

PLANNING COMMITTEE – 23 MAY 2017

APPLICATION NO DC/16/5039/COU

LOCATION

The Creamery
Angel Link
Halesworth
Suffolk
IP19 8SW

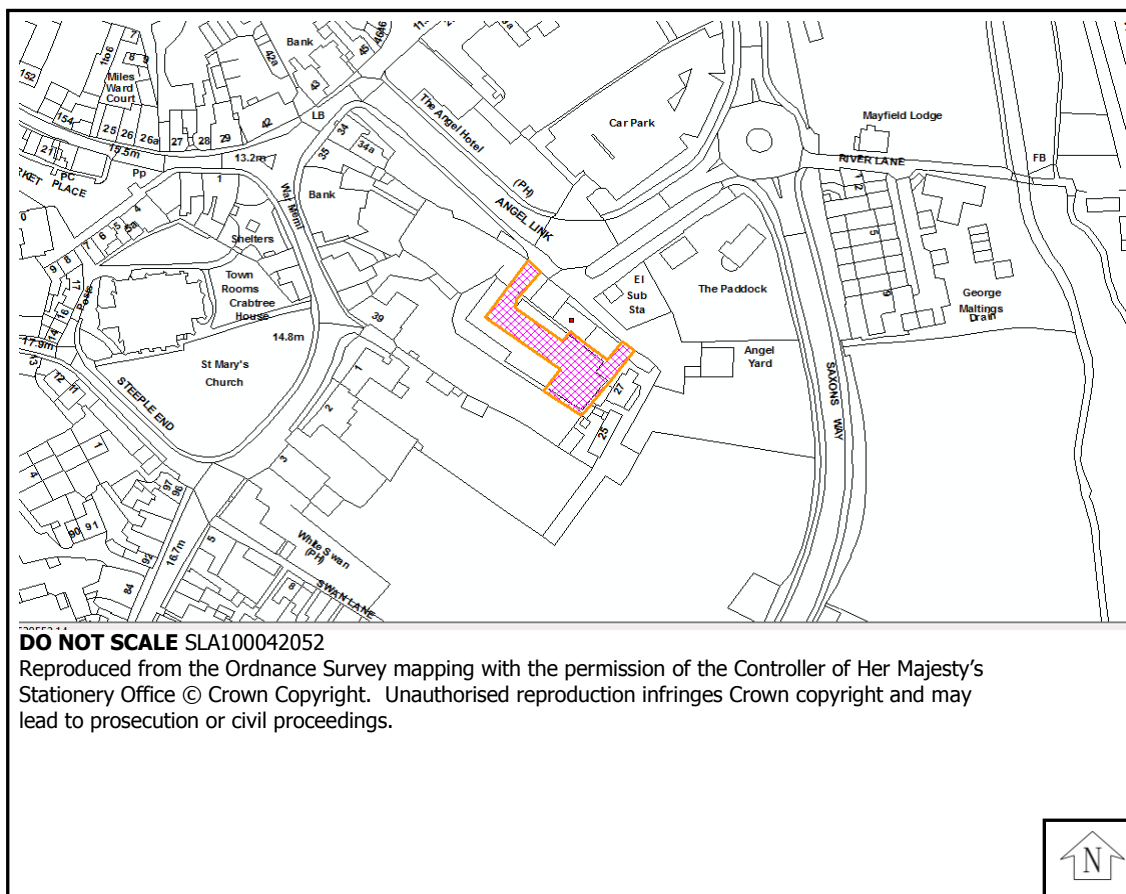
EXPIRY DATE 1 February 2017

APPLICATION TYPE Change of Use

APPLICANT Macepark Developments

PARISH Halesworth

PROPOSAL Change of Use from privately leased car park to hand car wash facility



SUMMARY

- 1.1 This application proposes the use of part of one of the Council's car parks on the edge of the town centre for a hand carwash. The site is within the Conservation Area and there are a number of listed and locally listed buildings in the vicinity.
- 1.2 The application comes before the Committee as the Council is the land owner.

- 1.3 The application was deferred from the agenda of the Planning Committee meeting on 14 March due to the late submission of amended plans and the need to reconsult on them.

SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 Angel Link is a short stretch of road which runs from a roundabout on Saxons Way to Thoroughfare, within Halesworth's town centre. The road turns through 90 degrees about halfway along its length and on the bend is the entrance to a Council carpark, which is located at the rear of The Creamery, a relatively modern group of three storey buildings housing mainly businesses but with some flats (approved in 1997).
- 2.2 The carpark has 32 spaces in total; the application relates to 15 of these at the south east end of the site.
- 2.3 There are two locally listed buildings housing three dwellings immediately to the south east of the site (25, 27 and 27A Thoroughfare). The site is within the Conservation Area and also within an Archaeological Site of Regional Importance.
- 2.4 The site lies outside the designated town centre for Halesworth. The HAL4 site specific allocation for residential development includes land adjoining 25, 27 and 27A Thoroughfare and The Creamery.

PROPOSAL

- 3.1 The proposal is to use approximately half the car park for a hand carwash business. 6 parking bays would be retained for customer parking and there would be three structures erected on the remainder of the site.
- 3.2 The largest would be a "washing area canopy", measuring 5.0 metres by 13.8 metres, and approximately 4 metres high. It would be located approximately 1 metre from the wall which forms the south east boundary of the site. There would be a polycarbonate screen to the rear wall, with the sides and front open. The roof would be a tensioned textile canopy coloured dark green. The surface of the carpark on which the canopy would sit would be re-profiled so that water drains to a new trapped gully.
- 3.3 The second structure would be a "drying area canopy", of similar design and materials as the washing area canopy, but measuring 5.0 metres by 7.5 metres and approximately 4 metres high. As before the front and two sides would be open with the rear (north west) formed by a polycarbonate screen. Again the roof would be dark green.
- 3.4 The third structure would be a small portakabin measuring 5.1 metres by 3.03 metres and 2.57 metres high. It would include a toilet and be used as a staff/store room. It would be located immediately adjacent to the south east end wall of The Creamery, close to the boundary with 27 Thoroughfare.
- 3.5 The proposed opening times are 08.00 - 18.00 hrs seven days a week.

