



13<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Dear Mr. Khan,

**Friends Green Farm, Friends Green, Damask Green Road, Weston, Hitchin SG4 7BU – Highways Response Note**

This Highways Response Note has been prepared by EAS to provide additional information to Hertfordshire County Council regarding the proposed redevelopment at Friends Green Farm, Friends Green, Damask Green Road, Weston, Hitchin SG4 7BU. A location plan is contained at **Appendix A**.

EAS previously submitted a Transport Technical Note to accompany the planning application at the above address, which concerns the *“removal of condition 2 of planning permission 23/01259/FP granted 25.03.2024 for use of buildings as (Sui Generis) car sales and (Use Class B2 general industrial) car servicing (as amended by details submitted 16th January 2024)”* (REF: 24/01434/S73). Hertfordshire Highways responded with comments refusing the proposals to remove planning condition 2 of the previous planning permission (23/01259/FP). Comments received from Hertfordshire Highways are contained at **Appendix B**.

Subsequently, this Highways Response Note has been produced to challenge assertions made by the reviewing Highway Officer, to allow Hertfordshire to approve the development.

For ease of reference, all relevant HCC comments will be quoted in italics, and the EAS response will follow in standard (non-italic) font.

**85<sup>th</sup> Percentile Speed Calculation and Methodology**

*“The TTN states that a “two weeklong ATC speed surveys were undertaken along Damask Green Road, between Monday 3rd June and Sunday 9th June 2024.”, and from that northbound 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed of 31mph was recorded at the southern site, requiring a visibility splay length of 67m; while a southbound 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed of 37mph was recorded at the northern site, requiring an 89m visibility splay.”*

*Damask Green Road features a single lane carriageway, speed limit of 60mph.*

*DMRB: Design Speed of Major Road (kph/mph) - ‘y’ Distance (m)*

- 50/31 – 70
- 60/37 - 90
- 100/60 – 215”

The Highway officer has questioned the calculated y-distance lengths of the visibility splays depicted at the southern access. 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speeds were calculated based on methods outlined in DMRB CD 185. In this instance, 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speeds were calculated using formulas extracted from the SSD equation, outlined in DMRB CD 185. Based on this, 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speeds outlined above were obtained and therefore visibility splay distances were calculated using these speeds.

It is understood that the reviewing highway officer has rounded up recorded 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speeds and is requesting that visibility splays of 90m for the northern splay and 70m for the southern splay should be shown. While this is not usually how visibility splay lengths are calculated, with 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speeds taken as a ‘value’ (i.e. not rounded up), in this instance the original visibility splay drawing submitted with the TTN

has been updated to depict that the requested visibility splay lengths are achievable at the southern site access. The updated visibility splays drawing is contained at **Appendix C**.

*“It should be noted that given the speed limit is 60mph and the stretch of the road fronting the southern vehicle access is relatively long and straight, there are no physical measures to restrict speeds other than driver behaviour, it should be further noted that vehicle speeds were recorded at between 43 and 50mph within the legal speed limit, therefore the only relaxation would be visibility splays commensurate to 50mph.”*

While it is acknowledged that the speed limit enforced along Damask Green Road is 60mph, and that the road is long and straight in places, the recorded average vehicle speeds of 37mph (southbound) and 31mph (northbound) reflect 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speeds, which are in line with DMRB requirements for assessing road safety and required visibility splay length. The 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed is used to determine the actual speeds at which most drivers feel comfortable and safe travelling, rather than focusing solely on the speed limit or the behaviour of outliers.

The recorded 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speeds of 37mph and 31mph suggest that, despite the road’s layout and lack of physical measures to reduce speed, most drivers are traveling well below the 60mph limit. This is exactly why the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed is collected—it reflects typical driver behaviour under natural conditions, giving a more realistic basis for determining safety measures, such as visibility splays.

