

PROOF OF EVIDENCE
OF
DAVID ROBERTS IEng FIHE FCiHT
ON BEHALF OF WAIN HOMES (NORTH WEST) LIMITED

DEALING WITH
HIGHWAY, TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT MATTERS

PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT
ON LAND AT A57 DINTING VALE, GLOSSOP

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1.0 QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE OF DAVID ROBERTS IENG, FIHE, FCIHT

- 1.1 I am the Managing Director of SCP, Transportation Planners and Infrastructure Designers.
- 1.2 I am an Incorporated Engineer of the Engineering Council, a Fellow of the Institute of Highway Engineers, and a Fellow of the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation.
- 1.3 I have over 40 years of experience of the highway, traffic and transport aspects of all types of development proposals and have advised many companies and local government authorities in that capacity.
- 1.4 I was first instructed in connection with this proposal in February 2021, and have carried out observations and investigations that led to the production of the Transport Assessment and other Technical Notes that support the planning application.
- 1.5 I confirm that the opinions expressed in this Evidence are my true and professional opinions and have been prepared in accordance with the CIHT Code of Conduct.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 I am instructed in this matter by Wain Homes to provide highway, traffic and transport advice in connection with their proposals to construct 92 dwellings on land served from the A57 Dinting Vale, Glossop.
- 2.2 My evidence should be read in conjunction with the Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) that has been submitted to this Inquiry and sets out the agreements reached with Derbyshire County Council (DCC), as local highway authority, and High Peak Borough Council (HPBC) as Local Planning Authority, as part of the planning application submissions.
- 2.3 Whilst it should be noted that HPBC originally refused planning permission on 4 grounds, and 2 of these grounds were highway related, the Council is no longer pursuing these highway reasons for refusal, and consequently not producing any evidence to suggest that planning permission should be resisted on highway grounds.
- 2.4 Notwithstanding the position of the Council, it is very clear from the third party objections that have been submitted, that these original reasons for refusal have been used as a basis for the retained third party objections.
- 2.5 For the avoidance of doubt, the original highway related reasons for refusal were as follows:
2. *The position of the proposed highway access road from the A57, part of which lies outside the Local Plan allocation, in close proximity to the school, would result in an unacceptable risk to road safety. The proposal therefore fails to achieve safe and suitable access contrary to Policy CF6 of the adopted High Peak Local Plan 2016 and the NPPF.*
 4. *There is potential for the public right of way onto Simmondley Lane to be used as a “rat-run” for vehicle access, and the absence of any detailed and workable proposals for preventative measures within the application, which would also allow the access rights for existing residents to be maintained, the proposal is considered to pose a risk to the safety of users of the right of way and a highway safety risk at the junction with Simmondley Lane contrary to Policies EQ6 and CF6 of the adopted High Peak Local Plan 2016 and the NPPF.*
- 2.6 Therefore, whilst the Council’s highway related reasons for refusal have been withdrawn, my evidence has necessarily been produced to assist the Inquiry by responding to the objections submitted by the third party on these same matters.

3.0 HIGHWAY AND TRAFFIC BACKGROUND

3.1 As background to the highway aspects of the proposals, the appeal site is allocated for residential development in the Local Plan, and access to the site is anticipated directly from the A57 Dinting Vale. The availability of an access position on to the A57 is inevitably limited by ownership constraints and in allocating the site it was clear there is little flexibility with the access location, which can only be achieved broadly in the location proposed in this appeal.