3.6 Amended plans

- 3.7 The amended plans relate to the wash bay and drying canopies, which are both proposed to be reduced in height from 4 metres to 3.3 metres.

CONSULTATIONS/COMMENTS

- 4.1 **Neighbour consultation/representations: - Initial Responses:** 28 objections have been received, and two representations of support. The objections are as follows:
- 4.2 White Lion House, The Thoroughfare: we own the Grade Two Listed property with a walled garden running adjacent to the proposed site of the new facility. It is a quiet residential area, opposite St. Mary's Church with historical Grade Two Listed buildings, and walled gardens, in a conservation area.
- 4.3 Our objections are that this commercial activity, in this area of the town, would have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the neighbourhood. We fear that the noise from machinery, industrial activity and increased motor vehicle noise would be a disturbance in the tranquillity of these town homes and gardens.
- 4.4 We must also express our concerns over the potential air pollution from car engines, machinery and chemicals.
- 4.5 Although we are not adverse to change, progress and development, we feel that this type of commercial, industrial business would be best suited well away from this beautiful, historical conservation area that is the heart of Halesworth.
- 4.6 27 Thoroughfare: We are writing to oppose the planning application of the hand car wash facility at the rear of The Old Creamery, Angel Link, Halesworth, The development and proposed layout of the car washing area and canopy are actually in DIRECT CONTACT with our boundary wall.
- 4.7 We dispute the design and access statement that reads –“No. 27 Thoroughfare appears to have no outside amenity space and is mainly separated by a tiled roof outbuilding” (which is actually a single storey part of our dwelling, and NOT an outbuilding). This single storey tiled roof accounts for approximately 30% of our boundary to the car park. The remaining 70% is the 1.8m high red brick wall that separates the ONLY outdoor amenity space we have, from the car park.
- 4.8 On the block plan, it shows the single storey tiled roof (called an OUTBUILDING!), continuing past the main body of our property along this 1.8m wall which is NOT ACTUALLY CORRECT.
- 4.9 We are extremely concerned by the noise that would be generated by pressure washers, radios, music and general works carried out in the day to day running of this business type, being right on our boundary – and adjacent to our ONLY outside amenity space.
- 4.10 This also includes overspray of water and cleaning products affecting our ONLY OUTSIDE LEISURE AREA, which could only be exasperated but the possible long hours including

Saturdays and Sundays which would have a great impact in a negative way - on the enjoyment we get in our small courtyard.

- 4.11 Ours is a small cottage which when weather is permitting - our courtyard becomes an integral part of our living space. It's not unknown for us to sit outside under a canopy in the rain.
- 4.12 Additional effects are the possibility that cars may be left running for longer periods while stationary in this proposed business area – to this end, and the use of petrol and diesel pressure washers polluting the air in our close proximity.
- 4.13 I would also refute that the spaces are “very little used and called redundant”. Both myself, in paying for an annual parking permit, and approximately 12 spaces are currently used by the occupants of The Old Creamery, which does not include the currently empty, but soon to be occupied, ground floor retail area which was formerly Musker McIntyre Estate Agents, which occupies approximately 70% of the ground floor that I can only assume will have employees who want to drive to work and wish to park nearby.
- 4.14 I am aware that Macepark leases these 18 spaces for use by the completed development of The Old Creamery, and its occupants, the businesses and their clients, (dentist, podiatry, retail), the 3 residential flats above, and I'm also aware of other businesses in the town such as Norton Peskett that I know of, who use this car park on a daily basis. Where will these patrons of the car park go if so much of it is to be removed for a car wash especially if the proposed bus hub in the neighbouring Angel Link car park goes ahead?
- 4.15 On Market days, (Wednesdays), Town events and hosting's – e.g. Brocante, Farmers Markets, Lions Summer Fete, Gig in the Park, Scarecrow fortnight in October half term, Lions Christmas lights event, Antiques Street Fair and many more.... This and the other car parks within the town are overflowing - sometimes with complaints from visitors about the LACK of parking! Which is not good advertising for the town, and would greatly affect the various events' success, and the success of our historic Market Town.
- 4.16 There is planned development of 49 plus homes directly opposite our dwelling on the proposed Tesco development site, which has now been sold, and 175 new homes off the Holton Road in Halesworth. These new developments will only require more parking in the town centre for retail and visitor use. If the town is to survive it is essential that ease of access is made for parking – so all its amenities can prosper. To us, a business of this type, commercial/industrial, should not be located in the centre of a historic Market town within its Conservation area. It would be much better sited at Blyth Road Industrial Estate or the Norwich Road Industrial Estate.
- 4.17 27A Thoroughfare: We are writing to express our objection to the Change of Use application to convert a portion of the Angel Link car park into a car wash facility. Our home is immediately adjacent to the planned car wash, along the south-east wall of the car park (directly behind the proposed washing bay).
- 4.18 Additional details requested for application: To fully assess certain aspects of the application, we believe the applicant must provide additional details to their operating plans. We are particularly concerned about issues related to noise, wash overspray, and fumes from chemicals and vehicle/machinery exhaust.

