



Planning Application 5/2025/1875 Oaklands College & Taylor Wimpey Oaklands Blossom

Hybrid planning application comprising: (1) Full detailed planning application for the construction of 167 new homes (use class C3); new local centre and community facility (use classes E(a to f) and F); a children's home (use class C2); demolition and renovation of existing college buildings; construction of new college buildings (use class F1.); the creation of Active Travel Routes including footpaths for walking, cycling and equestrian activities; removal and planting of trees; along with the laying out of green infrastructure (including publicly accessible open space) and habitat creation; drainage infrastructure, earthworks, new means of access and alterations to existing access points. (2) Outline planning application (access only) for the construction of new homes (use class C3); new extra care home dwellings (use class C2); land for the construction of a new primary school (use class F.1); demolition and renovation of existing college buildings; construction of new college buildings (use class F1.); the construction of new sports facilities and pitches; the creation of Active Travel Routes including footpaths for walking, cycling and equestrian activities; removal and planting of trees; new energy centre; new recycling facilities; new car parking facilities; along with the laying out of green infrastructure and habitat creation; drainage infrastructure, earthworks, pedestrian and cycle routes, alterations to existing access points.

Marshalswick North Residents' Association (MNRA) is a formally constituted non-political organisation which represents residents in the Marshalswick area and campaigns on matters of local interest. We seek to ensure that when applications for development in our area are being assessed, local concerns are adequately taken into account.

MNRA acknowledge that a development of housing, local centre, primary school and extra care home form part of the previously drafted and emerging Local Plan and is referenced within the made Sandridge Neighbourhood Plan. We are not therefore objecting in principle to this development on Green Belt land.

We also acknowledge that both Taylor Wimpey and Oaklands College have engaged in a level of community engagement prior to this application which was not offered prior to the earlier 'Oaklands Grange' development adjacent to the proposed site off Sandpit Lane.

We do however have major concerns about the proposals as set out in this application.

1. Assessment against Sandridge Neighbourhood Plan (SNP)

It is noted that the Transport Assessment (Table 3 page 14) and the Planning Statement (Appendix 1) is selective in identifying how the application complies with the Sandridge Neighbourhood Plan. All the assessment comments are compared with Appendix 5 – Policy D7 East St Albans Broad Location but relevant SNP requirements are also located within Policy T1 Traffic

Congestion & Road Safety, Policy T2 Public Transport (Buses) and Policy T3 Walking, Cycling and Recreational Travel (Active Travel).

Omitted issues will be raised under the appropriate headings below.

2. Traffic Congestion & Road Safety

Within the Design & Access Statement, it contends that

'St. Albans City Station, providing direct services into Central London, resides to the west of the site. It presents an approximate 6 minute drive and 30 minute walk or a 10 minute cycle via Alban Way to the south of the site.'

These times are grossly over-optimistic, especially during peak travel times.

Note: we are concerned that the Transport Assessment and the Design and Access Statement contain a number of factual errors, such as incorrect naming of roads, errors in designation of rights of way and orientation of pavements. This casts some suspicion on the accuracy of the checking and validation process within the application documents.

The Transport Assessment (TA) makes much play of the migration away from private car use. Based upon national data, the future traffic assessments are modelled upon a modal shift away from private car use from 72% of journeys to 57% of journeys. For this planned development, this shift is grossly over optimistic and unrealistic. The assessment makes no proposals for improving cycling and walking routes via a direct route to the principal destinations of the city station, city centre or the nearest local schools.

Although the 1st 'Vision' of the Transport Hierarchy is to reduce the need to travel including working from home facilities, as acknowledged in Section 3.5 of the Residential Transport Plan, the earlier move to working from home is now in reverse with more organisations requiring staff to work from a central office for part or all of the week. It appears that this 'return to work' trend is not adequately reflected in the transport assessments.

Although efforts to improve walking and cycling links to Jersey Lane and Alban Way are appreciated, these are not convenient non-motorised routes suitable for regular commuters or city centre visitors. Critically, the creation of a direct walking and cycling route from the proposed development towards Oakwood Drive to connect with Beaumont and Oakwood schools is not within the scope of this application and it cannot be assumed it will be provided.