3.2 The Transport Assessment (TA) [CD 1.16] supporting the proposals sets out in detail the highway and traffic conditions around the site, along with the impacts of the development related traffic movements. Further Technical Notes (TN) [CD 2.11, CD 2.58 and CD 2.79] were produced to deal with queries raised by DCC during the determination of the application. The highlights of the TA [CD 1.16] and TN [CD 2.11, CD 2.58 and CD 2.79] are that:

- Base traffic flow surveys were undertaken for the busiest hours of the day in 2021 on the local road network, and the resulting flows are agreed with DCC.
- Further traffic surveys were undertaken on the A57 in 2022 to record vehicle speeds in the vicinity of the site to inform the visibility requirements at the site access. The speed surveys and corresponding visibility requirements are agreed with DCC.
- There have been no reported accidents in the most recent 5 years period in the vicinity of the site access, or the school on the north side of the A57.
- The site is in an accessible location; within an acceptable walking and cycling distance of shops and services in Glossop, Simmondley, Gamesley and Brookfield, amongst others. There are also bus and train services within a short distance from the site, with railway stations in both Dinting and Glossop. The buses and trains jointly provide direct connections to the cities of Manchester and Sheffield, and local centres including Hadfield, Hattersley, Ashton-under-Lyne, Stalybridge, Mottram, Hollingworth and Hyde.
- In the busiest hour of the day, the development related traffic movements will be equivalent to an average of 1 vehicle every 2 minutes exiting the site in the AM peak hour and 1 vehicle every 2 minutes entering the site in the PM peak hour. The entering traffic in the AM peak hour, and the exiting traffic in the PM peak hour, will be around an average of 1 vehicle every 5 minutes.
- The development traffic will have no material impact on the local highway network in terms of highway safety or highway capacity, and there will be no queues or delays at the proposed site access.

- A Travel Plan [CD 2.36] will be implemented as part of the development proposals that will encourage future residents to minimise their single occupancy journeys by private car.

- 3.3 It can be noted that the longstanding Highways England project to provide a Mottram Bypass has a Development Consent Order that will see a new section of highway created linking the A57 west of Glossop and the M67 at Junction 4 in Hattersley. At the time the appeal was lodged, the DCO was the subject of a Judicial Review, which inevitably leads to some uncertainty over the scheme being provided. However, in April 2024 it was determined that all challenges to the scheme had been considered and dismissed and that there were no further obstacles to the scheme being commenced.
- 3.4 The impacts of the bypass are predicted to be peak hour journey time savings between Glossop and the M67 of 8-10 minutes in the eastbound direction and 5-6 minutes in the westbound direction. Whilst existing roads in the area will see benefits in the reduction of queues and delays, the scheme is predicted to increase traffic on some roads in the study area, as traffic diverts from other less suitable routes.
- 3.5 The most recent Transport Assessment to support the Mottram bypass [CD 6.20] shows cost savings in journey times and vehicle operating costs of £181m, and improved journey time reliability. Other economic benefits of the scheme are predicted to be £97m.
- 3.6 I have considered the effect of the scheme in the context of the appeal scheme. The existing bottlenecks at the junction of the A57/A628 and the Mottram crossroads (A57/A6174) that will be relieved by the proposed scheme will more than off-set the increase in traffic.
- 3.7 Whilst the Highways England Transport Assessment [CD 6.20] doesn't include specific junction capacity assessments at the Dinting Vale junctions with Glossop Road to the west, or Simmondley Lane to the east, of the appeal site, the overall journey time savings demonstrate the benefits of the scheme to traffic movements overall.
- 3.8 The Technical Note [CD 2.11] accompanying the Appeal proposals did include a review of the predicted traffic changes associated with the bypass at the nearby junctions on Dinting Lane with Simmondley Lane and Glossop Road. Whilst these junctions will suffer from some additional delays as a result of the Mottram Bypass scheme, the development related traffic is insignificant in this context and does not materially impact on the queues and delays that would otherwise exist at these junctions.

4.0 THIRD PARTY CONCERNS

4.1 The vast majority of the objections submitted by third parties repeat the original reasons for refusal set out by HPBC, and in highway and traffic terms these relate to two items:

- The position of the site access
- The potential for the Adderley Place public right of way to be used as a rat run by development related traffic.

Position of the Site Access

4.2 The position of the site access was dictated by the allocation of the site in the Local Plan. The supporting text for the allocation states that '*the site will require substantial access improvements on to the A57*'. There are no other suitable frontages to a public highway that would be capable of serving the scale of development proposed.