- 4.19 1. Hours of operation: What are the proposed hours of operation?
- 4.20 2. Pressure washing noise: What type of pressure washing equipment do they intend to use? Diesel, petrol, or electric? We did some preliminary research, and pressure washer decibel levels appear to range from 78 to 100 decibels. Diesel and petrol, in addition to being on the noisier end of the decibel range, have the additional attribute of emitting exhaust fumes.
- 4.21 3. Vacuum noise: what types of vacuums will be used, and what is the expected noise level they will emit?
- 4.22 4. Noise mitigation generally: what specific plans does the applicant have for mitigating noise from washing operations and employees. For example, will they allow employees to play music/radio during operating hours? From current plans, it appears that the open-sided canopies will not do anything to mitigate noise.
- 4.23 5. Vapour & overspray mitigation: what specific plans does the applicant have for mitigating overspray and fumes (i.e., fumes from equipment and vehicle exhaust, chemical vapours, and overspray from pressure washers). Again, the open nature of the canopies would appear to offer minimal overspray/vapour protection to nearby properties.
- 4.24 6. Canopy maintenance: will the applicant have sufficient access (and plans) to keep the canopy tops clean on a regular basis? From the submitted plans, it appears that the rear of the canopy top for the wash bay will have limited to no access, where it abuts the brick wall separating our residence from the car park. We expect the top of this canopy to be clearly visible from our home, and would expect the car wash operator to be able to keep the visible canopy top clean.
- 4.25 7. Planning restrictions: And a question for Planning specifically- what planning restrictions, if any, will apply to above points? We've read about other communities that had disputes spanning multiple years with operating car washes (about noise and appearance primarily): should this COU get approved, it'd be best if proactive operating restrictions are in place from the beginning, rather than applied as corrective measures after-the-fact.
- 4.26 Concerns Specific to our Residence: We expect the noise, overspray, and odours from the proposed car wash will unreasonably and substantially interfere with the use and enjoyment of our home, both indoors and outdoors.
- 4.27 The application is incorrect in its statement under "02.02: Design Considerations; Neighbour Amenity": there ARE outdoor amenities, and there is no outbuilding separating 27/27A from the car park. We also don't understand the claim that "noise generation will be minimal", when they intend to use power washers and vacuum cleaners in open sided structures.
- 4.28 The proposed wash bay will be extremely close to our property. The NE side opening of the wash bay canopy is 1.5M from our kitchen window, and 3M from our daughters' first floor bedroom window. We also have an outdoor courtyard area that we use frequently, also immediately next to the wall by the wash bay opening. The likely 75-80 decibels or higher

from the car washing operations, only meters away, would be minimally attenuated at our residence.

- 4.29 We'd also expect that wash overspray will keep our courtyard continually damp, and prevent us from opening our home windows (notwithstanding the noise which may also prevent us from opening windows).
- 4.30 Furthermore, we have health concerns related to the potential for extended exposure to combustion exhaust fumes from pressure washers and vehicles. Also, for any other vapours from potential sources like cleaning agents, vehicle treatments, or particulate in wash overspray from vehicles (like heavy metals in brake dust on wheels).
- 4.31 Concerns Related to the Broader Community; In addition to the concerns specific to our residence, we also object to the application on grounds relevant to the broader community.
- 4.32 1. Loss of parking: We believe that approval of this project would run counter to the Halesworth Town Plan, by making key parking spaces unavailable. We'd also expect that the COU would run counter to the original parking requirements defined for the Creamery. At full occupancy, the Creamery's three residential flats, three retail units, and dental surgery would alone use a significant number of the available Creamery car park spaces. Factors providing additional pressure on Creamery car park spaces in the future:
- a. Completion of the Angel Link Car Park bus hub
 - b. Completion of Dairy Farm residential development, removing use of parking at Tyre King and Dairy Farm field (both currently used by several nearby residents and businesses)
 - c. Continued growth of various Halesworth special events like the Big Gig, Christmas lighting, various town fairs, market day, etc.; all of which result in completely filling the car parks.
 - d. No on street parking anywhere nearby for local residents.
 - e. Potential development of the Halesworth middle car park, reducing general parking in centre of town.
- 4.33 2. Design & appearance not in keeping with area: looking to the future, we expect the Dairy Farm development to significantly add to the visual appearance and character of the area, replacing the Tyre King facility and poorly maintained open fields. In the context of the conservation area to the north and west, the existing Creamery building, and the planned development of the Dairy Farm site; the temporary nature and appearance of the office portakabin and canopy structures, along with the car washing equipment and operations, will be a blight on the area, and completely out of place. The car wash will be clearly visible at the main entrance to the new Dairy Farm development, and the canopy tops will be visible from several viewpoints around town in the conservation area.
- 4.34 This project should be refused at its proposed location in the middle of town, and would be much more appropriately located out of the town centre in the industrial estates or in more rural/open land.
- 4.35 35 Thoroughfare: I think this is a wholly inappropriate site for a car wash. Halesworth is very short on parking spaces as it is, without removing them for a car wash. Should this type of business be placed on the industrial estate. The whole plan looks temporary and

would be seen from a number of different advantage points with in the town, which would not help enhance the town.

- 4.36 1 London Road: concerned that carwash would be a gross intrusion by its size, noise and design. It would seriously interfere with the amenities of the two houses closest to the site. It would have a visual impact far beyond its site.
- 4.37 The application makes a misleading statement about parking – the spaces that are claimed as redundant are often in use. Rather than another carwash, of which we already have two, Halesworth needs more parking.
- 4.38 The most outrageous claim is that it will have little visual impact hidden beside the red brick walls. The plans show that the walls are 1.8 metres high and the shiny dark green tops of the canopies for the new buildings are 4 metres high. Even the porta cabin is 2.57 metres high.
- 4.39 2A London Road: As a nearby resident, I should like to object to the above planning application.
- 4.40 The proposed change of use to a commercial/industrial one, as an outside operation with all its attendant noise, mess and smell, is entirely against the tenet of the conservation area in which it would be situated. There would be the noise of car engines running, high pressure hoses, vacuums and pumps constantly in use, with unsightly chemical drums and other such paraphernalia filling the area.
- 4.41 It would be an eyesore as would its associated advertising boards, flags and banners. After dark in the winter months, it would require floodlights to enable it to continue trading and the glow from such bright lights would intrude into many nearby properties.
- 4.42 There is no need for another car wash in Halesworth and certainly not in this area, involving the loss of so many much needed car parking spaces.
- 4.43 I urge you to reject this planning application outright.
- 4.44 Corner House, The Street, Wissett: This application, if passed, will be in a conservation area. At a time when we should be looking at conserving and reducing our profligate use of water, this will add to heavy increase in an area which is well served locally. There are two car washes at the Coop already, another on the north side of the town at Hammond's garage. Further to these there is a hand car wash at the garage at Ilketshall, just outside Halesworth. This application will further reduce the parking in the town.
- 4.45 1 Hill Farm Road: Object strongly to change of use as current off road parking for town is due to be diminished by supermarket and bus hub plans for town development. There are sufficient car and vehicle wash facilities already in place at local garages, and the loss of these existing parking places will only serve to reduce access to town shops and market thereby seriously affecting town trade.
- 4.46 The business rate from the proposed hand car wash will not compensate for the loss of parking revenue currently received by Waveney District Council.