The potential shift away from the use of private cars must therefore be re-assessed based upon the local situation and a much smaller shift introduced into the scenarios for future traffic use.

2.1 Section 7 - Trip Generation pages 64 onwards

Item 7.3.6 and Figure 24 purport to show 'Nearby Local Centres'. These correctly show The Quadrant, St Brelades Place and areas along Hatfield Road. It is incorrect to suggest that that Notcutts Garden Centre or the Smallford Farm shop are Local Centres as they are primarily specialist shopping sites & not suitable for everyday shopping.

Item 7.5.11 & 7.5.12 The assessment of AM peak internal journeys is flawed. Although a number of children from the new development will attend the primary school (if and when it is built), most parents will then have to continue to their place of work which will require an external journey within the AM peak. The assumption of 25% internal journeys should therefore be substantially reduced closer to the PM peak split.

Item 7.5.28 We believe that the combination of the Oaklands Blossom housing development and the Oaklands College Improvements when preparing the trip generation models is substantially flawed. The housing development anticipates 72% of journeys to be undertaken by car and 3% by bus. However, for the college, the proportions are 21% of journeys undertaken by car and 38% by bus. The sites discharge onto different main roads and approach assessed junctions from different arms. Therefore, to combine them has distorted the proportion of car, foot and bus users with an unsubstantiated reduction in car use percentage from 72% to 57%. From knowledge of the area and evidence on the ground, the percentage of car use should be returned to, or close to the original 72% proportion.

Item 7.6.6 The supposition that residents of the proposed development will gain employment on site or within the college is again overly optimistic. The houses on this development will be marketed towards London commuters. Their selling prices will generally be out of reach of teachers and shop workers which are the only employment opportunities on or adjacent to the development.

Item 7.8 Trip distribution. This analysis does not take into account the fact that whereas the exit from Oaklands Grange is to the west (St Albans) side of the Sandpit Lane/Barnfield Road roundabout, the proposed development site is to the east of the roundabout. The result is that the existing use of Barnfield Road as a rat-run from the development site entrance towards the station and town centre will be exacerbated.

The Sandpit Lane/Barnfield Road and Barnfield Road/Ridgeway junctions need to be assessed as part of the Traffic Assessment.

Additionally, the report does not identify what they have considered the main 'work destinations'. The main location must be considered the City Station due to the very high level of commuters likely to occupy properties on the new development.

In light of the numerous errors and over optimistic assumptions within the current traffic survey analysis we request that a new analysis is carried out using more a realistic split in the proportion of types of journeys undertaken.

Despite using a modal shift away from private car users which is totally unrealistic in the timeframe being analysed, it is recorded that several of the junctions analysed are currently at capacity or will reach capacity within the predicted 5-year period. (Transport Assessment – pages 86 onwards)

- **Junction 3 – Sandpit Lane/House Lane Roundabout**

The data shows this junction currently working close to optimum capacity at present. With the development added, queues increase but the junction is considered just within optimum capacity.

Projecting forward 5 years with the inclusion of the development, capacity exceeds optimum but remains just below full capacity.

Modelling anticipates queues of 8 vehicles and delays of 30 seconds on the House Lane arm of roundabout. These increase by 2030 to 52 seconds.

Despite this significant increase in delays, the assessment states that as the model is still just within theoretic capacity, the junction is considered suitable to accommodate the development flow. We believe that further work needs to be undertaken to this junction to improve flow & reduce the length of delays.

- **Junction 4 - Sandpit Lane/Coopers Green Lane/Oaklands Lane Roundabout**

Using the standard model, this junction is already performing at capacity. It shows morning peaks queues of 39 vehicles increasing to 160 vehicles and delays of in excess of 4 minutes. By 2030 the queues are projected at 234 vehicles and delays of over 10 minutes.

Queue survey data suggested shorter queues than the model, so these reduced figures were used to re-model the junction!

Add the development and junction performs slightly over capacity queues on both Sandpit Lane & Coopers Green Lane are 28 & 39 vehicles with delays of over 1 minute & over 2 ½ minutes.

Extend this to 2030 and queues of 90 vehicles and delays of 9 minutes are generated.