Designing visibility splays commensurate with the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed is in line with best practices and ensures that safety provisions are appropriately tailored to the actual driving conditions. The goal is to provide a safe environment for most drivers, and therefore design decisions cannot be based on the occasional reckless driver who might exceed reasonable and/or average speeds. By focusing on the typical behaviour of drivers, a balance can be achieved between safety and practicality without overengineering based on outliers.

## Northern ATC Location

*“It is unclear the purpose of the northern ATC which was placed approx 250m north of the proposed southern vehicle access. An ATC should have been placed just a few meters north of the proposed southern vehicle access.”*

The location of the northern ATC was deliberately chosen to represent a worst-case scenario—specifically targeting the section of the road where vehicle speeds would likely be at their highest, given the roads straightness. This approach ensures that the data collected reflects the most challenging conditions from a road safety and design perspective. In essence, the location of the ATC was chosen specifically to capture the maximum potential speeds, ensuring that speed survey analysis is robust, thereby justifying the proposed visibility splays and ensuring they are adequate.

By placing the ATC at a point where speeds are expected to be the highest, visibility splays are therefore depicted to account for the fastest average speeds that are reasonably encountered on that stretch of road. This method ensures that any recommendations or design relaxations are based on a conservative approach, ensuring that even in the worst-case scenario, the safety of road users is prioritised.

## Second Vehicular Access

*“Local Highway Authorities (LHA’s) do not support a second vehicle access serving a single development. This is because more than one, unjustified, vehicle accesses serving a development create more potential conflict points between vehicles, the HA aims to reduce conflict points or not allow them to occur unnecessarily.”*

Whilst Hertfordshire County Council follows a range of transport and development planning policies that may influence whether a development can have two vehicular accesses, there is no single overarching policy specifically prohibiting two vehicular accesses for developments.

New guidance, recently published by Hertfordshire County Council (Highway Place and Movement Planning and Design Guidance) provides recommendations and standards for access points to developments. These standards aim to ensure that accesses are safe, avoid congestion, and meet traffic

flow requirements. The guidance outlines that having two vehicular accesses may be considered based on safety, road capacity, and local traffic conditions.

As previously outlined, details were provided in the previously submitted TTN stating that there have been no recorded traffic incidents along the section of Damask Green Road where the southern access is proposed. Visibility splay drawings have also depicted that the required level of visibility is achievable at the southern access considering recorded 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speeds, as well as speed values that were rounded up and suggested by the Highway Officer (appended to this response note). The likelihood that the new southern access will increase conflicts along Damask Green Road is doubtful given the existing road is not inherently unsafe and adequate visibility is achievable at the access.

*"It would also set a precedent for other developments to apply for more than one vehicle access exacerbating highway conditions."*

Each development site is assessed on its own merits, meaning that planning applications are evaluated individually based on specific factors such as location, road safety, traffic impact, and the character of the surrounding area. A decision to permit two vehicular accesses for one development does not automatically create a blanket precedent that other developments can rely on. Every development proposal is subjected to a detailed review process, which includes traffic assessments, highway safety evaluations, and consultation.

Further, the context of the site plays a significant role in determining the appropriateness of having multiple vehicular accesses. Factors such as the site's proximity to major roads, local traffic volumes, the achievability of visibility splays, and the layout of the development all contribute to the decision-making process. What works in one location may not be suitable for another, and therefore a case-by-case assessment ensures that no generalised precedent is set.

## Conclusion

Visibility splays that are achievable at the southern access were calculated using appropriate methods, including 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speeds as outlined in DMRB CD 185. Both ATCs were placed in locations expected to capture the highest vehicle speeds, ensuring that the analysis reflects a worst-case scenario. Further to this, the originally submitted site access visibility splay drawing has been updated showing compliance with the reviewing Highway officer's requested splay lengths. Additionally, there are no specific policies prohibiting two vehicular accesses, with each site evaluated individually based on its unique conditions and safety assessments, further supporting the case for this access.

