



**SOLIHULL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 etc**

**THE METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF SOLIHULL (SHIRLEY  
TOWN CENTRE REDEVELOPMENT) COMPULSORY  
PURCHASE ORDER 2007**

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**PROOF OF EVIDENCE**

**Piers Cockroft**

**FOR THE LOCAL HIGHWAY AUTHORITY**

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Local inquiry date: 8<sup>th</sup> May 2008

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 I am Piers Cockroft. I have a BSc in civil engineering. I am employed by Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council ("the Council") as Transport Policy Manager, and have been employed in a similar role in Solihull for more than 20 years. My duties include advising the Council on transport policy matters, and on the highway and transport implications of development
- 1.2 I am familiar with the redevelopment proposals for Shirley, ("the Scheme"), and with the adjoining area, including its highways and footpaths.
- 1.3 I had been involved in pre-application discussions on matters contained in the Transport Assessment ("TA") that was submitted with the planning application in April 2006. I have previously given evidence on behalf of Solihull at the public inquiry into the refusal of planning permission for the proposed Asda development on the Powergen site immediately north of this proposal.
- 1.4 This evidence deals with the highway and transport implications of the proposed development, from the point of view of the Council as the local highway authority. It will summarise the key transport and highway implications of the development. Mr Ojeil deals with most of the objections to both the CPO and Stopping up Order. The highway authority supports his responses, so I do not consider them in detail.

## **2. Transport and Highway Implications of the Scheme**

- 2.1 From this perspective the proposals for retail and residential development are located within the urban area of the West Midlands conurbation, and in a district centre. The site has partial frontage to highways on two sides. To the east is A34 Stratford Road, a principal road forming part of the national primary route network. To the north is Haslucks Green Road, a classified unnumbered local distributor road.
- 2.2 A TA supported the planning application. The highway authority accepts the findings and the conclusions of the TA. These also formed the basis of the transport and highways related information reported to members to assist their determination of the planning application.
- 2.3 Section 2 of the TA describes the highway infrastructure in the vicinity of the site, refers to traffic and accident data and existing car parking availability. It also deals with public transport, pedestrian and cycle facilities.
- 2.4 At section 3 the TA reviews relevant policies and identifies the relevant national and local policy guidance, particularly Solihull UDP transport policies.

### **3. Accessibility**

- 3.1 The TA deals with Accessibility in section 4. This confirms that the location is very accessible. Both Stratford Road and Haslucks Green Road are bus routes with many services to Birmingham City Centre, Solihull Station and Town Centre, Shirley Station and surrounding residential areas.
- 3.2 A significant residential hinterland is accessible by cycle. Pedestrian access along the major roads is good. A number of crossing points are provided, and footpaths and routes across the park provide good pedestrian permeability and access.
- 3.3 The Scheme includes proposals to improve or provide further pedestrian crossings on Stratford Road, Haslucks Green Road and the junction of these routes. The Scheme itself would provide links that would increase permeability through the site.
- 3.4 Being located close to a junction between busy roads, accessibility by car is also good. However the traffic generated by the Scheme would have a negative impact on this junction. Mitigation measures are proposed. Highway works are also proposed at all vehicular accesses into the site

### **4. Scheme Proposals**

- 4.1 The proposed Scheme, in transport and highway terms, is described in section 5 of the TA. This considers existing and proposed traffic movement, access and car parking.
- 4.2 Section 7 details how forecast traffic flows for the development proposals were derived, and section 8 considers the impact of these on the highway network. The significant impacts are identified as being at the A34 Stratford Road / Haslucks Green Road junction, and at the proposed main car park access to Haslucks Green Road. The Council, as highway authority agrees with this view.
- 4.3 These junctions are considered in more detail in section 9 of the TA, and the performance of the new junction proposals is assessed. The junctions were further assessed to take account of the potential impact of future redevelopment of the Powergen site, as described in section 10. The Council agrees that the proposed junctions would properly serve the proposed Scheme, and that they would not be an unreasonable constraint on any future proposals to redevelop the Powergen site.

### **5. Summary of the Transport Assessment and other considerations**

- 5.1 The A34 Stratford Road is a busy primary route connecting the M42 with the conurbation. It forms the shortest link between Birmingham City Centre and the M40. It is a red route, with

restrictions on turning and stopping to help promote smoother traffic flow and improved journey time reliability. Recent highway and junction works along the route in Solihull have generally taken account of the possible additional traffic generation of potential development and redevelopment sites along the corridor.