- 4.47 6 Hill Farm Road: This is a totally unnecessary .development. There are already two car cleaning facilities in Halesworth with a hand wash just 10 minutes away along Norwich Road. We have been battling with Waveney for a free hours parking which they say they can't afford to give us. Why would they sell parking spaces which are much needed in Halesworth (there is NO on street parking in town) for a short term gain?
- 4.48 "Residents of the Town": We would like to express our concern of this going ahead. Firstly we cannot see how this is necessary at all as we have car wash facilities in Halesworth already. Hammonds and Co-operative both have a drive through car wash and Co-op also has a pressure wash bay which you can do a manual pressure wash. So why would we need another facility of this nature. Secondly we are extremely concerned for the residents surrounding this location. The spraying of chemicals is worrying as there are families with children and vulnerable elderly people who could have asthma related problems and it could have a serious affect on health. The cottage and bungalow which are immediately behind the proposed car wash would be directly affected and we urge you to consider these people. The noise, the overspray, not to mention the view for the residents surrounding it. Where will all the chemicals and water drain away to? HALESWORTH does NOT need this facility in this location. Or any other location for that matter. We hope this application is rejected.
- 4.49 24 Rectory Street: I wish to register my view that this application should not be agreed. It is a development totally unsuited to the centre of a historic town and in a conservation area. It would cause noise, pollution and installation of unsightly machinery and in order for it to generate sufficient business would require massively distributed signage to draw in customers.
- 4.50 Such a facility should be outside or in the business development area of a town. We already have car wash facilities at the Co-op, at Hammonds and at Linstead garage on the Bungay road. There are seldom queues at any of these sites.
- 4.51 Magnolia House Station Road: I fully agree with the previous objector and wish to voice my grave concerns. This is not the place for a car wash facility when we already have two others in our small town.
- 4.52 Address not stated: Unbelievable to think WDC would even consider a car wash tucked away in a car park very close to housing and underneath residential flats. Bright lights, noise, cars waiting to use facility, we already have 2 car washes we do not need 3. We also do not need to loose much needed car parking. Please consider the residents who have to put up with this monstrous idea. I OBJECT.
- 4.53 Orchard House, The Street, Holton: While I am one who enjoys to see new business thrive in a town, there is a doubt as to whether a car wash situated in the Angel Creamery car park will work at all. I understand the car park in the Angel Link will in part become a bus terminal (be it small) this will cause congestion and the removal of precious parking bays.
- 4.54 With the introduction of a car wash there will be further removal of parking bays in another of Halesworth' s precious car parks with the introduction of such a business. There will be more congestion as with the Angel Link car park and for a small town constant noise and traffic queuing. The Angel Hotel will suffer as a result, due to a knock on problem with traffic and noise.

- 4.55 For such a business to be successful it needs to be on a main road with plenty of off road space and away from retail, hotel and residential spaces. The only places I have ever seen one of these car washes work successfully has been in a current or disused petrol station, which is fit for purpose. I also have concern of the run off from the water hoses and chemicals that are used to clean the cars.
- 4.56 Walnut Tree Farm, Chediston: I want to protest against the planning application for yet another car wash facility in Halesworth, which would decrease badly needed car parking places and be a great nuisance to the residents nearby.
- 4.57 3 Holmere Drive: This is inappropriate in a conservation area and will lead to noise and congestion in the area. The loss of parking spaces is significant in a town that is trying hard to develop its appeal to those who live out of town.
- 4.58 There are already two automatic car washes in Halesworth, co-op and Hammonds, both of which appear to be under-used. Additionally, there is already a very well established hand car wash within 5 miles of Halesworth and this will clearly have an adverse impact on that business.
- 4.59 There can clearly be no justification for another car wash facility in the Halesworth area.
- 4.60 25 Orchard Valley, Holton: As owners of No 25 Thoroughfare and among the people most likely to be affected by this planning application, we object in the strongest possible terms for the following reasons:-
- 4.61 1. Pressure washers used in car cleaning emit a lot of overspray chemicals which would blow around the car park and contaminate our windows and surrounding windows and we would not be able to have our windows open in the summertime.
- 4.62 2. We do not wish to be overlooked by people and have our view obstructed viz. brick walls 1.8m high - proposed canopy for new building 4 m high - porta cabin 2.57 m high.
- 4.63 3. There will be a significant noise and overspray nuisance.
- 4.64 4. The cars of people who work or visit the Angel Link Dentist or Podiatry business who park in the car park will be contaminated with mist spray from the car wash.
- 4.65 5. Where will the contaminated water and chemicals used on aluminium wheels go to?
- 4.66 6. Not healthy for residents in the flats and surrounding properties.
- 4.67 7. There is an excellent car wash facility on the Co-op site not 100 yards away, and another at Hammonds Garage.
- 4.68 8. 14 valuable parking spaces in the centre of the town will be lost.
- 4.69 9. This is totally unsuited to be located in a conservation area.

