



THE EAST COULSDON RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

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29th August 2013

Dear Laura

East Coulsdon Residents' Association Objection to Re: Planning Application 13/02178/P Supermarket and Medical Centre – Lion Green Road Car Park

East Coulsdon Residents' Association represents 2,000 households on the eastside of the Brighton Road from Marlpit Lane, Coulsdon to the Borough Boundary with Surrey and also includes the Coulsdon Woods Estate and the roads leading up to Old Coulsdon. The large areas of Farthing Downs and Happy Valley Green Belt are also within our area. All our residents regard Coulsdon as their local town centre.

Although we are in agreement that Coulsdon is in need of new larger supermarket and we are pleased that Waitrose is the chosen supermarket provider.

We feel we have no choice but to object to the present plan on the following grounds

- **Size of the building**
- **Insufficient parking for the Supermarket and the Medical centre**
- **Loss of parking for the town centre**
- **Loss of other uses of Lion Green car park**
- **Poor pedestrian linkage to the town centre**
- **Location of traffic entrance and effect of increased traffic in Lion Green Road**

Background : Coulsdon is a very nice place to live, it has good transport by road, rail and bus it also has direct road and rail links to Gatwick Airport and the coast. It has quality housing, schools and marvellous countryside. However, the Town Centre has been in steady decline and a state of flux since the closure of Cane Hill Hospital 20 years ago and does not offer the local population what they need from a modern local Town Centre. The go ahead and construction of the Bypass along with the Town Centre makeover have improved the visual look of the Town Centre and have also improved the environment by making it less congested and more pedestrian friendly.

Retail Provision. In summary: the Town Centre needs to be made more attractive to bring more people into the centre during the day and in the evening and for them to spend some time here. A survey undertaken in 2007 by East Coulsdon RA showed that only 56% of the Affiliated to :

local community regularly did their main shopping in Coulsdon. Other more recent studies by Croydon council in the last year have shown that the retail leakage is much higher than this. It is clear that there needs to be a larger supermarket presence in Coulsdon. The existing Boots and Waitrose supermarket are well liked and are also supportive of the local Coulsdon economy especially at the northern end of the town, but the Waitrose has become too small to cater for the needs of the local community in the 21st Century. The existing Tesco and other convenience store also provides useful competition of smaller and convenience shopping, but again they are not conducive of a weekly shopping experience

There is an urgent need for an improved retail offer in the Town Centre to attract more people and also support other local shops and restaurants. Until recently Coulsdon has suffered a lot less than many other local shopping centres with good independent retailers such as Coulsdon Hardware, Dobles Motorcycles and Woods Jewellers.

It had very few empty shops. However, in July and August another 5 shops and business have closed and the HSBC Bank has announced the closure of the Coulsdon branch in the autumn, while many of the other small retailers are operating on very tight margins.

Compared to other local district centres the Town Centre lacks one of the big four or a larger specialist supermarket for the weekly family shop (although local residents do not support a huge supermarket). The Town Centre also lacks modern Medical centre facilities for the local medical practices with good parking and access by public transport.

We strongly believe that any supermarket on this site must be able to work with and support the rest of town and not work against it. **We are of the view that the present supermarket design in this planning application works against the town centre.** The Lion Green car park site is an important part of the town centre economy and this aspect needs to be maintained for the community.

In consequence of the above, we feel we have no choice but to object to the present plan on the following grounds:-

- **Size of the Building**

The size of the new supermarket takes over the whole car park and destroys this important asset for Coulsdon residents and businesses. It should have been possible to construct a supermarket building with a combined medical centre that took up less of ground area of the car park leaving space for more public parking and for the parking of coaches and transfer of foreign students from and to coaches safely. The supermarket could have included more underground parking on more than one level. It could also have left a proportion of the ground area for parking outside at ground level where 24 hour parking could be provided.

- **Insufficient parking for Supermarket and the Medical centre**

The proposal to have only 190 parking spaces for a supermarket of this size is inconsistent with that of other supermarkets in the area such as Tesco Purley which has over 400 spaces and Sainsbury's Wallington has just under 400 spaces on three floors for a similar size supermarket. The newly proposed Waitrose Supermarket at Redhill Station includes a multi-story car park with 450. The assumption that a large proportion of Coulsdon residents will walk and cycle is wrong and although there will be some that will walk and cycle which we agree should be encouraged it will be a

minority and there is provision of too higher ratio of cycle space to car spaces. A typical family weekly shop needs a car to transport it home.