4.3 It should be noted that my client has acquired additional land to that envisaged by the allocation, in order to achieve an improved access arrangement. This additional land was essential in order to achieve an acceptable standard of access, since the frontage to the A57 Dinting Vale that is shown in the Local Plan is too narrow to achieve the necessary carriageway width, footways and junction radii. The Local Plan frontage is also shown to directly abut the access to 41 Dinting Vale, and that private access would have been detrimentally affected by a site access in that location; emerging on the radius of the site access.

4.4 Having determined that the broad location of the access is effectively fixed by the Local Plan, the geometry and visibility of the junction are established by guidance documents, including that used by DCC in assessing new development proposals, and Manual for Streets which is the national guidance document for roads in built up areas.

4.5 The guidance documents are consistent in respect of:

- Requiring a 5.5m wide carriageway to serve a residential development of this scale and type,
- Requiring junction radii typically around 6m, and
- Requiring visibility splays that correspond with the speed of traffic approaching the access location.

4.6 The Design Speed¹ of traffic approaching the access was found to be less than 30mph, on this 30mph section of road. This is a result of local conditions, which include a speed camera in the vicinity of the site, parked cars that narrow the carriageway and induce lower speeds, and a traffic signal controlled pedestrian crossing close to the access.

4.7 The April 2023 TN [CD 2.11] confirmed that the visibility splays required at the site access are 38m in the southerly direction and 31m in the northerly direction. These were determined from a 7-day speed survey that confirmed the following design speeds:

85th Percentile Design Speed of the A57 Dinting Vale in the Vicinity of the Proposed Site Access	
Northbound	28.7mph
Southbound	25.3mph

4.8 The proposed site access arrangement provides the standard 2.4 x 43m visibility splays that are required for traffic travelling at 30mph, and hence these exceed the minimum requirement based upon a 7-day speed survey undertaken in 2022.

4.9 Based upon the above, the site access proposals meet or exceed the normal requirements for safety and capacity considerations.

4.10 The objectors believe that activity arising from the close proximity of the school on the north side of Dinting Lane, results in the access being poorly located.

4.11 In sustainability terms, it should be encouraged for housing to be built in close proximity to schools. This offers the optimum opportunity to allow pupils to walk to school, and correspondingly reduces the need for children to be taken to school by car. Most schools throughout the country cause some form of disruption to the flow of traffic at the start and finish times of the school day. Much of the congestion around schools is caused, and simultaneously experienced, by the parents of the children who are taken to school by car, as they slow and manoeuvre into and out of parking spaces. Many other drivers who travel the same route each day can vary their journeys to avoid any particularly congested times.

¹ The design speed is the speed that 85% of vehicles do not exceed.

- 4.12 Congestion around schools is generally short-lived and as such is not used as a reason to resist otherwise acceptable developments. The short-lived timespan is typically around 20 minutes in the morning drop-off period and 20 minutes around the afternoon pick-up period. Whilst the morning drop-off period can conflict with peak commuting periods, in the afternoon the peak commuting period is much later than the school finish time and conflict is reduced.
- 4.13 The now withdrawn reason for refusal stated that the proposed access is in close proximity to a school and therefore presents an unacceptable risk to road safety. In assessing this reason, there is no planning or highway policy that restricts junctions from being close to schools. Indeed, by locating schools in urban areas where they serve the catchment area, there are inevitably junctions close to many schools and this is not a problem in principle.
- 4.14 In this case, the proposed junction has been demonstrated to meet all safety and capacity considerations for a junction of this type and there is no inherent safety problem to justify any concerns.
- 4.15 It should be noted that the appeal site access is some 60m distant from the school's pedestrian access, and some 75m from the pedestrian crossing that serves the school and the adjacent church. Between the site access and the pedestrian crossing there are a combination of parking restrictions associated with bus stop bays, school zone restrictions and pedestrian crossing approach zigzag restrictions. If on-street parking were considered be a problem around the school, then the Highway Authority has the ability to provide further restrictions to improve road safety, although this is not something that is considered necessary at this time.
- 4.16 Overall, it should be concluded that the site access is located in the broad location envisaged by the Local Plan and meets all current design standards for safety and capacity. There is no restriction on junctions being located close to schools, and moreover, a residential access close to a school is more likely to lead to children walking to school rather than being taken by car.

