the design of the roundabout and the tracking of HGV's would be useful.

Taking the above into account, recommend no objection to this application.

Third Party Representations

21. Three responses have been received to this application, of which one resident expresses concern about the proximity of their property to the roundabout and the impact on right turn movements (i.e. into the town centre) from the property.
22. The other two responses object to the proposal on the following grounds:
 - proposal does not address any of the fundamental flaws to the CLR scheme as a whole;
 - will result in more significant delays to traffic;
 - will adversely impact on vehicles trying to exit Cogges Hill Road onto the CLR – leading to significant diversions and additional 'u-turning' of traffic on the CLR roundabouts;

- proposal downgrades the provision for pedestrians and cyclists at the junction – accidents rates for cyclists at roundabouts are 2-3 times more than those at signal controlled crossings;
- introduction of a roundabout will give rise to potential adverse impacts that have not been properly addressed;
- Shores Green provides a preferable alternative to the CLR;
- a five limb roundabout junction should be considered;
- risk of HGVs overtaking whilst navigating the roundabout.

Relevant Planning Policies

23. Planning applications should be decided in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case, the relevant documents comprising the Development Plan are the South East Plan (SEP) and the adopted West Oxfordshire Local Plan.
24. Relevant Government Guidance includes PPS5 (planning for the historic environment).
25. Whilst the South East Plan forms part of the Development Plan, the government has made it clear that it intends to abolish regional strategies. This intention has been upheld as being a material consideration in determining planning applications.
26. All relevant policies are set out in detail in the Policy Annex circulated with this Agenda. Key Policies are SEP policies CC7, T1, T2 and WOLP policies BE1, BE3, BE18, NE6, T1, T2, T4 and T6.

Comments of the Deputy Director (Growth & Infrastructure)

27. The Cogges Link Road was granted planning permission in April 2009 following extensive debate where the planning issues and concerns were fully considered against the backdrop of the Development Plan and other government guidance at the time.
28. The development now proposed is limited in its extent to the replacement of the light controlled junction on Oxford Hill (at the eastern end of the CLR) with a roundabout. The extent of the area of the application is basically within the footprint of the main CLR permission. The policy implications for the development, in relation to the West Oxfordshire Local Plan, remain the same as in 2009 when the CLR as a whole was determined. The policy change since that time therefore relates to the change from the Oxfordshire Structure Plan to the SEP.
29. Policy CC7 of the SEP seeks the provision of appropriate levels of infrastructure to meet the needs of new development. The bulk of the funding for the CLR comes from developer contributions from developers building in Witney and permitting this roundabout would improve on the permitted CLR scheme and enhance this piece of highway infrastructure for the town. Similarly, the roundabout proposed is considered to be an improvement on

the signal controlled junction in traffic movement terms, contrary to the argument proposed by an objector that it will result in more delays to traffic rather than less. Both pedestrian and cycleway provision is properly catered for and the landscape impact should be no more than that anticipated as part of the original approved scheme. Policies T1 and T2 of the SEP are therefore in my view complied with.

30. A concern has been raised that HGVs using the roundabout would topple over when manoeuvring around the roundabout due to its design and gradient. However, the scheme would be designed in accordance with recommended highway design standards and would proceed through the normal design and construction process which involves various safety audits. Indeed the proposal involves the re-profiling of the B4022 Oxford Hill road on its approaches to the roundabout. The design of the roundabout circulatory carriageway has been designed to minimise the risk of overturning vehicles. The size of the roundabout is sufficient for all standard vehicles including HGVs to safely manoeuvre and execute turns to and from any of the arms of the roundabout.
31. An objection has been raised about traffic trying to exit Cogges Hill Road onto the CLR. This originally was to be signal controlled linked to the signals at the Oxford Hill/Jubilee Way/CLR junction. As a roundabout is now proposed, it is proposed to remove the signals at Cogges Hill Road replacing them with dedicated right and left turn lanes on entry onto the CLR and vehicles turning right into Cogges Hill Road from the CLR would have a dedicated right turn lane. Modelling has shown that with the roundabout in place, traffic at the Cogges Hill Road moves freely and it is not therefore considered necessary to develop a signal controlled junction here as it could introduce additional and unnecessary delay.
32. One of the aims of the CLR, by reducing traffic through the Bridge Street area of Witney, is to reduce pollution in that part of the town. Similarly, the provision of a roundabout, rather than a light controlled junction, would involve less queuing and smoother flow of traffic which is likely to reduce pollution from standing traffic and reduce the impact of cars moving up through the gears from a standing start. This would be of significant benefit to the residential properties located along this junction.
33. The proposal is basically within the envelope of the existing CLR permission and the impact of trees and hedgerows at this eastern end of the scheme are comparable. Some hedge removal would be involved along the eastern side of the CLR and Oxford Hill but this hedgerow would have been affected by the permitted scheme. As with the permitted CLR scheme, it is proposed to plant the area adjacent to the Windrush Cemetery with mature woodland trees with the redundant part of Cogges Hill Road being landscaped with shrubs and trees. Conditions can be imposed to minimise any further loss of hedgerows, protect and maintain those hedgerows and trees that are to remain and can require additional landscaping and tree planting. As such the proposal should have no more a significant impact on the landscape or visual character of the area as the permitted scheme.

