



St Leonard's Neighbourhood Association

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Charity Reg. No. 283568

Exeter City Council,
Planning Dept.

Re: Application No: 23/0880/FUL - Comment.

25th August 2023

We would like to make the following comment on the application referenced above.

Our particular concern is for the poor vehicular access for residents, their visitors, the necessary commercial traffic, but most importantly emergency vehicles. We realise that under a previous planning application vehicle access was permitted off Weirfield Road and that decision would be difficult, but not impossible, to rescind. It would however be possible and necessary for the Planning Authority to apply a condition on the developers that a second vehicle access be made directly onto Topsham Road which would be for both the Residential Home and the Care Home. The Weirfield Road access being for emergencies only.

Our reasoning for this suggestion is as follows:-

Emergency vehicle access.

Comments made by Highways and the Devon & Somerset Fire & rescue Services on this and previous applications for this site have hinted that the information supplied to them contains, "very little detail relating to fire to be found." They also ask for further information to be supplied.

The Department of Health in its 'Health Technical Memorandum 05-02: Firecode Guidance in support of functional provisions (Fire safety in the design of healthcare premises) 2015 edition' states:-

(1) The building shall be designed and constructed so as to provide reasonable facilities to assist firefighters in the protection of life.

(2) Reasonable provision shall be made within the site of the building to enable fire appliances to gain access to the buildings.

7.1 The fire-and-rescue service, once alerted, will attend quickly and, once there, should be provided with adequate facilities to ensure the protection of life and property.

Particular matters which require consideration are:

- *site access;*
- *vehicular access around the buildings for fire appliances;*
- *access into the building for the fire-fighting*

7.2 When considering site access for the fire- and-rescue service, the following should be considered:

the location and number of site access points;

the design of the internal roadways with respect to width, radii of bends, gradients, clearance between and under buildings;

the weight and turning circle of the fire appliances.

7.3 A minimum of two access points to the site, suitable for use by the fire-and-rescue service, should be provided for fire appliances. Their location should be agreed with all relevant authorities.

7.4 New hospital roads that may be used by fire appliances should comply with Table 10 of this Health Technical Memorandum. **One access point for the fire-and-rescue service may be an emergency access point dedicated solely for the use of the fire service.**

1. Fire appliances are not standardised. Some fire services have appliances of greater weight or different size. In consultation with the fire-and-rescue authority, the building control body may adopt other dimensions in such circumstances.

2. Because the weight of high-reach appliances is distributed over a number of axles, it is considered that their infrequent use of a carriageway or route designed to 12.5 tonnes should not cause damage. It would therefore be reasonable to design the road base to 12.5 tonnes, although structures such as bridges should have the full 17-tonne capacity.

The built Care Home has no vehicle access around it. This Residential Home application has provision for a 'drop off' point off Topsham Road.

We would ask the Exeter City Planning authority to work with the fire services to (a) turn down the application in its present form and (b) insist that any future application allows for a full access from Topsham Road for all vehicular traffic to both homes and makes the access from Weirfield Road exclusively for emergency vehicles. Consultation with DCC Highways may be necessary to make sure that Weirfield Road and the many service pipes and conduits beneath it can withstand the full 12.5 + tonne capacity of modern Fire appliances.

The application, as it is at present, does not comply with the Dept. Of Health regulations and advice shown above. The Cul-de-sac of Weirfield Road access is not only totally unsuitable for day to day vehicle access, it flies in the face of requirements designed to save lives. If the Planning Authority were to pass this application as it stands responsibility for lives lost could be partially theirs.

Sincerely,

Nigel FitzHugh

Chairman.