[Adderley Place Vehicle Restriction](#)

- 4.17 Whilst the original reason for refusal relating to Adderley Place being used as a rat-run has now been withdrawn, it had always been the intention to deal with the matter of designing a vehicle restriction by a condition on the grant of planning permission. However, in the time period between the refusal and preparing evidence for the Inquiry, it has been possible to provide more details of a scheme in consultation with the public rights of way officer at DCC.

- 4.18 The details of the agreed scheme are attached to my evidence as **Appendix 1**. The scheme shows a combination of bollards, signs and traffic islands, which together maintain all access to existing properties along Adderley Place to and from Simmondley Lane, but prevent vehicles from the proposed development from being able to turn into or out of the eastern section of Adderley Place.
- 4.19 Without the ability to travel by car directly from Simmondley Lane to the new development road, or vice versa, the opportunity for vehicles rat-running is diminished, as had always been intended.
- 4.20 Whilst some residents have expressed scepticism about the success of the proposed vehicle restriction, perhaps through vandalism, the physical restrictions, supported by signs, demonstrate that a scheme is possible, and even if refinement of the scheme were to be considered desirable, a matter that can be addressed by a condition of planning permission cannot be a reason for refusal.

Other Highway Matters Raised

- 4.21 In addition to the reasons for refusal originally put forward by the Council and subsequently withdrawn, there have been some additional issues raised by third parties, relating to:
- the gradient of the site access and its compatibility with accessibility by sustainable modes of travel
 - the site access design requiring a mini roundabout or ghost island type right turning lane.
- 4.22 The gradient of the access road has been looked at in detail during the planning application process, as set out in the attached statement of Richard Nicholas at **Appendix 2** to my evidence. There are fixed levels at the site access on Dinting Vale and the site is effectively on a plateau above that. Also, at the top of the slope from Dinting Vale is a major gas pipeline that requires a minimum level of cover where the new road crosses it.
- 4.23 Whilst a section of the access road leading to the developed area has a gradient of 10% (1 in 10), this is not unusual in both Glossop and the High Peak generally. In this case, there is no development directly fronting the section of road that has a gradient of 10% and the majority of the population will be able to negotiate this gradient in any event. Also, in this case, the public right of way along Adderley Place is available for pedestrians to reach bus stops and walk towards Glossop, whilst avoiding the steep section of the access road, hence accessibility guidelines are met by the development proposal using this alternative route to the public highway for pedestrians.

- 4.24 The need for a mini roundabout or ghost island type right turning lane at the site access are dismissed by the capacity analysis showing that there would be no queues or delays arising from the use of the simple priority junction.
- 4.25 It has been established by the TA [CD. 1.16] and TN [CD 2.11] supporting the transport impacts of the development that the levels of traffic at the site access would be low, with no more than an average of 1 vehicle every 2 minutes in any direction of flow using the access in the busiest hours of the day.
- 4.26 Mini roundabouts are used to increase capacity at existing constrained junctions in urban areas where traffic flows on each arm are relatively balanced. In this case, there is no need to increase the capacity of the site access. Also, the traffic flows would be so low on the site access that traffic travelling along the A57 would become aware of their being very little traffic on the side road and correspondingly become accustomed to not stopping at the give way line, which then increases the chances of accidents when traffic does enter or exit the site access.
- 4.27 Similarly, a ghost island type right turning lane is used where there is a high number of right turning vehicle into a site and those vehicles cause a queue on the main road if there is insufficient space within the carriageway for other vehicles to pass. Again, in this case, the very low number of right turning vehicles into the site would not cause any material queues on the A57 whilst they wait to turn into the site. The junction capacity model was undertaken using industry standard software, and was based upon a right turning vehicle blocking the southbound lane of the A57. The model demonstrated that there would be no queues or delays at the site access and hence a dedicated right turning lane could not be justified on the A57.

