DEVONSHIRE AVENUE/ALBERT DRIVE JUNCTION IMPROVEMENTS
SHEERWATER, WOKING

Transport Statement

March 2012

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Mayer Brown (MB) has been commissioned by Woking Borough Council (WBC) to prepare and submit a planning application in respect of proposed improvements to the junction of Devonshire Avenue and Albert Drive in Woking. The proposals will also create a new access into the Bishop David Brown School and rationalise the school's parking arrangements to accommodate this.

1.2 This Transport Statement (TS) forms part of the planning application and provides details of and assesses the proposals in transport terms.

1.3 The site is shown in relation to the local and regional highway networks in Figures 1.1 and 1.2 of this report.

1.4 Sheerwater is recognised as a Priority Place by the Surrey Strategic Partnership and in Woking Borough Council's Local Development Framework. The area contains some 1,700 residential properties and has the largest concentration of Business Parks in the Borough. Access arrangements are an obstacle to securing investment in or full occupation of the Business Parks. Improved access arrangements and enhancement of the environment of Albert Drive are considered essential to further the economic vitality of this part of the Borough. They would also improve movements in and out of the school which plays a major role in the life of the local community.

1.5 As part of a separate planning application, Mayer Brown has previously provided Woking Borough Council with highway and transportation advice on the provision of a link road to provide better vehicular access to Sheerwater and to improve the environment of the residential areas of Eve Road and Arnold Road. This application has recently been granted planning consent by Woking Borough Council.

1.6 The Devonshire Avenue / Albert Drive junction lies directly to the south of the Bishop David Brown School. It currently takes the form of a mini-roundabout. Albert Drive is the main route through the Sheerwater area, linking from Monument Road to the southwest through to the A245 Sheerwater Road to the northeast.

1.7 The proposals comprise the re-design the roundabout in order to provide improved access into the school which is a major community facility and within the Sheerwater Priority Place.

1.8 This report sets out details of the improved roundabout design, which provides higher capacity, lower speeds and creates a new access into the Bishop David Brown School. A very similar junction arrangement was granted permission in September 2005 as part of a wider application to create a new sport centre at the school (WBC application reference PLAN/2005/0735). The 2005 application was supported by a Transportation Assessment (TA) prepared by MB. This current report updates and builds on this work. A copy of the 2005 TA is included as Appendix A.

1.9 The remainder of this report is divided into five sections:

- Site Location and Existing Conditions
- Planning History
- Scheme Proposals
- Traffic Impact
- Summary and Conclusions

2.0 SITE LOCATION AND EXISTING CONDITIONS

2.1 The Devonshire Avenue / Albert Drive junction lies immediately to the south of the Bishop David Brown School in the Sheerwater area of Woking in Surrey. The junction currently takes the form of a mini-roundabout.

2.2 The Sheerwater Area is bounded to the north by the Basingstoke Canal and by the Woking – London rail line to the south.

2.3 Devonshire Avenue is essentially a residential road, but leads west onto a small shopping parade on Dartmouth Avenue. This forms part of a recommended, signed cycle route into Woking. Cycle facilities are largely on-road along this particular section.

2.4 Devonshire Avenue generally has a 5.5m carriageway, with 2-2.5m footways on either side. There are double yellow line parking restrictions in the vicinity of the junction, with a mixture on frontage access and on-street parking along its remaining length.

2.5 Devonshire Avenue is subject to a 30 mph speed limit and has street lighting provision.

2.6 Albert Drive is the principal route though the Sheerwater area. It leads from Monument Road to the southwest through to the A245 Sheerwater Road to the northwest. Monument Road leads to the Six Crossroads Roundabout, which essentially provides a link to the strategic highway network, being the main route between Woking and the M25 motorway.

2.7 Albert Drive is subject to a 30 mph speed limit and has street lighting provision along its entire length. It is subject to traffic calming measures to the east of the Bishop David Brown School, taking the form of horizontal chicane style arrangements. Directly to the west of the site, there is a toucan crossing providing pedestrians and cyclists the opportunity to cross Albert Drive.

2.8 Sheerwater has a high concentration of business units, but the existing links into the area are poor and this adversely affects investment into these units.

2.9 A separate application for a new link road into the Sheerwater Area has recently been consented by WBC.

3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

3.1 As briefly set out in the introduction, a similar junction arrangement was granted planning permission in September 2005. The 2005 application was principally for the creation of a new community sports centre at the school, with the junction works designed to improve access to the site, whilst also creating wider benefits for the Sheerwater Area.