- 4.70 23 Rectory Street: I would like to object to the above proposal as a concerned resident of Halesworth. The site is not suitable for the use intended; it is too near the centre of the town and backs on to residents' gardens and property. The loss of the 'redundant' car park spaces does not make sense when we are to have a reduced carpark facility on the other side of Angel Link once the bus stand is in operation. This sort of facility is best at an industrial estate. We already have automatic car washes at the Coop and Hammonds. It is also inappropriate in a conservation area. We need to look after our precious environment which once lost is never replaced.
- 4.71 Gavyn, Harrisons Lane, Halesworth: Comments: I object on the following grounds:
- 4.72 - The proposed use would increase brief traffic movements in an area already often difficult to negotiate during busy periods and carrying danger for pedestrians too. The proposal would further exacerbate the inevitable difficulties that will arise once the bus hub is in place with extra vehicles, including large buses, trying to manoeuvre in a tight turn.
- 4.73 - A car service facility is not appropriate for a conservation area.
- 4.74 - Whilst the hand-wash machinery itself might not generate much noise, the increase in car movements obviously will.
- 4.75 - Again, whilst the hand-wash machinery itself might not produce unacceptable smells, the smell and air pollution from many cars coming to and from the facility and, probably, idling whilst waiting for access or to be attended to, would be unpleasant and the pollution unacceptable in a relatively enclosed area where it would not disperse quickly.
- 4.76 21 Roman Way: This will be placed in an unsuitable area, there are homes very adjacent to this car park, the noise of the pressure washes will be relentless, there are also very old walls near there which could loose footings of the ground is constantly wet. There will be spray from the washers and noise from the workers and their customers.
- 4.77 We desperately need parking for the town and to loose the car parking is ridiculous. The water from the car wash will make the whole area constantly damp in autumn/winter. The extra water run-off will put pressure on the existing drainage. We already have 2 car washing facilities in our town and they are NOT under pressure, often unused. There are many things this town needs and a car wash is not one of them...use the site for what it's meant for...car parking and change the Car park near the Angel to the bus hub. If Halesworth people cannot wash their owns cars and need to go to this kind of facility they can either go to Beccles or the one along the Bungay straight which does not interfere with anyone. I fiercely oppose this.
- 4.78 First Floor Flat, 15 Thoroughfare: Given the uncertainty over the future of the current long stay car park behind the Thoroughfare on land currently for sale by Tesco, plus the plans to develop a mini bus station within the Angel Link car park resulting in the loss of parking amenity, it would seem unwise to consider granting change of use for a further car park at this time. To do so would run the risk of leaving the town short of parking space, damaging the economic life of the town.

- 4.79 Mahn House, Stone Street, Spexhall: I do not believe that there is a need for this facility in Halesworth, which already has two car washes. I think that it would be detrimental to the appeal and look of the area, which is a key vantage point for visitors to the town centre.
- 4.80 63A Thoroughfare: This car wash is unnecessary and will cause extra congestion when the bus hub is built.
- 4.81 Hillcrest, 2 Holton Road: I object to this proposed change of use. The planned development would use 14 currently "pay and display" parking spaces; it would back onto residential property within a conservation area; there would be noise from vacuum cleaners and high-pressure washing devices, overspray nuisance to nearby businesses and residents, and potential pollution from water and chemical runoff.
- 4.82 Address not stated: I am writing to object the proposed car washing facility to be situated in the Angel Yard car park. My major concerns are the noise affecting the residents in the surrounding area, the lack of parking and the air pollution from the constant running of car engines.
- 4.83 I am a resident of Halesworth and have been all my life, my family used to own the Angel Yard and car park space - which I frequently use. If a car washing facility is placed in the car park then the town of Halesworth would lose once again more parking spaces. This car park is a useful area for shoppers and workers because it is in close walking distance to the town centre and very needed and greatly appreciated by all.
- 4.84 The houses surrounding the area of the proposed car wash will be greatly affected by noise and air pollution.
- 4.85 Address not stated: I am alarmed to hear about the above planning application for the development of a car wash facility behind The Creamery here in Halesworth.
- 4.86 This proposal is totally inappropriate. There will be noise and pollution and the whole thing will be an eyesore. There will be the loss of valuable car parking and it is in a residential area. This is a fairly tranquil area and does not need the noise and mess associated with a car wash.
- 4.87 We already have two efficient car washes at the nearby Co-op garage and at Hammonds.
- 4.88 Address not stated:
- 4.89 Regarding the above application I would like to state that I have reservations regarding the suitability of the site and its location in a conservation area.
- 4.90 This appears to have been allowed to be proposed very quietly and I am only aware of it now because of a passing comment by a client of myself.
- 4.91 I believe that this should be given more time so that more people are aware of the proposal, and any views they have, can be aired.....Christmas has in effect reduced the time period for any objections. I believe that more information should be given.

- 4.92 Also consideration should be made (regarding the future) as to the use of adjacent land that is currently up for sale (for use as land for housing).
- 4.93 It is my personal belief that this facility is not required in the town, is something more suitable for an out of town site, and Halesworth already has 2 car wash facilities in the town.
- 4.94 Address not stated: We object because of noise, disruption of area of conservation, loss of car places.
- 4.95 The two **letters of support** come from:
- 4.96 148 Chediston Street: Always nice to see a new business start up in town, and much better utilisation of the public space.
- 4.97 East Anglian Children's Hospices: we are writing to support the application. We see such a service as being very helpful to Halesworth and district residents, there being no HAND car wash in Halesworth. Such facilities are widely in use throughout the country and are much appreciated by car owners as they preserve the finish on their vehicles whereas the mechanical washes have a propensity to cause damage.
- 4.98 As well as the benefit for car owners there is a substantial benefit for retailers and service providers as while in town the majority of hand car wash users look to make use of retail facilities etc., thus making a substantial contribution to economic activity of the town.
- 4.99 In addition the agent has submitted **two petitions**, stating:
- 4.100 For your consideration I attach details of signatures obtained from local residents over a three day period totalling around 12 hours in adverse weather conditions. There are 111 names supporting the proposal for the car wash. As you may be ware, car owners prefer to use these facilities rather that a mechanical installation which can damage vehicles, and indeed cause considerably more noise.
- 4.101 I attach the results of further signatures in favour of provision of the hand car wash at Halesworth for your information. Total of those supporting on these pages is 113 bringing the total signatures to 223. 58 of these were collected at the hand car wash in Saxmundham and 16% of these travelled from Halesworth to Saxmundham to use the hand car wash as there is none in Halesworth.
- 4.102 **Halesworth Town Council Comments**: The Council recommended that this application is refused for the following reasons:-
- 4.103 1. Wholly inappropriate for this location which is within the Conservation area, the Council would recommend that there are far more suitable locations on the industrial areas in the town.
- 4.104 2. Height and appearance of porta cabins and porta loos in a Conservation area.

