

Land at Bradley Hall Farm, Grappenhall

Statement at Public Inquiry

Planning Appeal Reference: APP/M0655/V/22/3311877

SCP Reference: 220632/S01

Date of Statement : 10th October 2023

1. My name is Mark Devenish; I am Senior Associate Director at SCP, a transport planning and infrastructure design consultancy. I am a Chartered Engineer in Transport Planning and a Fellow of the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation (CIHT).
2. I have over 20 years' experience of the highway and transportation aspects of a wide range of development proposals and have advised various parties in that capacity.
3. I am appointed by Mr and Mrs Hickman in relation to the highway works included as part of the appeal proposals in the vicinity of their land to the south of the A50 Cliff Lane.
4. The proposed highway works comprise the signalisation and relocation of the A50 Cliff Lane / Grappenhall Lane roundabout to the west and the partial signalisation and introduction of additional lanes at the Lymm Interchange dumbbell roundabout, facilitated by the widening of the section of the A50 Cliff Lane in between the two roundabouts.
5. Representations were submitted to the appeal by Mr John Coxon of Emery Planning on behalf of Mr and Mrs Hickman including a Technical Note prepared by SCP. This included an extract of the improvement scheme showing the proposed kerb-line of the widening of the A50 between the two roundabouts in relation to the highway boundary.
6. This demonstrated that the new kerb-line on the southern side of the road will sit immediately adjacent to the boundary between the adopted highway and the land under the ownership of Mr and Mrs Hickman.
7. As a result, the scheme does not provide space to allow a footway or adopted highway verge to be constructed on the southern side of the A50 Cliff Lane, where usually at least a 1-2m verge would be present on a high speed major road such as this.

8. Furthermore it is unclear whether even the width of the kerb itself can be accommodated immediately to the west of the access road to Mr and Mrs Hickman's land where the proposed kerb-line appears to be upon the highway boundary.
9. Whilst the appellant has advised that the scheme has been agreed with the local highway authority in the response provided in the transport Proof of Evidence (Appendix AV010 – Response to Interested Parties); the design does not appear to have been considered in sufficient detail as to how it would be constructed in this location, raising concerns in relation to the following:-
 - Deliverability / Buildability – it is not clear how the existing services that run along the southern side of the A50 will be accommodated given the lack of footway / highway verge, whilst there is no scope to accommodate necessary street furniture such as street lighting columns or signage. In addition, the lack of space between the proposed kerb-line and highway boundary does not provide any scope to address level differences. Each of these issues question the deliverability of the improvement scheme including:
 - The width of a kerb including backing is typically in the region of 300mm, however the proposed kerb-line is directly upon the highway boundary meaning there is no space for this to be installed.
 - The installation of the kerb without any verge would be unusual on such a high speed major route, leaving vehicles travelling close to the boundary fence and trees.
 - The construction of the highway in such close proximity to the boundary may affect trees outside of the highway, in addition to those present in the existing verge.
 - Signage and street lighting columns require an absolute minimum clearance of 450mm from the carriageway or often more for higher order roads such as Grappenhall Lane in this location. This clearance is not available on the section of the highway to the west of the access to the land and adjoining uses.

- Highway Safety – the removal of the existing verge would significantly reduce the achievable levels of visibility for vehicles emerging from the existing lane, which currently serves Mr and Mrs Hickmans property and other residential dwellings / agricultural uses along the lane. The proposed works result in the available levels of visibility falling well below the required standards for the design speed of the road, raising highway safety concerns.
 - Pedestrian Safety - although the existing verge is not surfaced it does provide a space for pedestrians from the access to wait before crossing to the footway on the north side of the carriageway. It's removal as part of the widening scheme would result in there being no refuge from the highway for any pedestrians walking along the lane whatsoever.
 - Accessibility. – the lack of footway / cycleway as part of the scheme raises accessibility concerns and no connection is provided to the proposed footway / cycleway facility to the west. This presents a missed opportunity to provide a direct pedestrian and cycle link to the large Plot 2 as shown on the illustrative Masterplan.
10. In conclusion the highway works proposed to mitigate the impact of the development are not deliverable, would raise safety concerns for existing users of Cliff Lane and fail to take up an opportunity to promote active travel modes to a section of the site.