The limiting of 12 parking spaces for the Medical centre and no dedicated disabled spaces is also wrong. Similar sized medical centres at Purley have around 20 spaces and these are deemed not to be sufficient. There should be at least 20 spaces with two dedicated disabled parking bays. These spaces must be for patients and not staff. There should also be adequate room for an Ambulance to draw up near the entrance for when patients have to be urgently transferred to hospital. There must also be sufficient spaces for medical staff to park during the day at either in a dedicated area or within the supermarket car park.

- **Loss of parking for the town centre**

The existing car park provides an important asset for Coulsdon residents, business and the local economy and good parking as well as good public transport are important to any successful town. The design of the Supermarket removes all the local parking from Coulsdon and removes control of the parking from the local authority and transfers it to the supermarket operator. We believe this is wrong

The parking survey undertaken by WSP showed that on an average week day the car park had high usage particularly for both short and long term parking. WSP report shows the following usage for a weekday

(Tues) in October 2012

- Max 154 (72.%) at 11.00
- < 3hrs 43%
- 3-7hrs 6.4%
- > 7hrs 46.6%

and for Sat

- Max 69 (32%) at 10.30, 11.45 & 14.30
- < 3hrs 92.2%
- 3-7hrs 6.5%
- > 7hrs 1.3%

WSP wrongly in our opinion has assumed that all day parking is by commuters rather than people working or doing business in the town and that when the new car park at Coulsdon South station would open these commuters would transfer to there. The new car park at Coulsdon South opened in mid July with 39 new spaces and during the six week period to date occupancy has varied from 28 to 38 per day with an average occupancy 35 and therefore could not be a viable alternative to Lion Green Road parking.

Our own survey of parking in Lion Green during this period (at the height of the summer holidays) has shown that there are on average still 80 to 90 cars parked in the long term car park area at Lion Green. **This clearly shows there is a need for continued all day parking in the town centre** not least for people who work in Coulsdon. As there is no other site in the town centre that can provide all day parking. We expect this requirement to increase again when the schools go back in the autumn.

Also at present Lion Green car park is free after 6.00pm and all day Sunday to encourage people to use the local restaurants in the evening and for Sunday lunch. Town centre residents

who do not have parking spaces also use the present car park to park in overnight. No consideration has been given to these aspects in the application.

- **Loss of other uses of Lion Green car park**

At present the car park has a number of other community uses. These include a recycling centre, access to the local Scout's site and as a safe place off the public highway, where Foreign Exchange students can be transferred from European left hand drive coaches to cars of local host families. It is also a safe place to leave these coaches over night while the drivers rest before returning to Europe with local children. This brings essential revenue to the town as these foreign students spend both time and money in the town centre.

We note that there is provision for recycling within the new development and to maintain access to the Scout's site with dedicated parking and pick up provision within the Scout's gated area, but consideration has not been given to issue of the coaches and the exchange student programme and the problems the loss of coach parking will cause to this important part of Coulsdon's economy.

- **Poor pedestrian linkage to the town centre**

One of the main concerns that we have is the linkage between the proposed supermarket and the rest of the town centre. Experience of other towns where the supermarkets are situated on the edge of town rather than in the town centre is that unless there is good linkage between the supermarket and the existing town centre the supermarket has a detrimental effect on existing footfall in the town centre and a loss of trade to the existing retailers.

We see nothing in the plan to improve the linkage to the rest of the town centre, no improved signage and no attempt to improve the alleyways that lead from Lion Green Road to the rest of the town centre as suggested in the Draft Coulsdon Masterplan. It seems to us that the actual siting of the supermarket of this size within the car park has designed out closer linkage.

There are no local bus routes in Lion Green Road and bus passengers will have to walk from Brighton Road and Chipstead Valley Road. For many this will mean crossing Lion Green Road and again there is no provision in the plan to provide a safe pedestrian refuge and crossing half way a long Lion Green Road.