I trust that the information included herein can suitably discharge your outlined concerns. Please feel free to reach out to me if you require any other information.

Yours sincerely,



Callum Turner

*Transport Planner/Engineer, for and behalf of EAS Transport Planning Ltd*

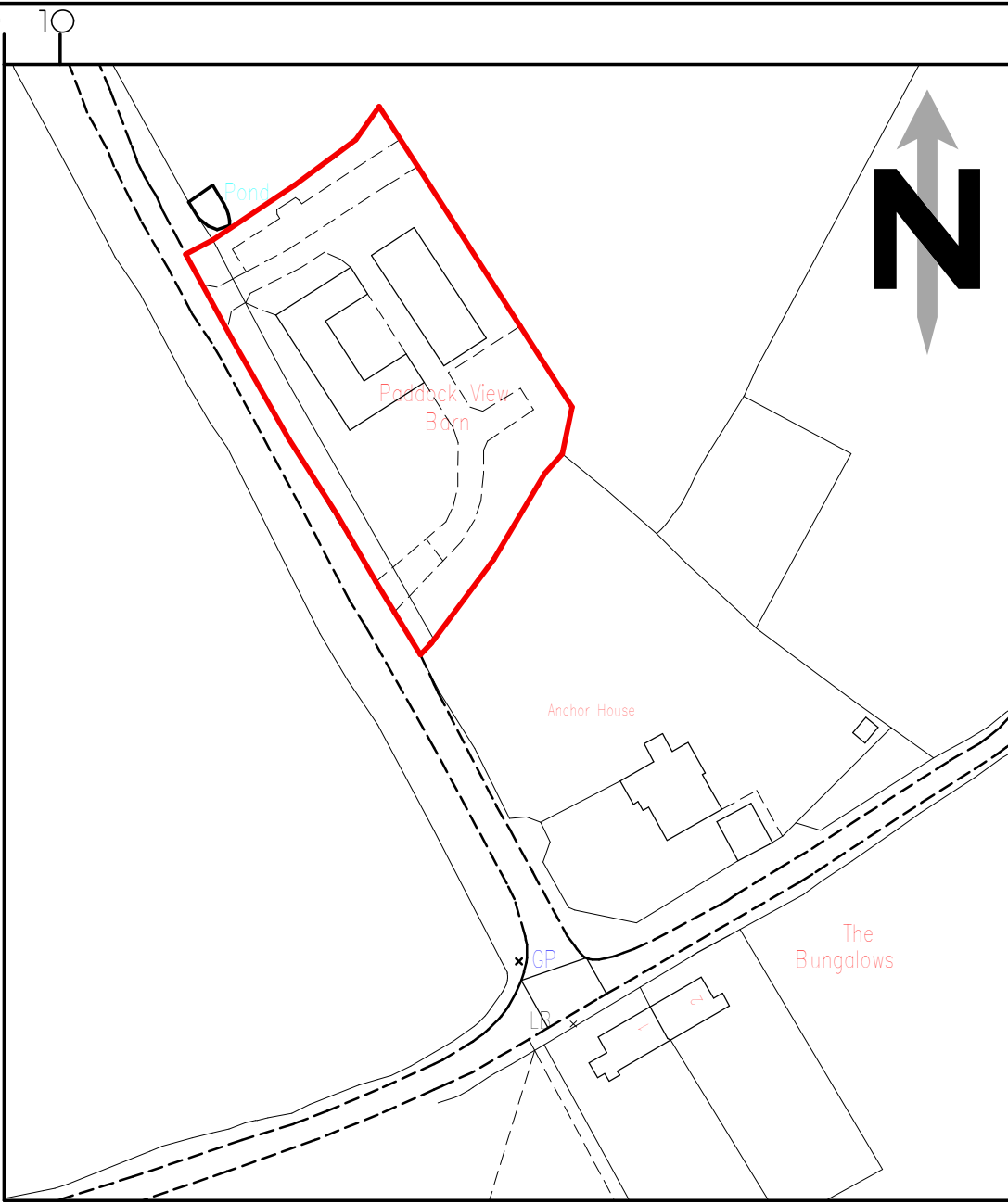
Enc.:

