

5019/25(BK3)

RE: KNEBWORTH

The Local Plan for Knebworth proposes 800 houses and a new school on land between Gypsy Lane and the A1(M), and between Deards End Lane and the A1(M). Also on the East side of Knebworth. Doubtless the planning authority will require the developer to fund the necessary widening of roads, junctions, etc, to give access to the residents of these new estates.

However the local plan does not make any reference to the fact that Knebworth is divided by the East Coast Railway line. Almost all of the facilities of the village are to east of the railway – post office, library, surgery, two churches, school, buses and shops – meaning that all the residents to the West must pass through either of two narrow bridges in the centre of the village or over the narrow bridge by the golf club at the north end of the village to reach these facilities. Also residents to the East must pass through these bridges to reach the new school proposed on the West side, and the present entrance to the railway station. The bridge at the north of the village goes over the railway. It is just wide enough for two cars to pass, but has a weight limit of 7.5 tons and has VERY narrow footpaths(30") on either side. However there are no pavements at all on the roads leading to this bridge and very tight bends at both ends.



GOLF CLUB BRIDGE



GUN ROAD BRIDGE



STATION ROAD BRIDGE

The two under bridges in the village are both very narrow and have a height restriction of 14 feet each.

More importantly, both bridges have pavements on only one side. The Gun Road bridge has a pavement which is only 40" wide at its narrowest point, right on the corner. The pavement on the Station Road bridge varies between 40" and 36" wide. This means that most mobility scooters cannot use the pavement and have to use the road. Likewise push-chairs use the whole pavement and other pedestrians have to step into the road. Two people cannot pass each other and have to step into the road. They were built in the mid 19th Century for farm carts. Large wing mirrors on trucks and vans are in danger of hitting pedestrians as they pass.

The dangers to pedestrians and road traffic through these bridges is already very apparent. Increasing the population of the village will only make the situation much worse, especially as a new school is proposed in the plans.

At the very least provision must be made for pedestrians by boring an underpass beside each bridge so that the present pavement can be removed, thus widening the bridge for vehicular traffic. This would be extremely expensive and disruptive to the railway and difficult to achieve as there is very little space for such a proposal. Widening and re-aligning the bridges would seem impossible as it would disrupt the railway and cost a fortune!

I am advised by an architect that the NHDC can only make a levy on the developers of the residential sites for infrastructure for **which the Council is responsible**. They are **NOT** responsible for any of the problems relating to the Railway. Hence there is little hope of overcoming the fundamental problems of the village layout!

In my view it is a grave omission that the NHDC have seen fit to ignore this problem, and without a solution the LOCAL PLAN is not strategically sound and sustainable.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Hall. C.Eng M.I.Mech.E. (Retired)

POSTSCRIPT

Added to the above. it should be noted that the Station has NO access for wheelchairs. The village has three retirement Homes and a nursing home!