- 4.105 3. Light pollution: The site backs on to neighbouring properties and similar operations in Beccles, for example (which are more sensibly located in industrial areas) produce a significant amount of light well beyond normal working hours.
- 4.106 4. Noise pollution: Pressure washing by hose can produce between 70 - 100db, waiting vehicles with the engines running, radios and general noise from up to 11 members of staff (5 full time) would be a significant intrusion, particularly for neighbouring houses but also to visitors and local businesses.
- 4.107 5. Water: Concerns with overspray from the operation, surface water drainage capacity to handle 1000's of litres of water, effective control of contamination from the chemicals used.
- 4.108 6. Potential loss of car parking spaces, although not significant immediately, this will be a concern as there are plans to develop the Angel Link car park into a Bus Hub and roughly a third of the Thoroughfare car park may be lost to development.
- 4.109 7. Recognition of the high level of objections to this application from residents in the town not just those who are close to the site.
- 4.110 8. Operating hours are unknown and therefore the impact of this operation cannot be assessed properly.
- 4.111 **Neighbours and Halesworth Town Council have been re-consulted on the amended plans and the following further comments received (7 objections and 3 in support):**
- 4.112 1 London Road: I refer to my original comments of the 21st of December on this hand car wash in Halesworth in response to the second application for planning approval. My views have not changed.
- 4.113 This week I attended the Halesworth Town Council Meeting and heard more serious concerns about it which I am sure our Town Clerk will be contacting you. Two of the most serious concerns were the drainage system and whether there was any limitation imposed on the use of the car park in the agreement allowing demolition and rebuilding of the Old Creamery as flats and shops.
- 4.114 I remain strongly opposed the hand car wash proposal.
- 4.115 15 Church Farm Lane: It would be terrible to build a car wash right next to those houses adjacent to car park. Those houses have the smallest of gardens and the compressors noise and overspray would be painful. Would you open your bedroom window next to a car wash? Would you hang your laundry out next to a car wash. Car washes should be at petrol stations or industrial estates.
- 4.116 The next problem is parking. If all these new housing developments are truly on the way, parking will become a bigger problem. We probably shouldn't tie up parking spots near city centre for a car wash.
- 4.117 15 Church Farm Lane: I am writing to voice my opinion and objection to the hand car wash facility application to replace car parking behind the creamery. My main reason is it would

directly affect the lives of my family and their children who live feet away from the proposed site. This kind of facility is much better suited on the outskirts of the town to avoid congestion, pollution and taking up valuable parking space within the town centre.

- 4.118 First Floor Flat, 15 Thoroughfare: Thank you for notifying me of the amended application. However, the amended proposals do not address the issues I raised in my original comments, to wit that this proposal is inappropriate for the location, and that with the potential loss of car parking space in the Angel Link car park due to the development of the bus hub, and the long stay town car park when Tesco sells the land it is premature to reduce parking space in the town. Having read the officer's report I would add noise pollution to my list of concerns.
- 4.119 25 Orchard Valley, Holton: The main construction would run parallel close alongside the wall of our backyard at No 25 Thoroughfare, and within a few feet of our conservatory. We and our nearest neighbour stand to be most affected by this construction and strenuously object to this planning application. We respectfully request that our objection be given more serious consideration than those in favour of this application who live many miles from Halesworth and who will not be affected on a daily basis, unlike ourselves.
- 4.120 In addition, the adjacent mini roundabout serves a number of exit roads and increased traffic into and out of the proposed facility could pose increased risk of accidents, as it is well used and in the centre of the town. There is also the loss of parking spaces to be considered, of which Halesworth has few enough already.
- 4.121 Address not stated My views on this planning application have not changed. There are already two automatic car washes plus a hand wash in Halesworth. There is another car wash in Ilketshall St. Lawrence. This would seem to be more than adequate for this area and this is without calculating the vast quantities of water used by them at a time when we should be considering using less water. The council should be taking a more responsible attitude when looking at this application since they are not only our representatives but guardians of our countryside and decision makers on projects which will have an impact on our environment.
- 4.122 39 Thoroughfare, Halesworth: Many eloquent and accurate reasons, opposing the proposed car wash in the creamery car park, have been raised.
- 4.123 I simply wish to add my own, very personal reasons opposing the car wash.
- 4.124 As one of the closest to this proposed development, I can assure you there is no doubt it would blight our lives, and seriously affect the way we wish to live.
- 4.125 The combination of noisy high pressure water hoses, vacuum cleaners, chemicals, water spray, talking, vehicle doors, and unsightly portable buildings, all within feet of my garden, is I can assure you going to affect me most adversely.
- 4.126 I have visited the site at Saxmundham, run by the people that are hoping to be my new next door neighbours. It is very busy, and looks to do well, but I came away from my visit literally terrified at the prospect of them being adjacent my garden.

- 4.127 I shall stop here, there is no point my going over the many points that have been raised by others, much better than me I'll add.
- 4.128 I will just hope and pray that common sense and decency prevails in this situation, and the proposal is rejected, letting many of us have our lives back, without this nightmare hanging over us.
- 4.129 Address not stated: I am writing to object to the reapplication of a hand car wash at the above address.
- 4.130 Whichever way this application has changed from the previous application it is still not suitable for this site:
- 4.131 1. Residential units are above the car park and directly behind the wall.
- 4.132 2. Car parking spaces are at a premium in Halesworth, 2 large housing developments are planned as well as 2 smaller ones. Where will these cars park, or will they just decide not to use the town.
- 4.133 3. Halesworth already has 2 car washes.
- 4.134 4. Noise pollution.
- 4.135 30 Roman Way: support the application; the service would be of benefit to residents of Halesworth as there is no HAND car wash at present. Such facilities are welcome by car owners as less likely to cause damage. In addition there is a benefit to retailers.
- 4.136 68 London Road: identical letter as above.
- 4.137 2 Market Place: identical letter as above but also comments that it would benefit the town by providing more footfall.
- 4.138 **Halesworth Town Council**: The Committee recommended refusal. The amendment of the height of the wash drying canopies did not address the concerns that the Planning Committee had with the original application and the reasons it recommended refusal.
- 4.139 Further concerns were raised with regard to how and where the detergents, oil, water and waste products would be dealt with and if these would end up in the river course and the Millennium Green, which would be wholly unacceptable.
- 4.140 The Committee noted that there had been a petition raised in favour of this application, however it was noted that the majority of signatures were from residents of other towns, Saxmundham, Leiston, Aldeburgh, Lowestoft, Campsea Ashe, etc, who reasonably, would not have been aware of the specific details of the application. The Committee would probably support an application for a hand car wash in one of the industrial areas of the town but not in this particular location.
- 4.141 The Committee therefore recommended refusal on the original reasons given on the 5th January, 2017 and for the additional concerns noted above. The Committee also raised a

question with regard to whether there was provision in the lease to allow the car park to be sublet, which to date has not been answered.