**Appendix A** – Location Plan

**Appendix B** – Hertfordshire Highways Comments

**Appendix C** – Updated Visibility Splay Drawing

## Appendix A – Location Plan



LOCATION PLAN (1:1250)



IMPORTANT NOTES

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PLANNING

| No. | Date | By | Contents |
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Revisions



LEES ARCHITECTS

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Site Address

FRIENDS GREEN PORSCHE  
PADDOCK VIEW BARN  
WESTON  
HITCHIN  
SG4 7BU

Job Title

EXISTING DEVELOPMENT

Drawing Title

SITE AND LOCATION PLAN

|       |             |      |       |          |     |
|-------|-------------|------|-------|----------|-----|
| Scale | 1:200<br>A1 | Date | 05/23 | Drawn by | SJL |
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| Paper Size | Org. No. | Rev. |
| A1         | FGP1-1   |      |

## Appendix B – Hertfordshire Highways Comments



Mark Youngman  
Development Management Group Manager  
Hertfordshire County Council  
Postal Point CHN115  
Farnham House  
Six Hills Way  
Stevenage  
SG1 2ST

**Response to Planning application from Hertfordshire County Council (T and CP GDP Order 2015)**

**Director of Planning**

North Hertfordshire Council  
Council Offices  
Gernon Road  
Letchworth Garden City  
Hertfordshire  
SG6 3JF

District ref: 24/01434/S73  
HCC ref: NH/21517/2024  
HCC received: 4 July 2024  
Area manager: Manjinder Sehmi  
Case officer: Senober Khan

**Location**

Friends Green Farm, Friends Green, Damask Green Road, Weston, Hitchin, SG4 7BU

**Application type**

Variation of Condition

**Proposal**

Section 73 Application : Removal of condition 2 of planning permission  
23/01259/FP granted 25.03.2024 for Use of buildings as (Sui Generis) car sales and  
(Use Class B2 general industrial) car servicing (as amended by details submitted  
16th January 2024).

**Recommendation**

Notice is given under article 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 that Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority recommends that permission be refused for the following reasons:

The application has failed to demonstrate a satisfactory policy and design-led approach for the above reasons, thereby the proposals would exacerbate existing highway conditions, which are prejudicial to the highway safety of all road users.

**Brief description in support of proposed development by the applicant:**

A Transport Technical Note (TTN) has been submitted in support of a planning application for the alteration of access arrangements.

The proposals seek to alter the access arrangements at the site, with access/ egress proposed to now be made from both an existing access point to the north, as well as from a newly constructed southern access. The applicant wishes to consolidate the southern access, enabling vehicles to access/egress using both access points to improve site operation efficiency.

A retrospective planning application (REF: 23/01259/FP) was sought and approved in March 2024 which proposed to change the use of the site from its lawful equestrian use (as approved under 17/04137/S73) to Sui Generis Use for car sales and B2 land use for car servicing. Access to the site from Damask Green Road via the northern access point, was retained, along with an internal driveway and parking area to the north.

The previously consented scheme above also included a personalised planning condition, as agreed with the reviewing case officer, which only permits the applicants existing use (Specialised Porsche Restoration Garage and Showroom) on site. This will prevent other applicants from purchasing the site assuming a Sui Generis/B2 use, without the need to complete a full planning application.

Access for vehicles will be from Damask Green Road, utilising the sites existing northern access, in line with the permitted arrangements, as well as the proposed access in the south.

The new southern access is proposed to measure circa 11m in width where it meets the Damask Green Road, tapering down to circa 4.8m after 4m. The access road will offer an alternative route to the existing car parking area within the site, with the driveway routing between the existing buildings on site.

