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Land at Hartnolls Farm, Tiverton

Summary Proof of Evidence of Neil Thorne
BSc (Hons) MSc MCIHT MTPS

Covering Highways and Transportation Matters

Local Planning Authority Reference – 21/01576/MOUT

Planning Inspectorate Reference – APP/Y11138/W/3313401

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 My name is Neil Thorne BSc (Hons) MSc MCIHT MTPS. I am Transport Planning Director at Rappor, infrastructure and environmental consultants, having joined in June 2023. I have over 24 years' experience in Transport Planning and Engineering matters, beginning my career at Peter Brett Associates in 2000, and more latterly at Stantec.
- 1.2 I am a Bachelor of Science in Human and Physical Geography and a Master of Science in Transport Planning and Management; I am a member of the Chartered Institute of Highways and Transportation and a member of the Transport Planning Society.
- 1.3 My evidence has been prepared and will be given in accordance with the guidance of my professional institution and I confirm that the opinions expressed are my true and professional opinions.
- 1.4 My Proof of Evidence is submitted in respect of the planning appeal (APP/Y11138/W/3313401), made on behalf of Waddeton Park Ltd. ("the Appellant") against the refusal of planning application 21/01576/MOUT by Mid Devon District Council (MDDC), the Local Planning Authority.



2 Transport Assessment & Access Strategy Summary

- 2.1 My evidence sets out the proposed access strategy and confirms that vehicular access to the site is proposed to be gained via a new priority T-junction onto Post Hill, located approximately 90m to the east of the existing Hartnoll Business Centre access junction, which is to be stopped up.
- 2.2 It is agreed with MDDC that the Appeal site offers the opportunity to support development of the adjacent Area B of the TEUE allocation.
- 2.3 My evidence also sets out a summary of the main findings and conclusions from the TA, concluding that the proposed development is considered acceptable on transport grounds, in line with NPPF, on the basis that:
- I. appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be – or have been
 - taken up, given the type of development and its location;
 - II. safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users; and
 - III. any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree.
- 2.4 The TA confirmed that there would be no unacceptable impact on highway safety, and the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would not be severe.
- 2.5 Following submission of the application, and subsequently the Response to Highway Consultation Comments, all highways and transportation technical matters were agreed with DCC ahead of determination.
- 2.6 On this basis, there were no Highways related objections to the planning application from any of the Statutory Authorities, and no Highways related Reasons for Refusal.



- 2.7 My evidence also sets out a review of relevant updates since the TA was originally produced. This included the latest available traffic data on Post Hill, with recorded traffic flows having reduced in both directions and both peak hours, in the order of 17 - 20%, demonstrating that the traffic impact conclusions are considered extremely robust and remain valid.
- 2.8 My evidence also summarises the very minor changes to bus services which have occurred and concludes that there have been no changes since the preparation of the TA which would alter the conclusions reached at the time.



3 Westcountry Land Proposed Access Arrangement

- 3.1 My evidence sets out a detailed review of the safety and suitability of the Westcountry Land access proposals, as shown in Drawing C23172-TP001 Rev B, which forms Appendix JRD3 of the Westcountry Land Statement of Case.
- 3.2 My evidence sets out why Westcountry Land's proposed junction arrangement is unsafe and unsuitable and why significant concerns remain around its acceptability and deliverability. This is because the Westcountry Land proposed arrangement:
- 1) in changing the priority of Post Hill, is not in accordance with the established road hierarchy, as set out within the Adopted TEUE SPD and Area B Masterplan. Post Hill is the Primary Road and carries 6,000 vehicle movements every weekday;
 - 2) in doing so, unnecessarily increases turning movements, which interrupt the predominant flow and materially increases potential for vehicular conflicts;
 - 3) is not in accordance with either MfS or DMRB (CD123), with the placement of a priority junction on the outside of a sharp curve a critical concern which would lead to misinterpretation over natural priority, failure to give way and lead to collisions;
 - 4) provides little to no deflection for westbound right turn vehicles, which is a significant safety concern for head-on vehicular collisions;
 - 5) is reliant upon a successful TRO to reduce the speed limit on Post Hill from 40mph to 30mph when there are no guarantees that this would be forthcoming, in particular because DfT guidance on setting speed limits suggests this is inappropriate;
 - 6) even with a successful TRO, fails to meet the design requirements for a 30mph road, with insufficient forward visibility for westbound vehicles, and obstructs the visibility for right turn vehicles entering and egressing from Manley Lane creating risk of collisions;



- 7) provides insufficient space for manoeuvring HGV's, leading to encroachment into adjoining lanes creating risks of vehicle collisions;
 - 8) fails to provide adequate provision for crossing pedestrians, and inadequate visibility to the pedestrian crossing point nearest to the desire line, leading to potential conflicts between westbound vehicles and pedestrians;
 - 9) does not include any consideration of the vertical design considerations, where ground levels are known to drop significantly away from Post Hill. Without this detailed design, concerns are raised regarding the physical and residential amenity impacts (including noise) on The Gamble (if not requiring demolition) and Woodleigh House;
 - 10) may not be able to achieve maximum gradients of 1 in 20, required to provide safe and suitable access to the site for all users, including wheelchair users, without causing other harm;
 - 11) is forecast to operate above capacity in future with the full build out of the TEUE, resulting in significant queueing and delay on the Primary Route of the identified road hierarchy, where there is currently none; and
 - 12) provides insufficient space for the predicted level of queueing right-turn vehicles, contrary to design standards, and in providing this additional queue length, would extend the junction across the Manley Lane junction and result in a significant safety concern.
- 3.3 In short, my evidence confirms that there can be no reliance on the acceptability or deliverability of the Westcountry Land access proposals, and therefore their ability to provide a secondary access to Area B of the TEUE.



3.4 In stark contrast, my evidence confirms that the Appeal site proposed access arrangement:

- 1) maintains the priority of Post Hill, in accordance with the established road hierarchy, as set out within the Adopted TEUE SPD and Area B Masterplan;
- 2) in doing so, does not interrupt the predominant flow or materially increase potential for vehicular conflicts;
- 3) is in accordance with both MfS and DMRB (CD123) and agreed as safe with DCC;
- 4) has been designed to a 40mph design speed and therefore not reliant upon a successful TRO;
- 5) provides sufficient space for manoeuvring HGV's;
- 6) provides pedestrian crossing provision with adequate visibility;
- 7) is located along a section of Post Hill that is level with the road, and therefore has no material vertical design constraints, does not create any residential amenity impacts and is able to provide safe and suitable access to the site for all users, including wheelchair users; and
- 8) is forecast to operate within capacity in future with the full build out of the TEUE, without significant queueing and delay on the Primary Route of the identified road hierarchy.



4 Response to Halberton Parish Council Representations

- 4.1 My evidence confirms that the matters raised by HPC are dealt with at length within both the original TA (which I confirmed remains robust and valid) and my previous Rebuttal Proof of Evidence.
- 4.2 As set out within Section 2 of my Evidence, all highways and transportation technical matters, including matters related to traffic impact, highway safety and sustainable access are agreed with DCC and MDDC.

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