- **Location of Traffic entrance and effect of increased traffic in Lion Green Road**

The existing design places the new entrance to the supermarket site at the northern end of the site and very close to the junction of Chipstead Valley Road. At this point it is proposed to widen the road to allow southbound vehicles to turn right into the supermarket from a central lane. However, we are concerned that the widening is too short and too near to the junction of Lion Green Road and Chipstead Valley Road. At busy times this will block back the traffic across this junction which is already at 90% of capacity according to the TfL traffic report by Mott McDonald prior to remodelling the junction. To prevent this, the vehicle entrance for shoppers should have been sited much nearer the existing entrance of the car park

Furthermore, the vehicle tracking in the WSP report demonstrates that the rear of a large service vehicle entering the site from the north will swing out into southbound traffic passing

this site on Lion Green Road. This has major safety implications for those using the public highway on a straight section of road who would not anticipate their path suddenly being blocked by a vehicle turning off the road in its own lane.

This junction can only get worse with the Masterplan traffic report showing that 75% of the supermarket traffic will approach the supermarket from this direction. If in the Cane Hill application there is no additional exit directly on to the A23 Bypass, Lion Green Road and the junction of Chipstead Valley Road will exceed capacity in peak hours as forecast in The Mayer Brown and WSP reports.

This increase in traffic will make crossing Lion Green Road by pedestrians much more difficult and there must be the construction of a safe pedestrian crossing point in the region of the halfway point between Brighton Road and Chipstead Valley Road.

What We Support in the Plan

- **Waitrose :** We are pleased that the preferred operator of the Supermarket is Waitrose as they have had a long association with the town for over 50 years and have provided a good service to the town and helped and contributed to many local organisations and charities over this time.
- **Medical Centre :** We are very pleased that the development includes a new and improved Medical centre and doctors surgery in the town centre with disabled step free access and dedicated parking. This is badly needed in Coulsdon
- **Design of the Frontage on Lion Green Road :** The design of the frontage on to Lion Green Road shielded behind the existing tree line with diversion of the existing footpath to run behind the trees is good.
- **Diversion of London Loop and exposure of the Ancient Monument (Surrey Iron Railway embankment) :** We strongly support this proposal as way of celebrating Coulsdon's transport history. Once this is public knowledge not only should it make the London loop a little more interesting it should also bring more visitors to Coulsdon wishing to see the ancient monument.
- **Employment:** We very much welcome the new jobs and employment opportunities that the new supermarket would bring.

Conditions

We strongly believe that any supermarket on this site must be able to work with and support the rest of town and not work against it. The Lion Green car park site is an important part of the town centre economy and this aspect needs to be maintained for the community.

Any supermarket development on this site in addition to solving the 'linkage' and 'traffic' problems above, must have the following conditions attached to the permission which we do not believe would prevent a supermarket from coming to Coulsdon.

- There should be adequate car parking for the both the supermarket and the town centre needs.

- There must be provision of free short term parking for a least three hours
- There must be the provision of a minimum of 50 long term parking places
- Parking charges should be kept in line local authority prices.
- Provision of a safe pedestrian crossing point half way along Lion Green Road.
- Additional northbound bus stop in Brighton Road just south of Lion Green Road to improve public transport access and reduce the need to cross main roads.

CIL and section 106 Monies

Public Provision from Section 106 or Local CIL Monies

It is important with the Cane Hill, Lion Green Car Park and a number of other developments in the Coulsdon Masterplan area that the public realm in Coulsdon is improved. The section 106 and local CIL should be levied from all of the developments associated with the Cane Hill and Lion Green Road site plus any other large and small developments in the Town Centre and surrounding areas including Ulswater Crescent.

The money collected from section 106 or the local CIL should be used for improving the public realm specifically for Coulsdon, providing the following:

- New combined Community centre, Calat centre and Library with rooms and halls.
- Up to date Medical facilities with surgeries and clinics.
- Diversion of the London Loop and opening up of the Surrey Iron Railway embankment (ancient monument) to the public.
- Provision towards step free access to Coulsdon South Station.
- Facilities for the young such as a skate park and fishing lake.
- Public art on the Cane Hill site and in the Town Centre
- Improved facilities for the local Scout Groups.
- Improved leisure facilities.
- Improved CCTV in the Town Centre and Lion Green Road.
- Improved car parking in the town centre.

Charles King

Charles King MBE

Chair : East Coulsdon Residents' Association

Copy : Councillors : Jason Perry; Jeet Bains, David Osland, Ian Parker, Justin Cromie, Terry Lenton, Chris Wright, Phil Thomas, George Ayres, Tony Newman; GLA member Steve O'Connell.

Council Officers : Mike Kiely, Emma Taylor; Steve Dennington and Vincent Lacovara
Laing Group : Duncan Brisbane