To understand the visibility requirements at the new southern access, two weeklong ATC speed surveys were undertaken along Damask Green Road, between Monday 3rd June and Sunday 9th June 2024.

As a result of the completed survey, a northbound 85th percentile speed of 31mph was recorded at the southern site, requiring a visibility splay length of 67m; while a southbound 85th percentile speed of 37mph was recorded at the northern site, requiring an 89m visibility splay.

The drawing submitted shows that visibility splays with the required dimensions, as outlined above, can be achieved along Damask Green Road, ensuring that both northern and southern splays remain wholly within land owned by the applicant and maintained by the local highway authority.

Servicing arrangements at the site will not be altered as a result of the proposals. The site will retain the potential for smaller vans (such as panel vans up to 6m in length) to enter and turn internally before egress.

Combining all trip estimations set out above for the car servicing garage, it is estimated that this use currently generates a total of 8 vehicle movements per day, including one delivery made by van.

The proposals are not resulting in a change of use or operation at the site, with the opening of the southern access the only observed difference from existing arrangements.

As such, this change will not engender an increase in the number of trips generated by the site, but will instead serve to increase onsite operational efficiency, while also aiding with the movement of vehicles accessing and egressing.

In the covering letter dated 28 June 2024 the following is stated:

Condition 2 stated "Within 3 months of the date that planning permission is granted, a plan showing how the existing southern access will be closed and landscaped will be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval. The southern access shall be closed and landscaped in accordance with the agreed details within 3 months of written approval".

The reason that this condition was required as part of the decision notice was solely in relation to highway safety given the visibility splays of this point of access not meeting the required standards. However, the new highways information that is submitted as part of this application confirms that the retention of the southern access would not cause undue harm to highway safety. This therefore means that this condition is no longer required and the southern access is able to be used by the applicant which is beneficial for the running of the business on the site.

### **Highway comments:**

The applicant seeks removal of condition 2 of planning permission 23/01259/FP granted 25.03.2024 for Use of buildings as (Sui Generis) car sales and (Use Class B2 general industrial) car servicing (as amended by details submitted 16th January 2024).

### **Condition 2**

Within 3 months of the date that planning permission is granted, a plan showing how the existing southern access will be closed and landscaped will be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval. The southern access shall be closed and landscaped in accordance with the agreed details within 3 months of written approval.

Reason: The southern access is considered unsafe by the Highway Authority and therefore require its closing, in accordance with T1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031.

The extant permission was approved on the basis that the applicant accepted that only the northern vehicle access would be utilised, along with a personalised planning condition as covered in the above applicants supporting statement, the applicant has now submitted another application for the removal of condition 2 to allow the southern vehicle access to be opened and used, while acknowledging nothing has changed other than the access is required for efficiency reasons.

Local Highway Authorities (LHA's) do not support a second vehicle access serving a single development. This is because more than one, unjustified, vehicle accesses serving a development create more potential conflict points between vehicles, the HA aims to reduce conflict points or not allow them to occur unnecessarily. To support a second vehicle access on the basis that because there are no recorded accidents so more vehicle accesses is acceptable is nonsensical, especially given in previous submission the applicant stated, "the expected vehicle trips generated by the proposed site are considerably lower than the existing use" and "car showroom and garage could be expected to generate 11 and 6 vehicle movements in the AM and PM peak hours respectively", there is no justification.

It would also set a precedent for other developments to apply for more than one vehicle access exacerbating highway conditions.

It should be noted the existing northern vehicle access, even though the visibility splays are substandard, was acceptable because it was an existing vehicle access and that the proposed use would generate far less trips than the previous use.

The TTN states that a "two weeklong ATC speed surveys were undertaken along Damask Green Road, between Monday 3rd June and Sunday 9th June 2024.", and from that northbound 85th percentile speed of 31mph was recorded at the southern site, requiring a visibility splay length of 67m; while a southbound 85th percentile speed of 37mph was recorded at the northern site, requiring an 89m visibility splay."

