Strategic City Transport

Transport Development Management

Application Response

To:	Paul Chick, Development Management
From:	Laurence Fallon, Transport Development Manager
Date:	10th March 2021
Address:	**The Hawthorns, Woodland Road**
Application No:	20/00433/F
Proposal:	**New University Library with associated public realm alterations**

TDM acknowledges members' discussions at the committee of 25th February. A number of the transport and highway issues discussed were assessed within the TDM comments appended to the committee report as follows:

Pedestrian Flows on Elton Road – **page 125**
Impacts at Tyndall Avenue / St Michael's Hill – **page 126**
Impacts of the Emergency Active Travel Fund upon flows – **page 126**

To assist committee, further information and detail is provided below in relation to the key matters of concern on 25th February in relation to the following matters:

- **Reliance of the development upon the road closure**
- **Impacts upon Pedestrian safety**
- **Impacts upon Pedestrian Safety along Elton Road**
- **Re-assignment of traffic**
- **Mitigation for Diverted Traffic**

Reliance of the development upon the road closure

The development does not rely on the stopping up or privatisation of highway but is subject to a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to remove traffic from Woodland Road, alongside other TRO measures including banned turns, new crossings and one-way orders in surrounding streets. The additional pedestrian / cycle accessible area would remain within the ownership, management and maintenance of BCC.

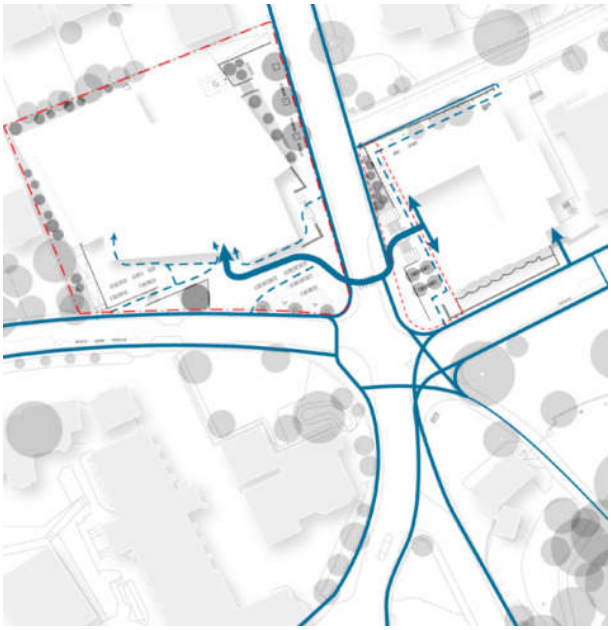
The proposed library building footprint sits entirely within the site ownership of UoB, and this includes the proposed overhanging / projecting upper floors, which are not proposed to overhang highway (shown blue below). However, as the red line boundary of the application includes the proposed road closure, the issue of the building and the proposed works therefore cannot be untied and must be assessed / considered as one proposal.

Extent of current highway adoption and extent of building

Impact upon pedestrian safety

Transport officers' assessment of this scheme is that it enhances the local environment for pedestrians, reduces the speed of traffic and contributes to a scenario where the motorist feels like the visitor, rather than the priority.

As reported at the previous committee, the design of the existing situation is one which is defined by the requirements of motor vehicles, with pedestrians a secondary consideration, assigned to routes and crossing facilities dictated by highway engineering criteria and not desire lines. The diagram on the left, below is taken from the submitted Design & Access Statement and indicates in blue those desire lines. The aerial image on the right provides the context to how these movements are made and where. Except for the zebra crossing, pedestrian crossing movements are undertaken across significant areas of carriageway and without formalised protection from either traffic or vehicle speeds.



Current pedestrian desire lines **Aerial image of current roadspace**

Transport officers' observations on site are that the routes prescribed above are commonly ignored, particularly the direct desire line from Tyndall Avenue to Elton Road, where pedestrians are observed to cross the middle of the junction, between the bellmouths of Tyndall Avenue and that of Elton Road. During busy periods, this involves pedestrians undertaking risks and / or crossing between queuing traffic.

With regard to the proposed development, the removal of traffic on Woodland Road north of Tyndall Avenue and right turns into Tyndall Avenue for general traffic, coupled with the inclusion of a raised table at the revised three-arm junction rebalances these movement patterns materially and demonstrably in favour of pedestrians and cyclists, in particular those movements between Tyndall Avenue and Elton Road, where the currently prescribed walking route (north via the zebra crossing) is convoluted and commonly ignored and to the detriment of highway safety. A further beneficiary of the removal of general traffic from this location are public transport vehicles

Proposed public realm improvements

Highway officers are satisfied that the above proposed scheme provides a significant benefit to pedestrians in terms of the additional square metreage of public realm and pedestrian / cyclist priority compared to the current situation. This also takes account of the change in the pattern of movements generated by the proposed library.

Impact on Pedestrian Safety – Elton Road

Turning to the impact on visitors / pupils of the adjacent school, transport officers are obliged to evaluate all impacts of a development, not just relating to movements generated by the development in question, but also where a change in the local environment may pose undue risks to neighbouring uses and users.

As is common practice where material changes to the highway layout are proposed, transport officers required the applicant to submit a Stage One Road Safety Audit (RSA) to accompany planning proposals. It is entirely normal that an RSA will raise issues to be addressed or followed up by the designer of a transport scheme, and in this respect, the scrutiny applied to the design within the submitted RSA is considered by transport officers to be sufficiently robust.

The RSA was conducted and included with the planning submission in accordance with National Guidance GG119, contained within DMRB (Design Manual for Roads and Bridges). With specific regard to Elton Road in the vicinity of the school and its junction with Woodland Road, the RSA raised five issues as summarised in the following table; how these were recommended to be addressed, and how the applicant has addressed these to transport officers' satisfaction.

