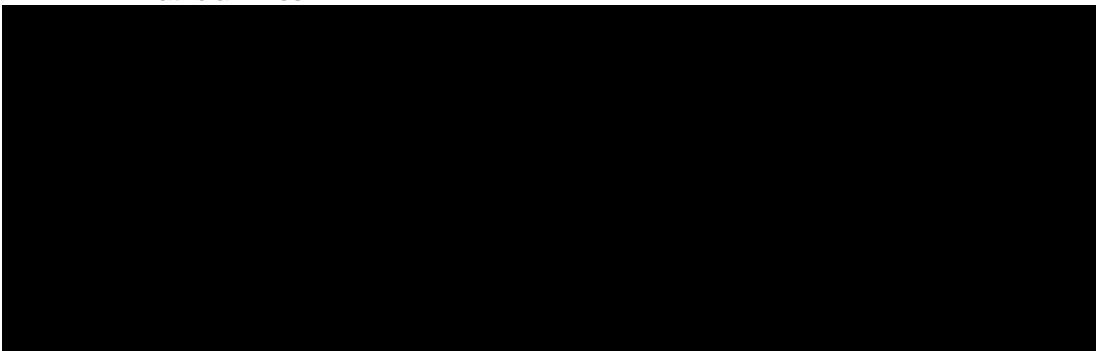


Patricia Ames



Subject: : Ref: 24/1835/FUL

Subject: Objection to St Vincent Road being designated as a school street.

Dear Ms Vedi,

Although I am aware that the deadline has passed for submitting comments on the proposed change of access to Nelson School, please accept my email as I was only made aware of this application on the 15th August from neighbours, having received no notification from the Council or the school. I believe this application has huge implications for all residents on St Vincent Road; please find my objections below.

1a) Highway safety:

Currently, street parking is partly on the kerbs and most residents have driveways, which on the current footfall can be hazardous when entering or leaving our properties during school periods. To name but a few of the hazards, there will be the increased risk of small children flying about on scooters, and families having to walk on the road because of narrow pavements with buggies and large families. Moreover, the road is used as a cut through for people commuting to/from work and various schools within the area; this will make the road very congested at peak times. Proposing that the end of our street be converted to the main entrance for Nelson School will dramatically increase footfall, with people having to negotiate two-way human and car traffic, given the single entry point to the street for vehicles. This poses serious safety risks for both pedestrians and drivers.

b) Road access:

It is a potential that on seeing a sign stating 'School Street', drivers will be inclined to reverse back onto Nelson Road to avoid being penalised. During busy school drop-off and pick-up times, these manoeuvres could have dangerous implications, with the risk of aggressive and dangerous driving, leaving pedestrians unsafe.

This significant change to the street will impact everyone who wants to park on our cul-de-sac. The street is consistently used for parking, due to its convenience to the high street for shopping, accessing the library and polling station, visiting residents and the day to day deliveries. With vehicular access from only one end of St Vincent Road, our already-busy street will become a hazardous bottle neck.

2) Adequacy of parking/loading/turning:

As aforementioned, our street has only one vehicular access point, meaning that the sole turning point for our road is by the proposed entrance area to the gates of Nelson School. Larger vehicles have to reverse down the road due to a lack of space for turning as it stands. This turning point is supposedly not council land, and is therefore an area that the residents maintain voluntarily; in the past, the residents financially contributed towards a new safety barrier to section the area, which you will see opposite the Nelson School gates.

Additionally, this patch of land is very dusty and the surface is uneven, with a large dip (mainly due to current vehicle usage from turning around). Although the designation of 'School Street' will restrict vehicles accessing the gates during certain times, there will still be an exponential increase of cars using the turning point, with late drop offs and early pick ups or finishes, as well as school visitors and events. Given the inevitable increase in usage from new vehicles accessing the school, the surface is only going to become more worn and uneven, posing further risks for trips and falls, but also making turning around at the end of the street more challenging. It is also worth mentioning that the area by the school gates could pose health risks and trigger respiratory distress from dust particles due to the gravel path, with increased footfall and vehicles turning. Visibility would also be reduced.