Damask Green Road features a single lane carriageway, speed limit of 60mph,

DMRB: Design Speed of Major Road (kph/mph) - 'y' Distance (m)

50/31 - 70

60/37 - 90

100/60 - 215

It should be noted that given the speed limit is 60mph and the stretch of the road fronting the southern vehicle access is relatively long and straight, there are no physical measures to restrict speeds other than driver behaviour, it should be further noted that vehicle speeds were recorded at between 43 and 50mph within the legal speed limit, therefore the only relaxation would be visibility splays commensurate to 50mph.

It is unclear the purpose of the northern ATC which was placed approx 250m north of the proposed southern vehicle access. An ATC should have been placed just a few meters north of the proposed southern vehicle access.

In view of the above comments the HA would not support the proposal for an additional vehicle access at the site's southern section.

Notwithstanding the above comments, the HA would also point out the following:

Detailed technical plans will be required to be submitted to the Highway Authority for approval, which show the detailed engineering designs and construction of the vehicle access including gradients, visibility splays and associated highway works where works are required within the public highway to facilitate a new vehicular access, and surface water drainage to be intercepted and disposed of separately so that it does not discharge from or onto the highway carriageway, the Highway Authority require the construction of such works to be undertaken to their satisfaction and specification.

A Stage 1 Road Safety Audit (RSA) for any revised access proposals will need to be submitted as part of application with particular attention to visibility splays.

The planning process seeks/provides the opportunity to improve conditions for both development and highway safety by applying current higher standards of policies, design, accessibility and safety to new developments, and not to retain and/or continue with past obsolete standards.

Access to developments should adhere to current higher standards of accessibility by all modes of travel as outlined in both local and national policies, guidance's, and regulations.

**Recommendation:**

Refuse

**Reasons for Refusal:**

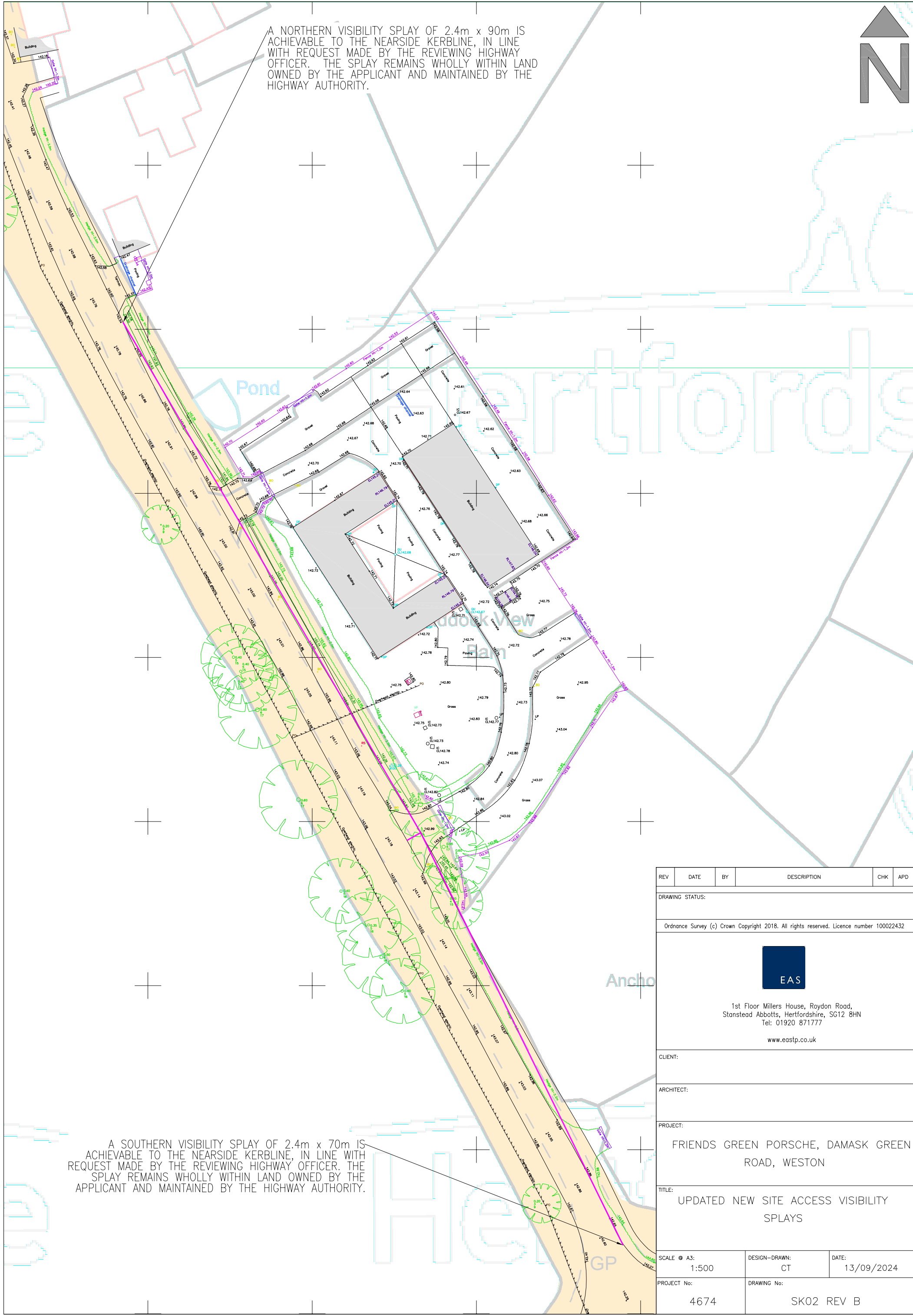
The application has failed to demonstrate a satisfactory policy and design-led approach for the above reasons, thereby the proposals would exacerbate existing highway conditions, which are prejudicial to the highway safety of all road users.