Consultees

- 4.142 **Suffolk County - Highways Department:** Notice is hereby given that the County Council as Highway Authority recommends that any permission which that Planning Authority may give should include the conditions shown below:
- 4.143 Condition: Prior to the change of use hereby permitted being first occupied, the vehicular access onto the highway shall be properly surfaced with a bound material for a minimum distance of 5 metres from the edge of the metalled carriageway, in accordance with details previously submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.
- 4.144 Reason: To secure appropriate improvements to the vehicular access in the interests of highway safety.
- 4.145 Condition: Before the development is commenced details shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority showing the means to prevent the discharge of surface water from the development onto the highway. The approved scheme shall be carried out in its entirety before the access is first used and shall be retained thereafter in its approved form.
- 4.146 Reason: To prevent hazards caused by flowing water or ice on the highway.
- 4.147 **WDC Environmental Health – Noise:** Pressure washers - more than one? I have concerns about this application and would recommend a refusal until the applicant can demonstrate that noise emissions will not give rise to disturbance to residential neighbours. The jet wash at the Tesco Express was assessed for noise and I suggested conditions that would limit noise emissions. The nearest properties at that location were across the busy Beccles Road and the background noise levels were quite high - I would expect the background noise to be less at the Creamery, so that the likelihood for nuisance is greater.
- 4.148 Further comments: I will stick with my previous comments. I did take a quick look on the internet at Karcher domestic pressure washers and found a sound pressure level of 74.5dB(A) (assumed measurement at 1 metre) quoted for one model. If this figure is used to calculate a cumulative noise level of four washers running at the same time (worst possible scenario), the combined noise level would be in the region of 80/81dB(A). Depending on background noise levels and the distance between the source of the noise and the nearest noise sensitive receptors I am concerned that that could be a significant impact on the neighbours' amenity.
- 4.149 **Design and Conservation Officer:** This application relates to the proposed use of the eastern corner of a WDC car park in Halesworth for a 'hand car wash facility'. The heritage concerns relate to the impacts of the proposed structures and portakabin on the character and appearance of this part of the Conservation Area, on the settings of the Locally Listed Buildings (LLBs) immediately to the east of the site – nos. 25 and 27 Angel Link - and the settings of both Grade II and Grade II* listed buildings to the north west of the site.

- 4.150 The Grade II listed buildings are known as no.38 Thoroughfare, The White Lion, adjacent, and the boundary wall to no.35 - which also defines the rear boundary to no.34, and encloses the car park to the north and west of the site. The Grade II* listed building was originally a single dwelling but is now divided, and is known as nos. 1 and 2 London Road (though no.1 is also known as Gothic House). All listed buildings are C16th timber framed structures, which contribute hugely to the character and appearance of this part of the Conservation Area, not only in views from the Thoroughfare to the west, but in views of the rear, as experienced from within the car park. The brick wall contributes equally significantly to the character of the place and enhances the setting of the various listed (and unlisted) buildings. Having said that, views of the rear of both LLBs from within the car park also contribute to the character and appearance of this part of the Conservation Area. Their scale, form and vernacular character offer glimpses of historic dwellings usually only afforded from private vantage points, and despite the relatively high wall which defines their western boundary. Their settings also consist in part of, and are enhanced by, views across the car park.
- 4.151 There are three proposed structures, two of which are effectively shelters, open on three of their four sides. The third structure is the portakabin, which is proposed to be tucked around the corner, in between the south eastern gable of the redbrick building, whose tenant at the south eastern end is Angel Podiatry, and the end of no.27 Angel Link. Both shelters are to be sited within the car park proper, and feature tensioned green textiled roofs and a polycarbonate screen to one wall. The 'wash bay' structure appears to be approximately 13m long and both structures are in excess of 4m high.
- 4.152 Given the distance from the listed buildings and their siting in the far corner of the car park, the hard nature of the landscape and the dull mid tone of roofing material, it is considered that the impacts on all four listed dwellings is quite limited – on the spectrum of 'less than substantially harmful' it is considered their impact is 'low to moderate', in terms of the NPPF. However, whilst the impact of the proposed structures on the significance of the listed wall is similarly 'less than substantially harmful', in this instance the harm is considered to be 'moderate to high' because of the proximity of the southern end of the wall and its currently relatively uninterrupted appearance.
- 4.153 In terms of the impacts on the LLBs there is a fundamental concern. There is also a major concern over the impacts on the character and appearance of this part of the Conservation Area. Of course, it is accepted that this part of the Conservation Area is not the most sensitive to change, though it does have its merits. It invites close up views across the backs of the two LLBs and the boundary wall, which is proposed to be largely obscured from view. The impact of the siting of these large, insensitive and wholly incongruous forms is therefore considered 'less than substantially harmful' to their setting, and the character and appearance of this part of the Conservation Area.
- 4.154 The location of the portakabin, effectively opposite the garage and at the end of the red brick structure, is also harmful to both the LLBs and this part of the Conservation Area. The agent's Design & Access Statement states that 'The building form and materials are appropriate for their setting', while using a 'modern roof covering ...is not anticipated to detract from the character of the surrounding'. This is unjustified and, in the heritage view, inaccurate.

4.155 In conclusion, the proposed erection of three utilitarian structures in this location would have a limited to moderate impact on the setting of the listed structures identified previously, which equates to 'less than substantially harmful' to their significance, whilst their proximity to two undesignated heritage assets would detrimentally affect their setting. Furthermore, their location within the Conservation Area would neither preserve nor enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, contrary to the principles of the Listed Building Act and NPPF and the Local Plan. It is for these reasons the heritage team does not support the scheme.

4.156 Further views of the Design and Conservation Officer on the amended plans:

4.157 *"I have looked again at the drawings, in light of the intended reduction in the finished heights of the canopies of 700mm - and have concluded that the fundamental concern of the impacts of the structures on the character and appearance of this part of the CA and on the heritage assets, both designated and undesignated, has not been addressed. "*

4.158 The Heritage Team considers the proposal remains 'less than substantially harmful' to the character, appearance and setting of the assets and as such does not accord with the principles of the LBA, the NPPF or the Local Plan – and it is for these reasons the Heritage Team does not support the proposal.