Despite confirming that the development will overload this junction, 'it is considered that the development will not have a severe impact on the operation of this junction, with only a 5 – 7% increase in traffic anticipated....'

We believe that further work needs to be undertaken to this junction to improve flow & reduce the length of delays.

- **Junction 8 – Oaklands Lane/A1057/Station Road Roundabout**

Oaklands Lane arm is working close to optimum capacity by 2030 baseline when development added.

- **Junction 9 – Sandpit Lane/Marshalswick Lane/Beechwood Avenue Junction**

Current modelling suggests that the junction is running with approx. 10% spare capacity with average queue lengths of between 12 and 18 vehicles over all arms. Cycle time through junction of 2 minutes at AM & 5 minutes at PM

From the 2025 base figure, the introduction of development sends the junction 23.3% over capacity. Average queues extend to 22 to 43 vehicles. Cycle time unaltered.

Modelled to 2030 without development, flow is within capacity. When the development is added to the 2030 base figure the junction is 37.8% over capacity in the AM peak. With average queues up to 65 vehicles. Even with the 'do something' scenario, the junction is 26% over capacity with queues averaging nearly 50 vehicles.

The TA analysis acknowledges that development will '*result in a negative impact*' on the junction. It suggests that the proposals '*involve a comprehensive package of mitigation measures to improve travel on foot, by cycle and by public transport to access key destinations from the site, including St Albans City Centre.*'

'It is therefore anticipated that the future number of vehicles travelling through this junction would be reduced with users instead travelling by sustainable modes of transport, which will have benefits on the operation of this junction.'

There are no substantive proposals within the Transport Assessment or Residential Travel Plan which will improve non-vehicular travel into the City Centre or station. We totally reject the suggestion that sustainable transport options have been provided which would provide this modal shift away from private car use for these commuting journeys.

The construction of the non-vehicular route through Oaklands Grange along the boundary of Verulam School playing field is urgently required to mitigate unnecessary private car journeys through this junction.

- **Junction 10 – Marshalswick Lane/B651/Beech Road Junction**

Currently working with 11.4% spare capacity below optimum flow with queues of up to 30 vehicles in the AM peak, but only 1.2% spare capacity during the PM peak.

Without the development, the 2030 projection shows the AM peak spare capacity drop to 6.9% and queues to increase by 10%. PM peak is now over capacity by 3.1%

Introduction of the development results in the junction functioning similar to the 2030 base with reduced spare capacity in the AM Peak and slightly above junction capacity for the PM peak. Traffic queues again increase to an average of over 30 vehicles.

The scenario for 2030 including the development shows the junction just coping for the AM peak with queues up to 36 vehicles but being over capacity of 5.2% in the PM peak.

Again, the impact on the junction is considered 'minimal' and no remedial action is proposed.

The analysis acknowledges that the Woollam Park application for 1,000 dwellings is being considered. This includes modifications to the road layout at this junction. These modifications appear to be introduction of a cycle route diagonally over the junction plus shared use areas around the junction.

Such changes will not affect how Oaklands Blossom residents would approach the City Centre of city station. However, they will reduce flow through the junction with increased queues and delay times.

We appreciate that this Transport Assessment may not be able to assess the full impact of other proposed major developments, but Hertfordshire Highways or St Albans District Council should be assessing the combined impact of developments to roads and junctions connecting the north of St Albans with the City Centre and city station.

- **Junction 11 – Beech Road/Batchwood Drive/A1081 Crossroads**

The analysis shows this junction is already over capacity at AM & PM peaks. The development increases that over capacity by about 1.5%.

This is replicated in the 2030 scenario except that the over capacity during the PM peak increases by 4.5%

The analysis again acknowledges the impact of further development – 150 dwellings at Sewell Park. Shared use areas and cycle crossing are proposed.

We reject the assertion that as the junction is already over capacity, no action should be taken because of the increased flow caused by this development.

- **Junction 12 – Sandpit Lane/Stonecross/Sandridge Road Junction**

Standard model shows the Stonecross arm severely over capacity with delays of 11 minutes. Continuing with this model resulted in delays of 23 minutes by 2030 including development.