Road Safety Audit Findings, Recommendations and Outcomes

Location	Issue	Remedy	Action	Resolved?
Proposed raised table at junction of Tyndall Avenue / Woodland Road / Elton Road	Lack of road markings and asphalt surface will be similar on all approaches to the junction undermining awareness of ambiguity	Surface the raised table using materials creating visual contrast to the asphalt of approach roads	Table to be surfaced in exposed aggregate asphalt along with herringbone stone setts at crossing points, provided in Appendix B of TA.	Yes
Elton Road / Woodland Road junctoin	Left turn from Elton Road into Woodland Road could result in sudden braking, collisions, and/or injuries to cyclists.	Increase corner radii to 4m	Design revised to address this and included in Transport Assessment Appendix A	Yes
Coach Parking on Elton Road	Cycle passing parked coaches potentially unexpected by opposing traffic	Provide cycle markings to standard requirements in TSRGD	Amendment made – contraflow cycle markings included.	Yes
Potential obscured pedestrian visibility at crossing points along Elton Road and near junction with Elmdale Road.	Intervisibility between pedestrians and motorists at raised table crossings used by schoolchildren could be obscured by on-street parking	Demonstrate that westbound drivers have adequate visibility of pedestrians crossing Elton Road and remove parking if necessary	Visibility confirmed to be acceptable in Transport Assessment, Appendix F.	Yes
Disabled Parking accessed from Elton Road	Conflict between wheelchairs being unloaded and pedestrians	Relocate disabled bay access zone to rear of footway	Sufficient space is provided within the footway for access / disembarking.	Yes

It is important to recognise that the Safety Audit process does not cease with the submission of the Stage 1 RSA. Were the scheme to be approved, a Stage 2 RSA is required at the detailed design process and requires a further and more stringent exploration of safety issues, whilst further RSAs (Stages 3 and 4) are required following the implementation of the scheme. At each stage of this process, designs are scrutinised by independent auditors as well as BCC's qualified Road Safety Engineers before being passed.

Re-assignment of Traffic

TDM's position remains that the reassignment of trips submitted by the applicant is considered a reasonable and robust prediction of where trips could be diverted within the network, within the bounds of the modelling tools available. This followed extensive camera surveys during 2019 which confirmed the origin and destination of morning and evening peak period flows to and from this area. Further modelling was provided to assess the impacts of re-routing and transport officers are satisfied that the assignment, distribution and modelling results represent a credible and robust forecast upon which to base further decisions. Inevitably, the closure of one route will lead to re-routing along another. The table below provides a summary of the change in peak hour traffic flows in this area.

Forecasted changes in peak hour traffic flows

Street	Location	Direction	AM Peak change	PM Peak Change
St Michael's Hill	n/o St Michaels Park	NB	33	2
		SB	118	52
	n/o Tyndall Avenue	NB	-26	-19
		SB	199	80
	s/o Tyndall Avenue	NB	61	93
		SB	23	-1
Tyndall Avenue	e/o Woodland Rd	WB	138	51
		EB	-123	-140
Woodland Road	s/o University Rd	NB	-87	-127
		SB	-48	-18
	at point closure	NB	-158	-164
		SB	-285	-126
	n/o St Michaels Park	NB	-101	-113
		SB	-134	-56
Elton Road	w/o Woodland Rd	EB	-2	0
		WB	62	67
St Michael's Park	e/o Woodland Road	EB	30	7
		WB	-114	-42

Members are reminded that the analysis resulting in the above figures assume all traffic recorded as travelling along Woodland Road is re-routed within the area of interest – which was defined by Whiteladies Road to the west, Park Row to the south and Cotham Hill to the east. This takes no account of reductions in through traffic generated by modal shift to walking, cycling or public transport, re-routing outside the area of scope or by the modelled reductions in through traffic resulting from a) the Clean Air Zone, and b) the Active Travel Fund (ATF) measure of banning left turns into and right turns out of St Michael's Hill at Park Row.

Mitigation for Diverted Traffic

Notwithstanding the above, Transport DM do consider the impact on St Michael's Hill to be material, and to this end have insisted on a contribution of £103,000 comprising £40,000 towards improvements to pedestrian facilities near its junction with Tyndall Avenue and a sum of £63,000 towards an area wide study to investigate the potential of a Liveable Neighbourhood (LN) in this area, which the transport authority will seek to progress following any approval of this development. Further to this, and as per the previous committee report, BCC would commit to exploring this in conjunction with the proposed road closure and in partnership with local stakeholders (including UoB) following any approval of these proposals.

In terms of the traffic impact on Elton Road, Transport DM consider the interventions submitted as part of the application sufficiently address this impact through delivering improvements that prioritise pedestrians ahead of traffic in conjunction with the addressing needs of cyclists, buses, on-street parking, coach parking and servicing.

With regard to Tyndall Avenue the largest change in movements is forecasted to be westbound but taking into account the eastbound closure to all but buses and cyclists, the change in two-way flows is not of material difference.

Conclusion

In planning policy terms, Transport DM is required to assess the material harm of proposals against Local Planning Policy DM23 and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Transport officers must weigh up whether the changes represent a severe impact upon road safety, assessing the designs and safety audit work alongside changes to traffic routing, congestion and delay.

Transport officers professional assessment of this application in the context of the above analysis is that when comparing the existing situation to the development proposal, and in the context of the financial and physical interventions proposed, it is difficult to see how the development can be considered to generate a worsened environment for pedestrians in terms of road safety.

It is therefore the recommendation of Transport Development Management that any transport reason for refusal would not be defendable were this development to be refused on these grounds and further scrutinised by a planning inspector.