

Brian Worrell

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Date: 25 January 2025

▶ **Naomi Reynard**
Development and Conservation Officer
Planning Department
North Herts District Council
Gernon Walk
Letchworth
Hertfordshire
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Dear Naomi Reynard

Re: 24/02889/FP Residential development of 281 dwellings and associated roads, parking, realignment of Back Lane, drainage, landscaping, open space, servicing facilities and associated works. Land at Roundwood, Back Lane, Graveley, Hertfordshire

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this Planning Application, which follow.

First, thank you for addressing many of the issues in my letter dated 11 December 2023 in response to the previous public consultation. It is much appreciated and has in my view improved the planning of this site, in particular in respect of vulnerable road users – pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders and mobility users.

I have taken the site plan and added detail to provide clarification of some of my comments that follow – see attached marked up plan for reference and further suggestions of a minor nature.

This application significantly improves this section of the Stevenage Horse and Pony Ride, an initiative from the early days of Stevenage. The amendments to the application provide much needed improvements that mitigate against the accidents reported on Back Lane, as well as the rights of way network. It is obvious that consideration has been given to the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) in the area.

Planning Statement

4.1.1 Fully support the *‘separate access to be provided off Haybluff Drive (east) and Back Lane (south) and improved pedestrian links to existing external routes (including Public Rights of Way)’*.

Transport Assessment

1.7 Fully support the realignment of Back Lane through the development and the stopping up between Calder Way and Haybluff Drive.

The stopped up highway should become a Restricted Byway to preserve the historical record of being a highway.

With regards to footpath Graveley 10, this should be upgraded to a bridleway so that it provides an alternative route along the greenway for horse riders instead of Back Lane. This has been registered in the ROWIP.

Additionally, it allows for the proposed greenway along the eastern edge of the development to be created/dedicated as a bridleway to connect Graveley 10 to Botany Bay Lane, which is the subject of Definitive Map Modification Order (DMMO) – STV37 and NH276. This will connect to Mendip Way and further east to bridleway Gt Ashby 19 and the wider network. This would be a significant improvement to the Stevenage Horse and Pony Ride.

I also support the implementation of a 20mph speed restriction on Back Lane through the development, as well as continuing this speed restriction to the existing Back Lane east and north.

5.7 This section supports my comments above such that *‘This route also operates as a bridleway with crossing corrals to equestrian standards present across both Mendip Way and Great Ashby Way’*.

This crossing implies the crossing will be a Pegasus controlled crossing, which will be essential for the safe crossing of Mendip Way for all vulnerable users.

5.12 It should be noted that there are DMMOs registered to upgrade footpaths Graveley 009, Weston 018 and Weston 040 to bridleways – NH304 and NH353. These will connect to Graveley 010 along the northern greenway of this site and significantly enhance the bridleway network for walkers, cyclists and horse riders. Hence this development will be a key element in this wider network.

It will also provide significant improvement for the Equestrian Centre of some 50 horses or more to safely access to bridleway network.

6.11 Haybluff Drive Access. Fully supportive of priority for pedestrians and equestrians. My concern is that signage must be clear that horses are allowed on this path to avoid misunderstanding and possible confrontation. As above, the greenway should be a bridleway public right of way and appear on the Definitive Map.

6.22 *The existing alignment of Back Lane on the eastern and southern side of the development will be converted to a footpath/equestrian footpath which will allow pedestrian and equestrian movements between the northern access point into the development from Back Lane to Calder Way.*

By creating/dedicating this route to a bridleway, it will remove the ambiguity of having a ‘footpath’ that allows horse riders. As a result it also has the benefit of the legal protections provided to bridleways. Signage will also be important to identify who is allowed to use these routes.

6.31 *Two additional bus stops will be provided on Mendip Way, one northbound immediately to the south of the Haybluff Drive/Mendip Way roundabout and one to the south of the pedestrian/cycle equestrian crossing of Mendip Way (old Botany Bay Lane).*

The crossing of Mendip Way should be a Pegasus controlled crossing to protect all vulnerable road users – pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders and mobility users.

This crossing also connects Botany Bay Lane to bridleway Gt Ashby 19 and is subject to Definitive Map Modification Order (DMMO) – STV37 and NH276.

6.36 *When considering the hierarchy of streets within the development, the function of the roads was carefully considered with routes for pedestrians and cyclists afforded greater priority than vehicular traffic. The internal network of streets has been designed in accordance with the guidance*

contained in the emerging Hertfordshire County Council guidance contained in “Place & Movement Planning and Design Guidance”.

To provide clarification, horse riders should be added to pedestrians and cyclists as they will be using the same paths some of which will become bridleways.

6.44 *It is proposed that the speed limit on Back Lane and Weston Road adjacent to the site will be reduced to 30mph. Our drawing **2105-037 PL109** provides an overview of the access works and indicates the locations where the speed limits will be reduced either side of the access junction locations.*

Due to the nature of Back Lane and the suggestion that it will be subject to a 20mph speed limit through the development, it would be preferable that this 20mph speed limit be extended to the west and north of the development on Back Lane.

Appendix A

Policy 1: Transport User Hierarchy

It is significant that equestrians are not included on this table, and for this development they should be due their inclusion in the planning.

Policy 5: Development Management

d) Secure developer mitigation measures It appears that there is no s106 or CIL contributions towards the ROWIP improvements outlined in the comment above. This is a missed opportunity to limit the impact of this development on the road network and its improvement. This should be addressed.

Brian Worrell
BHS Herts Access Group
BDS Beds, Bucks & Herts Rights of Way Officer

25 January 2025.

Marked up Plan for response to public consultation