5.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 I am instructed in this matter by Wain Homes to provide highway, traffic and transport advice in connection with their proposals to construct 92 dwellings on land served from the A57 Dinting Vale, Glossop.
- 5.2 Whilst there are no longer any highway, traffic or transport related reasons for refusal in connection with this proposed development, the Council originally refused planning permission with two highway related reasons cited in the decision notice. These, now withdrawn reasons for refusal, have been the focus of objections by third parties and relate to:
- i. The position of the site access in close proximity to a school
 - ii. The potential for an existing pedestrian public right of way, and private vehicle right of way, serving dwellings at Adderley Place from becoming a rat-run between Simmondley Lane and the development.
- 5.3 Firstly, dealing with the position of the access, it must be noted that the position of the access was dictated by the allocation of the site in the Local Plan. It should also be noted that my client has acquired additional land to that envisaged by the allocation, in order to achieve an improved access arrangement in the same location.
- 5.4 The proposed access meets both national and local design standards for a junction of this type and the scale of development, in terms of both geometry and visibility requirements.
- 5.5 The development related traffic would not exceed an average of 1 vehicle every 2 minutes in any direction of travel in the busiest hour of the day. This level of traffic can be easily accommodated at the site access, with industry standard software for undertaking capacity assessments confirming that there would be no queues or delays associated with the access.
- 5.6 Most schools throughout the country cause some form of disruption to the flow of traffic at the start and finish times of the day. However, the problems are short-lived and cannot reasonably be used to resist otherwise acceptable developments.
- 5.7 There are no policies in national or local guidance in relation to restricting accesses in close proximity to schools. Indeed, providing residential developments in close proximity to schools should be supported to encourage more walking to school, rather than more remote developments that can lead to children being dropped off and picked up by car.

- 5.8 The school benefits from a traffic signal controlled pedestrian crossing and there is no history of accidents in the vicinity of the proposed access or the school. The crossing location is some 75m from the proposed access and there is no interaction between the two features.
- 5.9 Turning to the matter of the potential for development related vehicles to use Adderley Place as a rat-run, it had always been the intention to deal with this matter by a condition of planning permission, in the knowledge that a suitable solution is achievable. This was supported by the professional officers of the Council.
- 5.10 However, in the time between the refusal of planning permission and the preparation of evidence for the Inquiry, it has been possible to agree more details of a scheme with the public rights of way officer at DCC. These details are appended to my evidence and demonstrate that continued vehicular rights of way to the dwellings at Adderley Place can be maintained, whilst also preventing vehicles from being able to turn to or from the proposed development road and the eastern section of Adderley Place. The scheme of works includes both physical restrictions and supporting signs.
- 5.11 In terms of additional matters raised by third parties, these relate to inclusive design due to the gradient of the access road from the A57, and the site access junction type.
- 5.12 Inclusive design seeks to ensure that access for all users is available to new development proposals. Whilst the majority of users will be able to negotiate the site access road gradient, for those with more restricted mobility issues there is an opportunity to use the eastern section of Adderley Place to walk between Simmondley Lane and the development site.
- 5.13 It should be recognised that both Glossop, and the High Peak as a whole, has steep gradients in parts and the gradient of the access road is not unusual in this context. Also, the gradient is dictated by the level of the A57 and the plateau of the development site and was a consideration as part of the allocation of this site in the Local Plan.
- 5.14 The site access junction type meets the normal level of expectation for a development of the scale and type proposed. The junction type is dictated by highway capacity and highway safety. In this case both elements are met by the site access design. The suggestions of a mini roundabout or a ghost island type right turning lane are not required to achieve an acceptable level of capacity, and a mini roundabout in this location would potentially raise safety concerns due to the low traffic flows on the side road, and vehicles on the main road becoming accustomed to not stopping at the give way line.

5.15 Overall, my investigations of the highway, traffic and transport aspects of the proposals have led me to conclude that there are no related reasons to resist the development as proposed, and this is a view shared by both the Local Planning and Highway Authorities.