Analysis was then carried out on traffic survey data. This showed the junction currently just coping with traffic with delays of up to 10 vehicles and waits of up to 1 ½ minutes. When the development is added, the Sandpit Lane arm is over capacity at both AM & PM peaks and queues extend to 56 vehicles and 8 ½ minute waits.

By 2030 Ma junction is over capacity with queues of 233 vehicles and waits up to 63 minutes.

The TA analysis confirms that development will add 5-8% additional flow. But, because the junction is considered to exceed its capacity without the development, the impact of the development is not 'severe', so no action needed.

We strongly refute the proposal that no action be taken to improve this junction which is destined to create major traffic issues at peak times.

- **Junction 13 – A1081/Stonecross/B651 Junction**

A complex analysis of this junction together with the Avenue Road junction and with A1081. Analysis concludes that junction is currently just within capacity for the AM peak, but above capacity for the PM peak. With the addition of the development, both peaks are over capacity and major queues of 50 plus vehicles are modelled.

Analysis suggests a 5% increase in traffic for the AM peak and 3% increase to the PM peak due to the development. We strongly reject the assertion that this represents minimal impact on the junction.

- **Barnfield Road**

MNRA are concerned that insufficient attention has been paid to the impact of the potential development on Barnfield Road. Barnfield Road is a narrow residential road with a number of bends and a significant gradient. This road has already long been inappropriately used as a 'rat run'. Records provided by HCC Highways for Sandridge Neighbourhood Plan para.5.48 show that even in 2013, 441 vehicles were using this road between 8 and 9 am on a weekday. Speed bumps have previously been installed along its length.

Although the Transport Assessment indicates that there will be mitigation measures for Barnfield Road, no details are provided.

With Barnfield Road being positioned on the town side (west) of the proposed development entrance, as the Sandpit Lane junctions get more congested, it will become a 'rat run' for car users attempting to get to the city station and city centre. The road cannot cater for a significant increase in traffic.

This is a key requirement of Policy D7 of SNP.

- **Sandpit Lane service road** – provision to be made in the Section Agreements for funding for street lighting to the service road along Sandpit Lane which is bordered by housing and used as a pedestrian route.

Although we support the desire to promote a modal shift away from the use of private cars to sustainable forms of transport, the development proposals do not provide the off-site improvements necessary to support sustainable travel routes to key locations, in particular the city station or St Albans town centre.

Until the sustainable routes are established and adopted by the local community, car use will increase. The roads and junctions around the proposed development are at, or close to, capacity as the traffic surveys have demonstrated. If the proposed development does not provide improved traffic junctions as part of the development, it is clear that many local junctions will exceed their capacity resulting in excessive traffic delays for all users with adverse economic and environmental impacts.

We urge the Council to require the applicant to carry out a revised traffic assessment based upon more realistic assumptions of future usage. Where road junctions are shown to be over capacity, the Council should require the applicant to fund and undertake junction modifications to improve traffic flow as a condition of granting any application.

3. Buses

MNRA welcome the additional funding to support a regular service from the proposed development to the city station and St Albans City Centre. We note that the applicant is still in discussion with HCC with regard to the service. We are therefore unable to comment in detail on the proposals but would add the following comments of what we would seek to be provided.

- The service must be 2 or 3 buses each way per hour during daytime.
- The service must run until 11pm in the evenings and run on Saturday and Sunday.
- The service must serve the City Station on both the outward and return journeys.
- The route must be a reasonably direct route to these destinations using roads which are less congested to avoid delays and unreliability.
- The service must be implemented upon 1st occupation to encourage initial take up.
- The service must access the proposed development site and travel round the spine road with suitable stops within the proposed development.
- If the route requires, a new bus stop and shelter is to be provided on the south side of Sandpit Lane set back from the kerb line of this busy road.
- Accurate real time information boards to be provided to all new stops.

In addition to the above, the applicant needs to explain how the bus will access the proposed development during the initial phase when the spine road will only be partly constructed.

A fully operational bus service must be in place by 1st occupation to promote the modal shift away from private car use. If the service is not initially available, private car use will become the default mode of access to the City Station and St Albans City Centre.

MNRA are disappointed that a through site bus service from Hatfield Road to Sandpit Lane has been rejected by Oaklands College. This is a requirement of SNP Policy D7 and we encourage HCC to pursue this further.