34. The Council, in the exercise of its functions, has a legal duty to have regard to the requirements of the Conservation & Habitats Regulations 2010 which identify four main offences for development affecting European Protected Species (EPS):
- deliberate capture or killing or injury of an EPS;
 - deliberate taking or destroying of EPS eggs;
 - deliberate disturbance of an EPS including any disturbance likely to:
 - a) impair their ability
 - i) to survive, breed or rear or nurture their young, or
 - ii) to liberate or migrate; and
 - b) to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong;
 - damage or destruction of an EPS breeding site or resting place.
35. Ongoing surveys have been undertaken which indicate that, whilst the bulk of EPS present occupy the part of the CLR site that crosses the Windrush floodplain, the presence of an EPS at this north eastern end of the site is likely. Suitable mitigation measures to deal with this issue have been prepared as part of the CLR permission and will be implemented as part of the CLR scheme. Such measures are considered to be convincing and in my view will secure “offence avoidance”. Neither Natural England nor the Council’s Ecologist Planner have raised any objections to this application. The application is therefore not considered to have an adverse impact on EPS provided the mitigation measures agreed as part of the previous CLR scheme are implemented.
36. One local resident, whilst not objecting to the application, has raised a concern that they will not be able to turn right out of their property towards the town centre as a result of the construction of the roundabout. The resident has been visited and advised that the creation of a new drive from their property will form part of the development and will enable right turn movements to be undertaken.
37. Witney is a congested town and this congestion has potential to be detrimental to the vitality and viability of the town centre and on the residential amenities of those properties directly affected by traffic. The CLR was approved to address these environmental concerns. The current proposal, replacing the traffic signal controlled junction at the eastern end of the CLR with a roundabout, would provide a far more effective solution with limited environmental impact. It could indeed provide greater benefits in relation to the minimisation of queuing and reduction in pollution and it would provide an enhancement to the local highway network in Witney.

Recommendation

38. It is **RECOMMENDED** that planning permission be granted for the development proposed in Application No. R3.0039/11 subject to conditions to be determined by the Deputy Director (Growth & Infrastructure) to include the following matters:
1. **Detailed compliance – development to be carried out strictly in accordance with the particulars contained in the application and plans.**
 2. **Detailed duration – development to commence within 3 years.**
 3. **Landscaping scheme to be submitted and agreed.**
 4. **Landscaping scheme to be implemented.**
 5. **Retained trees/hedges to be protected during construction.**
 6. **Agreement and implementation of an archaeological mitigation strategy.**
 7. **Details of lighting to be submitted and agreed.**
 8. **Surface water drainage scheme to be approved.**
 9. **Details of ecological mitigation measures (including measures already agreed as part of the CLR approval) to be submitted and agreed.**
 10. **Final details of cycleway provision to be agreed.**
 11. **Existing footpaths and cycleways to be made good following completion of works.**
 12. **Details of proposed working hours during construction to be agreed.**
 13. **All plant and equipment to be used in pond construction to be designed and maintained to reduce noise levels to a minimum.**
 14. **Road to be constructed using a low road noise surface material.**
 15. **A scheme for routeing and control of construction traffic to be approved.**
 16. **No vehicles used in construction works shall enter the public highway unless its wheels and chassis are cleaned.**
 17. **Measures to be adopted to prevent dust nuisance.**

Informatives

1. **Requirement for a Site Waste Management Plan.**
2. **Diversion required for any Thames Water Main that crosses the site.**

MARTIN TUGWELL
Deputy Director (Growth & Infrastructure)

File ref: R3.0039/11

PLAN 2

HO22135/OHR/PA/03

Scale: 1:500
 Date: 15/05/2012
 Author: J.H.L.
 Checker: J.H.L.
 Date: 15/05/2012

- All landscape treatments within highway boundary
- All landscape treatments within site boundary
- All landscape treatments within site boundary
- All landscape treatments within site boundary
- All landscape treatments within site boundary
- All landscape treatments within site boundary



Ref	Date	Description	By

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
 Planning Department
 100 High Street, Oxford, OX1 1BQ
 Tel: (01865) 815000
 Fax: (01865) 815001
 www.oxfordshire.gov.uk

WITNEY
COGGES HILL ROAD

OXFORD HILL ROUNDABOUT

FOR PLANNING
 Date: 15/05/2012
 Author: J.H.L.
 Checker: J.H.L.
 Date: 15/05/2012
 Scale: 1:500
 Project: HO22135/OHR/PA/03

HO22135/OHR/PA/03