

Miss N. Allan
Trinity Chambers
By Email
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06/01/2022

DARLINGTON STATION GATEWAY - COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER - WAVERLEY TERRACE, DARLINGTON

Dynamic Transport Planning Ltd is instructed by Mr P. Million and Mr A. Watson to undertake a high-level review of the proposals that form part of Darlington Borough Council's CPO made in relation to proposed works at Darlington Railway Station and the associated implications with our client's land.

The location of our client's property and the railway station are shown below at **Figure 1**:

Figure 1 – Site Location Plan



Darlington Station Gateway - Development Proposals

The CPO proposals are presented as 'Darlington Station Gateway improvements to Victoria Road and Park Lane for improved transport interchange facilities' and the area of interest within the wider CPO area relates to the works on the western side of the station.

The works to the western side of the station were subject to a planning application (application reference: 21/00691/DC) which was approved in October 2021. These works relate to 'highway and ancillary infrastructure works in the vicinity of the western access to Darlington Railway Station' and are focussed around improving the highway and public realm around the junction of Park Lane and Victoria Road.

It is these works that would require the compulsory purchase of our client's property, which is listed as 'Plot 43' within the application.

Rather than these works seeking to improve the Park Lane/ Victoria Road junction, they now propose to link Park Lane directly through to Pensbury Street, realigning the northern section of Park Lane and passing directly through our client's property.

During earlier consultation phases of this scheme that our client had previously been consulted on, the property in question was not proposed to be required as part of the works and would have been left unimpacted.

This earlier scheme was not based upon a design concept seeking to connect Park Lane directly to Pensbury Street, but a design concept that sought to improve the existing substandard junction of Park Lane with Victoria Road. This would have been achieved by increasing the centre line radius of Park Lane and Victoria Road thereby improving the sweep of the bend, achieved by the demolition of the former Hogans Public House, which is understood to already be within the AAs ownership.

As part of the current proposals, Waverley Terrace is now proposed to be closed off from access to Park Lane with a turning head located on our client's land. This was never considered a requirement during the consultation stage nor in any of the four alternative options considered in the review referred to below.

Implications of Proposed Development

It is the case that the applicant has now rejected the earlier scheme and they are suggesting that this is the only option available to achieve the scheme objectives and therefore requires our client's land.

We would reiterate that the concept design of the current proposals, linking Park Lane directly to Pensbury Street rather than Victoria Road, misses the primary aim of the scheme. Having reviewed the proposals it does appear that other options are available and should not have been prematurely discounted.

On the planning application site, the application document is present that includes a number of seemingly rejected options which consider multiple different individual elements separately across these options. An alternative combination of elements across the various options would appear to provide a solution that seems to have been prematurely discounted and would in my view better achieve the overall aim of improving Park Lane and Victoria Road rather than Pensbury Street.

Application document SD31 'Gateway West Additional Appendices' Appendix D presents these four options. As an example, element 3 of option 1 appears to be shown as acceptable and compatible with other options, but is then not included or combined with the other options.

A further example would be the eastbound bus stop location on Option 4 appears acceptable and is in a similar location to the existing bus stop. This is reinforced by the distance from the station entrance to the southbound bus stop now included in the CPO application proposals.

The issue raised at Option 4 Issue 3 regarding the visibility across the southbound bus stop would be overcome by locating the bus stop where it is now proposed in the CPO application scheme. This would then leave a number of options for a crossing point such as that shown at Option 3 and 4 to provide a direct connection to the station entrance. With the 20mph speed limit which appears to be proposed and we agree this would mean that issues such as forward visibility around the bend of the junction would comply with design standards (despite being listed as a potential concern at POE paragraph 5.1.16) and would also be a significant improvement over the existing sub-standard visibility in this location.

The overall purpose of the scheme is to improve Park Lane and Victoria Road and the current proposals again do not aid this at the new proposed priority 'T' junction, as illustrated by their own tracking plans at Appendix DC2 of Sanderson Associates Proof of Evidence (Drawing number 11789-005 Rev B), which shows that by reason of the small radius provided at the revised location of the Park Lane/Victoria Road junction would require buses to cross over into both lanes in order to navigate the bend. This means buses approaching from Park Lane would need to wait against the priority arrangement of the junction to allow any vehicle approaching (not just larger vehicles) to turn right from Victoria Road to Park Lane.

We understand that a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit has been undertaken but this document appears to only look at the General Arrangement plan for the scheme and makes no reference, and therefore appears to have had no consideration, to any vehicle tracking plans. This is a concern in light of the vehicle tracking plans and raises concerns there hasn't been full consideration of all the relevant safety aspects.

At paragraph 5.1.16 of the document cited the above reasons are given for why this plot is required to be CPO as part of the scheme and it discusses a 'requirement for having two bus stops on Park Lane'. However, the existing situation is that one of those bus stops is already on Victoria Road and some of the earlier design options considered Victoria Road for one of the stops. This paragraph also suggests that technical aspects of the earlier options to improve the existing Park Lane/Victoria Road junction have not been considered in full detail on highways matters.

Summary

Darlington Borough Council have made a CPO as part of their development proposals for the Darlington Station Gateway scheme. As part of the works proposed within the western gateway element, this includes the realignment of the northern section of Park Lane to cross through our client's property and as such the applicant are seeking to compulsorily acquire the site.

The premise of the scheme is set out as to improve the highway and urban realm along Park Lane and Victoria Road, primarily to improve non-car access to the stations western entrance. What the scheme does is provide significant improvements to Pensbury Street and actually makes manoeuvring, particularly for bus services, more difficult at the junction of Park Lane and Victoria Road.

Overall, we do not believe that the scheme proposed has fully considered the alternative options available which would not impact our client's land. It would also appear that the scheme has departed from its overall design concept and contributes negatively to the form of the junction of Park Lane/Victoria Road, which is the core of the scheme and could be better delivered whilst also avoiding the need to make use of our client's property.

Yours Sincerely,



Gavin Snowball
BSc(Hons) MSc MCIHT MTPS MSoRSA HE RSA Cert Comp
Director
Dynamic Transport Planning Ltd