4. Active Travel

We note from the Planning Statement item 6.52 that the Active Travel Routes are not scheduled to be provided until Phase 2 in 2028/29. This is unacceptable. All active travel routes must be provided as part of the phase 1 works with a requirement for them to be constructed and available for public use by 1st occupation.

Link to Jersey Lane - MNRA support the intention to provide an active travel route between Alban Way to Jersey Lane using South & North Drives. We are concerned that the proposed route from the development to Jersey Lane is impractical and possibly may increase the risk of a collision on a difficult junction.

The route described within Transport Assessment item 3.4.2 and shown in Appendix M – Mitigation Drawings is described as
'Improvements to the cycle route to Jersey Lane via Barnfield Lane (Road) and Ardens Way, through new shared cycle/footway on Barnfield Road, improved signage and road markings and improved crossing facilities.'

This proposal is considered impractical for a number of reasons – the route from Sandpit Lane to Ardens Way is a short steep incline which would be impractical for less active or experienced cyclists; The turning from Barnfield Road onto Ardens Way for motor vehicles approaching from Sandpit Lane is through a blind bend. This junction is already problematic. The introduction of the raised crossing platform at the road junction and reconfiguration of the kerb line will increase the risk of a collision in the future.

MNRA would propose that an additional route to connect the proposed development with Jersey Lane is adopted. This route is set out in Policy T3 Walking, Cycling and Recreational Travel - Figure 7 of the Sandridge Neighbourhood Plan. The route would cross Sandpit Lane at the end of North Drive, continue along the west side of House Lane until it meets the end of Sandridge Bridleway 6. It would follow this bridleway, cross Villiers Crescent and join Jersey Lane opposite the end of Briar Road. This route would provide excellent access to Sandridge and onward towards Wheathampstead.

It is noted that Active Travel England also raise concerns about the inadequacy of this route in their response to the planning application ref: ATE/25/01865/HYB dated 9th January 2026 – See item 3.0 Off-site Infrastructure.

Dedicated Active Travel Route to Oakwood and Beaumont Schools

As set out in Transport Assessment item 4.4.13, there is currently no dedicated sustainable transport route from the proposed development, through Oaklands Grange, along the boundary of the playing field to Verulam School and out onto Oakwood Drive. Although outside the site boundary, this route is within the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, was discussed and was due to be implemented during the construction of Oaklands Grange.

Funds must be put in place and Taylor Wimpey, who also constructed Oaklands Grange, must be required to provide the funds and route through all areas of both developments.

The early completion of this link would remove the need for a 2 km journey, mostly by private car, from both Oaklands Grange and the proposed development to reach the schools.

5. Rights of Way

We are very pleased to record that Oaklands College and Taylor Wimpey have engaged with the local community, Ramblers, and other interested bodies in establishing a set of routes through the proposed development. A lot of the initial concerns about the future of active travel routes have been resolved. There are however a number of issues which still need to be addressed as part of this application procedure.

Previously agreed S106 improvements – the S106 improvements to PRow agreed to in 2017 remain unfulfilled. These must be completed as a prior condition to any future planning approval.

Timing – as stated above, all new or altered active travel routes must be completed before 1st occupation and not during phase 2 works.

Public Rights of Way (PRow) – all active travel routes and ‘Rambler Paths’ need to be dedicated as PRow to ensure their use in perpetuity.

College centre paths – we note that the application indicates that, separate to the planning application, Oaklands College plan to apply for removal of the PRow status from North, South & East Drives where they pass through the college buildings. We have a number of concerns about this proposal. These concerns will be reviewed when the final detailed application is made.

We would state however, that, within the application, an active travel route suitable for both cyclists and walkers which is not substantially longer than the existing route, must be established between the East Drive and South Drive entrances. This is not currently shown on the planning application drawings.

6. Site Layout

- **Civic Space** - The cross-section drawings of the Local Square (Fig 182) appear to show 2 short flights of steps with no accessible route through the square running north - south. This square needs to provide full accessible access throughout.
- **Parking** – We understand that Oaklands College are now charging students to park within the campus. How will displacement student parking on public roads within the development be managed?