**Signed**

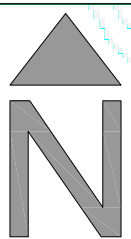
Senober Khan

29 July 2024

## Appendix C – Updated Visibility Splay Drawings



A NORTHERN VISIBILITY SPLAY OF 2.4m x 90m IS ACHIEVABLE TO THE NEARSIDE KERBLINE, IN LINE WITH REQUEST MADE BY THE REVIEWING HIGHWAY OFFICER. THE SPLAY REMAINS WHOLLY WITHIN LAND OWNED BY THE APPLICANT AND MAINTAINED BY THE HIGHWAY AUTHORITY.



Pond

Woodcock View Farm

Ancho

GP

A SOUTHERN VISIBILITY SPLAY OF 2.4m x 70m IS ACHIEVABLE TO THE NEARSIDE KERBLINE, IN LINE WITH REQUEST MADE BY THE REVIEWING HIGHWAY OFFICER. THE SPLAY REMAINS WHOLLY WITHIN LAND OWNED BY THE APPLICANT AND MAINTAINED BY THE HIGHWAY AUTHORITY.

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| CLIENT:                                                                                                                                                                                                            |      |    |                           |     |                     |
| ARCHITECT:                                                                                                                                                                                                         |      |    |                           |     |                     |
| PROJECT:<br>FRIENDS GREEN PORSCHE, DAMASK GREEN ROAD, WESTON                                                                                                                                                       |      |    |                           |     |                     |
| TITLE:<br>UPDATED NEW SITE ACCESS VISIBILITY SPLAYS                                                                                                                                                                |      |    |                           |     |                     |
| SCALE @ A3:<br>1:500                                                                                                                                                                                               |      |    | DESIGN-DRAWN:<br>CT       |     | DATE:<br>13/09/2024 |
| PROJECT No:<br>4674                                                                                                                                                                                                |      |    | DRAWING No:<br>SK02 REV B |     |                     |