4.159 There is clear and defined harm to all assets, and in accordance with the NPPF this harm must be weighed against the public benefits.

PUBLICITY

4.160 The application has been the subject of the following press advertisement:

Category	Published	Expiry	Publication
Conservation Area, Public Right of Way Affected,	16.12.2016	05.01.2017	Beccles and Bungay Journal
Conservation Area, Public Right of Way Affected,	16.12.2016	05.01.2017	Lowestoft Journal

SITE NOTICES

The following site notices have been displayed:

General Site Notice	Reason for site notice: Conservation Area, In the Vicinity of Public Right of Way, Date posted 19.12.2016 Expiry date 08.01.2017
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PLANNING POLICY

5.1 The Waveney Core Strategy was adopted in 2009. Relevant policies include CS01 which sets the Spatial Strategy for the District, CS02 which seeks high quality and sustainable

design, CS10 which deals with retail, leisure and office development and CS17 which looks at the built and historic environment.

- 5.2 The Development Management policies were adopted in 2011. Policy DM01 sets physical limits for settlements and policy DM02 sets design principles for new development. Policy DM30 looks to protect and enhance the historic environment.
- 5.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is also relevant to the determination of this application.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 In terms of planning policy, the Core Strategy seeks to require new retail and leisure development to be located in the existing centres wherever possible and to be of an appropriate scale and character to reflect their role and function.
- 6.2 A car wash is a “sui generis” use (that is one not falling into any use class) but is perhaps not dissimilar to a retail use. This site lies outside but close to the designated town centre for Halesworth (as identified in Development Management) policy DM10 and it is considered that the development would be acceptable in principle.
- 6.3 However there are other issues that need to be considered, most notably impact on the Halesworth Conservation Area and impact on the amenities of nearby residents.
- 6.4 The site is within Halesworth Conservation Area, which is a designated heritage asset. In addition there are a number of listed buildings in the vicinity of the site, including a garden wall associated with 35 Thoroughfare, 34-36 and 38-39 (the latter known as White Lion House) Thoroughfare and 1-2 London Road. These are also designated heritage assets. 25, 27, 27A and 37 Thoroughfare are locally listed and are non-designated heritage assets.
- 6.5 Although the site is screened from Angel Link by the existing buildings, it will be visible from the rear of properties on Thoroughfare and London Road. The Design and Conservation Officer has identified a minor impact on the setting of the listed buildings, but a greater one on the brick wall which forms the boundary between 35 Thoroughfare and the car park, and which is itself “listed” by virtue of being in the curtilage of a listed building.
- 6.6 However there is a major concern over impacts on the Conservation Area and the locally listed buildings immediately adjacent to the site, principally relating to the impact of the three buildings/structures on the setting of the locally listed buildings and the character of the Conservation Area.
- 6.7 The NPPF provides guidance to the decision maker for such situations. It says:
- 6.8 “Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

- 6.9 In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:
- *the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
 - *the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
 - *the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.*
- 6.10 When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional.
- 6.11 Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.
- 6.12 The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset."
- 6.13 It is established that there is "less than substantial" harm to the designated heritage assets of the listed buildings, but the character of the conservation area would not be "preserved or enhanced". In addition there is harm to the non-designated heritage assets of the locally listed buildings. In these circumstances the local planning authority should weight the "harm" and the significance of the heritage asset against the public benefit.
- 6.14 Whilst the reduction in height of the structures is noted it is not considered that this is sufficient to allow a different conclusion to be reached.
- 6.15 In this case there would be some benefit from the employment created (stated to be 5 full time and 8 part time employees). In addition the agent has drawn attention to the petition (see paragraphs 4.99-4.101) and cites this as evidence of strong local support and that the facility will bring customers into Halesworth who may well stay and contribute to town commerce. He considers that this will be reinforced as the business will be offering a valet car wash facility where customers leave the car for cleaning and return for the vehicle at a later time.
- 6.16 In relation to impact on neighbours, the main concern is with noise, as outlined in the Environmental Health Officer's comments, in paragraphs 4.111-4.112 above. It is noted that the adjoining properties to the south east are very close to the boundary. Although the applicant has been requested to submit a noise assessment, none has been forthcoming.

6.17 There is also a potential concern about overspray impacting on immediately adjacent properties. To mitigate this, the “washing area canopy” has a solid rear wall, but the possibility of overspray at the sides of the area cannot be discounted.

CONCLUSION

7.1 It is considered that this proposal will have a detrimental impact on the character of this part of Halesworth Conservation Area, and will have a detrimental impact on the setting of the locally listed buildings which directly adjoin the site. These impacts are not considered to be outweighed by the potential benefits.

7.2 In addition there is likely to be a significant impact on the amenities of persons living adjacent to the site through noise and perhaps spray.

7.3 For these reasons the application is recommended for refusal.

RECOMMENDATION

That permission is refused for the following reasons:

1. This development is considered to cause a 'low to moderate' harm by impact on the setting of nearby listed buildings on Thoroughfare and London Road and cause a 'moderate to high' harm on the curtilage listed boundary wall to 39 Thoroughfare which forms the southwest boundary of the site because of the proximity of the southern end of the wall to the proposed structures and its currently relatively uninterrupted appearance. In addition the impact of the proposed large, insensitive and wholly incongruous structures proposed will be 'less than substantially harmful' to the setting of the locally listed buildings at 25, 27 and 27A Thoroughfare immediately adjoining the site, and the character and appearance of this part of the Halesworth Conservation Area.

It is not considered that these harms are outweighed by the public benefits of the proposal. As such the application is contrary to Waveney Core Strategy policy CS17, Development Management Conservation Policy DM30 and section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

2. The proposal would have a significant detrimental impact on the amenities of nearby residents, particularly those at 25, 27 and 27A Thoroughfare by reason of noise from the pressure washers, contrary to Development Management policy DM02.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

See application ref: DC/16/5039/COU at

www.waveney.gov.uk/publicaccess

CONTACT

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