



TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Ref No. 4/1662/95

Chipperfield Land Co Ltd  
Kings Works  
Kings Lane  
Chipperfield  
Herts

Mr A King  
Folly Bridge House  
Bulbourne  
Tring  
Herts HP23 5QG

DEVELOPMENT ADDRESS AND DESCRIPTION  
=====

Rear of 16-18 Rockcliffe Avenue, Kings Langley, Herts

ERECTION OF SEVEN DWELLINGS

Your application for *outline planning permission* dated 28.12.1995 and received on 29.12.1995 has been **REFUSED**, for the reasons set out on the attached sheet(s).

Director of Planning

Date of Decision: 07.03.1996

(ENC Reasons and Notes)



REASONS FOR REFUSAL  
OF APPLICATION: 4/1662/95

Date of Decision: 07.03.1996

1. The average width of Avenue Approach is 4.7 m whilst 'Roads in Hertfordshire' recommends that the minimum road width to support the existing level of development is 5.5 m. The substandard nature of this access is compounded by substandard kerb radii at the junction of Avenue Approach and Watford Road, and heavy on-street parking. The proposed development and associated increase in vehicular movements would exacerbate the existing substandard access arrangements and jeopardise highway safety for those using Avenue Approach and Watford Road.
2. Visibility from Avenue Approach onto Watford Road is substandard and contrary to the requirements of PPG13 "Transport". The increase in traffic generated by the development would exacerbate the existing substandard conditions leading to highway danger to those using the highway.



# The Planning Inspectorate

An Executive Agency in the Department of the Environment and the Welsh Office

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Your Ref:

On Ref:  
T/APP/A1910/A/96/266009/P7

PLANNING DEPARTMENT			
DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL			
Date	Ref.	Ask	File
- 8 JAN 1997			
- 9 JAN 97			
Comments			

Dear Sir

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990, SECTION 78 AND SCHEDULE 6  
APPEAL BY CHIPPERFIELD LAND CO LTD  
APPLICATION NO: 4/1662/95

1. I have been appointed by the Secretary of State for the Environment to determine this appeal against the decision of the Dacorum Borough Council to refuse outline planning permission in respect of an application for seven houses on land at the rear of 16-28 Rockcliffe Avenue, Kings Langley. I conducted a hearing into the appeal on 20 November 1996.
2. From all that I have read, heard and seen, I consider the main issue in this appeal to be the effect of additional vehicular movements on highway safety and the free flow of traffic in Avenue Approach and at its junction with Watford Road.
3. The development plan comprises the Hertfordshire County Structure Plan Review 1991 and the Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1995. The Council has drawn my attention to 3 particular policies. These are policy 32 of the Structure Plan, which states that the Council will ensure that appropriate standards are applied to all roads, both existing and proposed; policy 8 of the Local Plan, which sets criteria for all development proposals, including the requirement that the traffic generated can be accommodated on surrounding roads without serious detriment to amenity, safety or traffic flow; and policy 49 of the Local Plan, which states that development must be compatible in general highway planning, design and capacity terms with the current and future operation of the defined road hierarchy. Policy 49 further states that acceptability will be assessed specifically in highway and traffic terms, including consideration of (a) the volume, type and timing of through traffic in a street and the environmental impact; (b) the volume of traffic generated by properties in the street and by the development proposed; (c) the width of the street to accommodate such traffic with on-street parking and the adequacy of footways; (d) the amount of existing on-street parking; and (e) road traffic accident records and safety policy.
4. The Council had no doubt that the appeal site, which is edged by residential development on 3 sides and outside the Metropolitan Green Belt boundary along the fourth side, is an appropriate location for housing. The Council's concern related firstly to the



consequences of additional traffic using the only available access into the estate, Avenue Approach, which leads to Rockcliffe Avenue and the site at the extremity of the southern leg of this cul-de-sac. The Council's second concern was about the ability of the junction at the entrance to Avenue Approach to cope safely with more turning movements on to and off Watford Road, the principal road A4251.

5. As regards the present and proposed additional traffic flows there was no dispute that, allowing for the occupancy of the residential institutions at the end of the northern cul-de-sac leg of Rockcliffe Avenue, there are the equivalent of some 54 dwelling units now gaining access along Avenue Approach. After demolition of the bungalow at 28 Rockcliffe Avenue, to gain access for the proposal, there would be extra traffic from a net increase of 6 dwellings.