Having to navigate and use this space to turn around when you have a large group of parents and children at the gate can only increase the risk of injury and harm. Due to drivers avoiding these families congregating, using driveways will arguably become a necessity for drivers at these busy times. As such, I foresee our private driveways being used as common turning points, which not only poses more risks for pedestrians, but will also have long-term impacts for residents. It is likely that over time, our driveway surfaces will be torn up and our drain structures (which are just inside our driveways) will weaken with vehicles accessing our properties to do U turns. Vehicles are much heavier and our drains were not built to withstand this weight daily - this is evident from the dip at the end of the street. I also anticipate that there will be an increased risk of unintentional scratches to vehicles parked on the street, from not only cars backing up onto driveways, but also due to the narrow pavements and the increased volume of pedestrians with scooters/bicycles and pushchairs. This is not acceptable, and I do not want to erect metal gates in front of my property, but I envisage that some residents may make that choice to protect their property and privacy, turning our welcoming street community into a built-up and soulless row of gates.

It is my understanding that only cars entering the street can be penalised (without permits), so I would therefore like to question what is stopping parents parking prior to these designated times in the limited spaces available, and overshooting our driveways? This strikes me as a very possible and likely eventuality, yet again increasing visibility hazards and adding to the dangers of

footfall and volume of moving vehicles.

3) Noise and Disturbance:

Nowhere in the planning application have I read any reference to improving lighting in this section of the street. Furthermore, there is no indication that intercom or CCTV is due to be installed to help with safety at this new entrance for the school. It is quite an isolated area outside of school opening times, and I worry that children arriving or being dropped off early are left vulnerable, particularly in the dark winter months. Given the alarming and most recent incidents of young school children being targeted and becoming victims of assault, and sadly death in some cases, surely these security factors should be at the forefront of the planning process, in the interests of child protection. Those side gates should not be used, as they will only exacerbate this potential risk.

Undoubtedly, there are also going to be increased levels of noise throughout the whole street, with this amount of footfall and the daily congregation of families before and after school. Noise pollution is going to be a side effect of this change, with drivers beeping horns amidst the business of peak school times. I feel for neighbours who are forced to close windows during these times, as the front room may be their only option of living quarters, while others may choose to utilise the back of their house if they have the freedom to do so. Of course, there is also a concerning lack of privacy for these residents too.

Finally, it appears the boundary for the school is from inside these gates, so I therefore question who takes responsibility for the safe maintenance of the entrance from the street?

4) Traffic generation:

I feel I have already touched on the subject of traffic generation in all other subsections, as this is an inevitable byproduct of relocating Nelson School's entrance to our street. When events outside of these hours take place at the school, will this also be the main entrance for parents and children? This will again contribute to more congestion, traffic and idling, with implications for safety, car fumes and noise to residents on the street.

5) Smells:

Aside from the car fumes that will be generated, I also fear for the increase of

litter that will no doubt grace our clean street, and the subsequent smells this will generate (and pests it may attract). There is no mention of providing litter bins by the school entrance for parents/children, leaving an increased risk of litter to be disposed of and accumulate around the street. Nelson Road is already equipped with bins to mitigate this issue, while our small street is not. As the main entrance to the school, I imagine that St Vincent Road will also be used as the primary access point for school events, like summer fairs, parents' evenings and discos; not only does this add to traffic outside of normal school hours, but it will also undoubtedly add to the litter issue.

To conclude, I would like to return to the planning statement submitted on 12th July by Synergy, in which Craig Wheeler outlines that 'the proposal seeks to enhance the vehicular and pedestrian access to the school' and that 'this will help mitigate the pedestrian traffic that usually occurs towards the main entrance of the school building' (Section 4, titled 'Proposed'). To me, this appears to be simply relocating an existing problem to a small street nearby, which is less equipped to deal with that volume of people. As I have highlighted above, there are a vast range of reasons why St Vincent Road should not become a School Street and primary access point for Nelson School, and while many of these consider the residents, the majority of my objections are concerned with the general safety of pedestrians, parents and children using the street. I have lived on St Vincent Road for over 20 years and in that time, I have observed the rhythms and common use of this little (but busy) street on a daily basis - a perspective that Synergy is not privy to. I am deeply concerned about the repercussions that this significant change will have on not only the residents and ethos of our home, but also the new people we will have frequenting it to drop their children off at school. The street was not designed for this purpose, and the planning statement appears to overlook a lot of the concerns I have mentioned above.

Please accept my letter of objection to St Vincent Road being a designated school street.

Many thanks and kind regards,

Patricia Ames

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