3.2 Whilst this permission has now lapsed, it is important to note that the junction design was considered acceptable at the time. A copy of Mayer Brown's TA for the 2005 scheme is included as Appendix A.

3.3 SCC raised no highways objections to the 2005 scheme.

3.4 The previously proposed sport centre and associated facilities at the school were predicted to attract a worst case of 176 vehicular arrivals and 173 departures within the weekday evening peak. The modelling contained within the supporting TA demonstrated that the proposed junction design would operate well within its maximum theoretical capacity with these traffic flows.

4.0 SCHEME PROPOSALS

4.1 The application proposals are to improve the existing mini roundabout at the junction of Devonshire Avenue and Arnold Road to create a larger roundabout. This will also allow a new access to be created into the school. The school car park will be rationalised in order to accommodate these improvements.

4.2 The school's existing vehicular egress will be converted to a new traffic-free pedestrian and cycle route to and from the school.

4.3 A new pedestrian / cycle route will also be created on the eastern part of the site to link directly to the controlled pedestrian crossing on Albert Drive.

4.4 A plan of the junction is appended to this report (drawing WBCBDB.1/11A), with the wider car park proposals shown in drawing WBCBDB.1/13A.

4.5 In addition to the capacity benefits, the improved junction is intended to have road safety benefits, reducing traffic speeds and accident risk at the junction and improving pedestrian and cycle access to and from the school.

4.6 The proposals have been subject to a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit carried out by SCC. This is included as Appendix B.

4.7 MB has prepared a Designer's Response to the Audit. This is included as Appendix C. Drawing WBCBDB.1/11A shows the application scheme proposals, which incorporates changes to the design made following the Safety Audit.

4.8 The design incorporates pedestrian and cycle facilities. Routes are provided from within the school to existing bus facilities and a controlled pedestrian crossing on Albert Road. The school access has been designed to accommodate coaches.

4.9 The proposed roundabout can accommodate HGVs if necessary (although this is anticipated to be infrequent). Swept path analysis plots are included as drawing MBTK120320 appended to this report.

4.10 Whilst the school car park will be rationalised and reorganised to accommodate the new access, there are no proposals for any new buildings within the school as part of this application.

5.0 TRAFFIC IMPACT

5.1 As set out above, the proposals are only to improve the existing junction, school access arrangements and car park. No new developments are proposed that would be likely to attract additional traffic. Traffic flows will therefore not change from their existing levels.

5.2 Whilst there have been some minor design updates, the proposed junction design is very similar to that proposed as part of the previously consented 2005 scheme. Certainly in terms of those elements of the design that could affect junction capacity, the two designs are considered identical.

5.3 As part of the 2005 application, the previous junction design was subject to capacity testing. This testing included an allowance for a significant increase in the traffic levels associated with the school (circa 550 movements in the PM peak). Given that the current proposals will not increase traffic flows, this modelling can be regarded as a highly robust test of the junction's capacity and hence no further modelling has been undertaken.

5.4 The capacity testing carried out for the previous scheme demonstrated that the junction would operate well within capacity, even with the significantly higher flows associated with the school. This conclusion was accepted by SCC.

5.5 It is therefore reasonable to conclude that the proposed junction will have a significant benefit on the capacity of the local highway network, and also allow for future growth in the area.

6.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Mayer Brown (MB) has been commissioned by Woking Borough Council (WBC) to prepare this planning application in respect of proposed improvements to the junction of Devonshire Avenue and Albert Drive in Woking. The proposals will also create a new access into the Bishop David Brown School and rationalise the school's parking arrangement to accommodate this.

6.2 Sheerwater is recognised as a Priority Place by the Surrey Strategic Partnership and in Woking Borough Council's Local Development Plan. Access arrangements are an obstacle to securing investment in or full occupation of the Business Parks.

6.3 A separate planning application for the provision of a link road into Sheerwater from Monument Way is currently being considered by Woking Borough Council.

6.4 The proposals under consideration are intended to provide a highways capacity and road safety benefit to the area, providing continuity of access though Sheerwater.

6.5 The proposals are based on those previously consented as part of a wider planning application in 2005.

6.6 This report shows that the modelling carried out in support of the 2005 application robustly demonstrates the proposed junction will have adequate capacity to support increased traffic levels in the Sheerwater Area.