- 5.2 The skewed junction with Haslucks Green Road/Olton Road is traffic signal controlled and operates at or above its theoretical capacity at peak times. In particular there is delay for right turning vehicles from any approach.
- 5.3 The majority of traffic to and from the Scheme would be expected to pass through this junction, much of it making a right turn when arriving, departing, or both. The present junction would not cope with the additional demands of the Scheme.
- 5.4 A new signalised gyratory junction is proposed. It has been assessed against the proposed Scheme, other committed developments, background traffic growth to 2016, plus the potential redevelopment of the Powergen site. The analysis in the TA demonstrates that the proposed gyratory would operate in these circumstances with generally no greater overall queuing than occurs currently.
- 5.5 The robust assessment gives confidence that the proposed development would not have a negative impact on this major route.
- 5.6 Works are proposed at all other points of vehicular access into the development. In conjunction with proper management of parking and servicing areas, these proposals are acceptable.

## **6. Requirement to stop up existing public highway**

- 6.1 In approving the Scheme, the Council as planning authority and as highway authority understood and agreed that the public highway, which is a loop service road to the rear of 162 to 184 Stratford Road with a spur behind 190, would need to be stopped up to enable the Scheme to proceed. They were satisfied that appropriate alternative provision would be available as necessary to access remaining premises that were not part of the redevelopment proposals.
- 6.2 The Council as highway authority has no objection to the proposed stopping up order

## **7. Objections to the Compulsory Purchase Order**

- 7.1 GC Shirley, the freehold owner of Westminster House 186-190 Stratford Road has objected and raised concerns about the lack

of a proper Transport Impact Assessment or consultation with the highway authority.

- 7.2 As noted in my evidence, a thorough TA of the Scheme was prepared. The scope was agreed with the local highway authority, which were also consulted at every stage in its development. The TA is appropriate for the Scheme.
- 7.3 At no stage has GC Shirley approached the highway authority directly in this matter.
- 7.4 Mrs LE Jones has objections relating to the disruption to traffic on Stratford Road, and to the loss of car parking.
- 7.5 These were matters properly considered at the time the planning application was determined. It was found that the proposed traffic mitigation was robust. The proposed car parking provision was determined on the basis of survey and analysis of the usage of the existing car parks, plus the requirements of the Scheme. An appropriate level of car parking is proposed.
- 7.6 Keep Shirley Alive object on the basis that the road network is unable to accommodate the expected increases in traffic.
- 7.7 The proposed mitigation measures are based on a robust assessment of future traffic demand, as detailed in the TA. The Council as highway authority considers that the proposals would not result in future problems on the network.

## **8. Objections to the Stopping up Order**

- 8.1 Objections have been received to the proposed stopping up order made by Shirley Advance under section 247 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. These are detailed in the evidence of Johnny Ojeil, who provides a detailed response to each on behalf of the developer., Shirley Advance
- 8.2 In brief, similar objections to the stopping up order have been made by Councillors Howard Allen, Simon Slater and Brynn Tudor; by Councillor Margaret Allen; and by Councillor Len Creswell. They object to the omission of a reference to the planning permission reference number 2007/919; suggest that the stopping up order is premature pending consideration of the compulsory purchase and footpath orders; and that the order does not provide for alternate access.
- 8.3 Planning permission 2007/919 does not require the stopping up of a highway, so it is not necessary to refer to it. For the development scheme to proceed, more than one order is required. It is appropriate to consider them at the same public inquiry. The development scheme provides alternate access.

- 8.4 Keep Shirley Alive object on the basis that the highway is needed for access to the car park, the rear of the shops, British Legion and Scout Group, Shirley Park and the recycling point.
- 8.5 The Scheme will provide access to the rear of the shops, the Scout Group, the British Legion and Shirley Park. The existing car park and recycling point will be replaced with new facilities with appropriate accesses.
- 8.6 Rita Leek, the owner of 192 to 206, objects to the loss of access to the rear service road.
- 8.7 The Scheme would provide a new access directly to and from the main Stratford Road carriageway. It would also improve the existing one-way access from the service area between 190 and 192 and the frontage service road to two-way operation. The proposed access is appropriate for the number and size of vehicles likely to use it.
- 8.8 Nando's Chickenland who occupy 192/194 Stratford Road has also lodged an objection. It seems that their main concern is that construction activity would affect their business. Shirley Advance will be required to ensure that works are carried out with minimum impact, and phased to maintain access to both the front and rear of these premises.
- 8.9 National Grid has objected because they would wish to maintain access to their apparatus in the area. The Council is in the process of discussing with the objector the resolution of its objection by the negotiation and completion of an agreement.