- **Green spaces** – it is noted that the usable green spaces on the development proposals have reduced between DM5 and DM8. This is particularly visible in the size of the central green corridor. There appears to be less green infrastructure on this application than on the existing Oaklands Grange, despite more housing.
- **Play areas** – there are play areas for young children (1 – 6 years) but there is little open green space suitable for ball games or similar which would be suitable for older children. This needs to be addressed.
- **Primary school site** – we request that a planning condition is set that requires the primary school site to have an interim usage plan to keep it open as a usable green space until such time that it is to be used for school construction.
- **Primary School Layout** – although part of phase 2 works, we are very concerned that the draft information to date indicates that the proposed primary school will include insufficient parking to cope with demand. There will need to be sufficient staff parking and a drop off zone of suitable capacity for families delivering and collecting school children. It must not be assumed that all children from the proposed development will walk to school. Many parents will drop their child off from the car as part of their commute.

This requirement is set out within the SNP (Policies T1 and D7) and is acknowledged as a major issue around other schools within the Parish.

- **Multiple access points to the development** – The proposed housing development (Oaklands College works are outside the Parish & not covered by the Sandridge Neighbourhood Plan) only has a single access point leading onto Sandpit Lane.

This is contrary to Policy 7 of the SNP. It should also be noted that the traffic survey confirms that Sandpit Lane currently carries more traffic than the more major road, Hatfield Road.

- **Trees** – it is noted that the entire area covered by the proposed development is covered by an area Tree Preservation Order (TPO). We seek a commitment that no substantial trees are removed from the western belt adjacent to the existing Oaklands Grange housing without preliminary local consultation. The density of this belt should be substantially enhanced.
- **Healthcare Provision** – it is noted that there is no provision for healthcare facilities within the proposal. This is despite the acute shortage of healthcare for local residents and is contrary to the requirements of SNP Policy D7.

We seek planning conditions that all the above are resolved at this planning application stage.

7. Construction Phase

We seek that all of the following are addressed prior to any approval of the proposed development and are set out in pre-commencement planning conditions.

- A detailed construction plan is prepared by the contractor(s) and the contents are discussed and agreed with the local community before they are submitted and implemented.
- The location of the site accommodation, parking, soil heaps and similar site facilities are located so as to minimise disturbance to adjoining properties.
- Suitable mud control facilities are installed on site and controlled on public roads.
- No contractor parking to be allowed on adjoining streets.
- All contractor traffic to and from the proposed development site shall be from the Hatfield (easterly) direction with no access or egress towards St Albans (westerly) direction.
- On-site working times to be controlled recognising the proximity of local residential properties.

Conclusion

There are substantial concerns to the local community about this planning application and the impact it will have upon residents. MNRA contend, on behalf of the community that these issues must be addressed at this planning application stage, before approval is given for the contractor to proceed.

Of particular concern is the impact of the additional homes upon the local road infrastructure. Without a vastly improved bus services towards major destinations (city centre & city station) and the introduction of a safe and convenient walking and cycling routes to these locations, the modal shift away from private car usage will not happen. The improvements currently set out will not achieve that shift.

We contend that the theoretic traffic assessments grossly underestimate the likely congestion that will be caused by the increased private car traffic generated by the proposed development & seek a more realistic assessment of local junctions and mitigation measures covered by Section Agreements within any planning agreement.

We believe that the failure to assess the impact of the proposed development on Barnfield Road and its junctions with Sandpit Lane and Ridgeway is a major omission from the Transport Assessment which needs to be addressed immediately. Similarly, it is apparent from the various scenarios prepared to assess the impact of the proposed development, that all the junctions along Sandpit Lane (House Lane; Marshalswick Lane/Beech Road; Stonecross) will exceed their design capacity. Without remedial action to improve traffic flows, there will be gridlock at these locations at peak times. A re-assessment using more realistic scenarios is required and proposals need to be submitted for corrective junction improvements.

Marshalswick North Residents' Association

Although not objecting to this planning application in principle, Marshalswick North Residents' Association oppose this application until the significant concerns raised within this objection are fully resolved.

19th January 2026
Marshalswick North Residents' Association

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