6. Considering the Council's first concern, Avenue Approach averages some 4.7m. wide and there are trees very close to the carriageway edge. Rockcliffe Avenue is narrower, down to about 4.4m. at one point. You maintained that although the Hertfordshire design standard for a road serving more than 50 dwellings calls for a carriageway width of 5.5m, this applies to new road proposals; here, the increase in traffic from 6 more dwellings would be so slight as to make no difference. Even if Avenue Approach was to be regarded as technically sub-standard, you said it had adequate capacity in practice to cope with the likely extra 5 movements, on top of the morning and evening two-way peak hour flows of 43 and 36 vehicle movements you had surveyed. Local residents, however, pointed to the prevalence of on-street parking which straddles the footways in Avenue Approach, despite dwellings having off-street facilities; there were said to be difficulties often experienced by vehicles trying to pass through.

7. It seems to me that driving through Avenue Approach can be awkward, primarily because parked vehicles cause obstructions, rather than because the carriageway itself is too narrow for two vehicles to pass. This is occasionally inconvenient, and gives rise to fears about emergency access, but raises no significant highway safety risk at the slow speeds which are likely. The occupiers of 6 more dwellings at the end of Rockcliffe Avenue would in their turn have to live with this inconvenience, but their coming and going would not worsen the situation markedly, or in itself cause additional obstruction. The extra vehicles generated would represent only a small proportional increase in the traffic flow within the estate. I consider the difficulties apparent in Avenue Approach are not so grave as to make the proposal unacceptable in terms of highway safety and the free flow of traffic.

8. The Council's second area of concern related to the junction with Watford Road. There was agreement that visibility available to a motorist emerging from Avenue Approach, at a point 2.4m. back from the carriageway edge, is of the order of 120m. to the north in the face of nearside traffic, and some 150m. to the south. The Council pointed out that this is sub-standard by reference to Planning Policy Guidance 13 on Transport, which requires 90m. visibility from 9m, or at least 4.5m, back in the minor road; this is not available. Local residents made reference to traffic speed exceeding the 30m.p.h. limit in Watford Road, and to the misleading dip into which approaching traffic drops beyond Langley Crescent, the next junction a short distance to the north. Your view was that in pragmatic terms available visibility suffices for the amount of traffic already generated off Approach Avenue; a little extra traffic obtaining the same visibility, perhaps one vehicle every 12 minutes in the peak hour, would not affect road safety.

9. In my opinion the limited degree of visibility for an emerging vehicle is one facet of the awkwardness of this junction but, on its own, it is not a compelling deficiency. More significant is the physical configuration of the junction to which my attention was drawn. You discounted the consequences of the very minimal kerb radii, in terms of extra turning traffic. However, you also put the flow of traffic along Watford Road as over 1400 two way movements in the morning peak hour. Because of the narrow opening into Avenue Approach and the sharp angles to be negotiated, it seems to me that there is already a significant risk to highway safety in Watford Road. Whenever a vehicle waiting to turn out of Avenue Approach is confronted by another wanting to turn in, either from right or left, the initial length of the estate road is not wide enough to allow the incoming vehicle to clear the main road easily. This gives rise to the likelihood of the free flow of traffic in Watford Road being impeded and, worse, possible shunt accidents and collisions with the emerging vehicle.

10. Insufficient detail was available regarding the 2 injury accidents here in the last 3 years to show exactly how these had occurred, but I view them as factors emphasising the need to recognize the significant defects in the junction layout. I was also struck by the difficulty of picking out the narrow opening into Avenue Approach when approaching up or down Watford Road, even in daylight. I consider that as presently configured, without appropriate kerb radii and sufficient width to the initial length of the carriageway in Avenue Approach, the junction is inadequate to cope safely with additional traffic movements onto and off Watford Road. In my view, even the small amount of extra traffic likely to be generated by the proposal would unacceptably increase the existing risk. I conclude that in this respect the proposal would materially breach the objectives of the development plan policies referred to, especially policy 8 of the Local Plan, and I intend to dismiss the appeal.

11. I have taken into account all the other matters referred to in the written submissions and discussed at the hearing, including concern about the demolition of 28 Rockliffe Avenue and the consequences for the occupier of the adjacent property; also the importance of trees on the site. However there is nothing so significant as to outweigh the considerations which have led to my decision.

12. For the above reasons and in exercise of powers transferred to me, I hereby dismiss this appeal

Yours faithfully



S N J BLADES BA Dip TP MRTPI  
Inspector