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App Ref: S62A/2023/0028

Our Ref: IT2259L.20.02.24

Date: 20 February 2024

Dear sirs,

**Re: Land off Chelmsford Road, Hartford End**

We write further to Essex Highways' (EH's) consultation response dated 14<sup>th</sup> February 2024 in relation to planning application reference: S62A/2023/0028, which relates to the provision of 50 dwellings and the associated site access junction along with off-site bus stop improvements at land off Chelmsford Road, Hartford End.

We set out below our responses to the items raised within the consultation response.

We would confirm that the reference to a speed of 41.5mph in our rebuttal letter of 30<sup>th</sup> January 2024 was a typographical error and is evidenced by the speed survey results contained within Appendix C of the submitted Transport Statement, which clearly indicate that the recorded average 85<sup>th</sup> percentile southbound speed was 41mph. As such, the calculated visibility 'y' distance of 102m remains relevant.

Our rebuttal letter of 30<sup>th</sup> January 2024 included the email from Essex Highways dated 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2023 in which in response to our question "... whether the spacing between the proposed access and the existing brewery development access would be considered acceptable from a highway perspective." the officer dealing with the enquiry stated that "It doesn't raise any immediate alarm bells with me but of course you'll need to ensure the transport statement includes a stage one safety audit and designers' response." We have not ignored or sought to overlook the reference to the stage one safety audit and submitted a designer's response to the audit within the application documentation. As such, we do not feel that we have acted in a disingenuous manner, as stated by Essex Highways, by indicating that Essex Highways did not raise fundamental concerns in relation to the proposed position of the access junction during pre-application discussions because, as evidenced by the aforementioned email, they did not. Any adverse comments in relation to the junction location were first raised by the safety audit team and we would highlight that the audit team's recommendation in terms of the junction spacing was that: -

*“It is recommended that the location of the proposed access junction should be in line with Local Authority policies on junction spacing.*

*If for whatever reasons the above cannot be achieved, then it is recommended that approval for the current proposals should be sought and agreed with the Overseeing Organisation, i.e. the Local Highway Authority, Essex County Council.”*

We would highlight that the recommendation of the audit team, i.e. that the junction spacing should accord with the local policies varies from one of the principles of the road safety audit process. In that regard, GG119: Road Safety Audit indicates within the fifth paragraph of its introduction that *“It is important to note that road safety audit is not intended to be a technical check of compliance with design requirements.”* Within the designer’s response to the stage 1 road safety audit, with reference to the Personal Injury Accident record of the local road network in the context of existing junction spacing on site, we concluded that the proposed location of the junction should not represent a road safety concern. We remain of that view and we would highlight that traffic flows into and out of both private access points, i.e. Ridley Green and the development access, would be relatively low and that any vehicles manoeuvring into and out of either access would be likely to be traveling at low speeds. We, therefore, consider that the propensity for the accident types described by the audit team would be low.

There is no evidence of a ditch across the frontage of Hillside and no evidence of a ditch to the north of Hillside. As such it is considered unlikely that there is a piped ditch across the frontage of that property and subsequently it is considered that the land up to the title boundary of Hillside, as shown on previously submitted drawing IT2259/TS/05, is highway land. Therefore, the majority of the hedge at the frontage of Hillside appears to fall within the public highway and could therefore be cleared / trimmed to deliver a visibility splay to the left at the proposed site access junction. Notwithstanding the latter, as demonstrated within our letter of 30<sup>th</sup> January 2024, we would highlight that if the 2.4m x 102m visibility splay to the left at the proposed access was plotted to a 1m offset into the carriageway of Chelmsford Road that the level of trimming required of the hedge would be notably reduced.


Within our letter of 30<sup>th</sup> January 2024 we explained why it is that we consider that the pedestrian visibility splay to the north from the eastern side of the proposed crossing point between the 2 bus stops would not represent an unsafe situation. In addition, we highlighted that if Essex Highways are concerned in relation to that visibility splay that the applicant would be prepared to fund the provision of a warning sign on the southbound approach to the crossing point. We would highlight that the provision of the proposed bus stops in the location proposed would enable the existing residents of Ridley Green to access local bus services without the need to walk in the carriageway of Chelmsford Road as they would need to at present if they were to access the existing Brewery Stops to the north. Furthermore, the pedestrian visibility available at the crossing point between the 2 proposed bus stops would exceed that which is potentially available for pedestrians looking south on the western side of Chelmsford Road when crossing between the north and southbound Brewery Stops to the north of the site. We consider that these potential highway safety benefits should be taken into consideration when assessing the location of the proposed bus stops.

We trust that the above sufficiently addresses EH's consultation comments dated 14<sup>th</sup> February 2024 in relation to application S62A/2023/0028 and we welcome the earliest confirmation to that effect. In the meantime, however, please do not hesitate to contact us should you have any queries or wish to discuss this matter further.

Yours faithfully,



Justin Bass

  
Director of Intermodal Transportation Ltd

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