



26th November 2024

Dear Mr. Khan,

Friends Green Farm, Friends Green, Damask Green Road, Weston, Hitchin SG4 7BU – 2nd 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 initially responded with Highway comments on 29/07/2024, 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**. In response to these comments, EAS prepared the 1st Highways Response Note which was submitted on 18/09/2024.

Following the receipt of this Highways Note, the Highway Authority issued more comments on 11/10/2024 outlining reasons for refusal. These comments from Hertfordshire’s Highway Authority are contained at **Appendix C**.

Subsequently, this 2nd Highways Response Note has been produced to challenge new assertions made by the reviewing Highway Officer, allowing Hertfordshire to approve the development.

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

85th Percentile Speed Calculation and Methodology

“Use of 85th percentiles are acceptable where natural/man-made features exist which restrict the ability of drivers to travel at high speeds, such as acute bends in the road or the ability to see too far ahead in the road, in those site specific circumstances and other considerations are the 85th percentile applicable, neither of these exist as acknowledged by the applicant’s consultant who in their response stated that ‘the road is long and straight in places’.

DMRB & Manual for Streets (MfS) indicative reduced sight stopping distances may be acceptable where the street environment physical influences driver behaviour i.e., where material constraints exist in a built-up area with an active mixed-used frontage. The same principles can be applied to rural roads too.

Whilst it is welcomed that most drivers drive at lower speeds along the site’s frontage off Damask Green Road, nevertheless there is nothing restricting/preventing drivers to legally travel at the speed limit of up to 60mph and as previously stated that given the site-specific conditions no flexibility in visibility splays can be applied

It should be noted that whilst most drivers drive safely and within speed limits, unfortunately a minority don't, and is why traffic calming measures are introduced even on roads with low-speed limits to influence driver behaviour and thereby deter any attempt at excessive speeding".

Firstly, it is unclear what the Highway officer is arguing in the section above. The statement suggests that flexibility in visibility splays cannot be applied because there are no 'natural or man-made' features restricting driver behaviour or the ability to legally drive at 60mph. This interpretation is inconsistent with the principles outlined in both MfS and DMRB.

MfS promotes a context-sensitive approach to road design and emphasises that visibility requirements should account for the actual behaviour of drivers based on the road environment, rather than rigid adherence to the absolute speed limit. MfS refers to research that demonstrates that drivers tend to adjust their speed based on the road layout and conditions, rather than purely the posted speed limit. Further to this, the document encourages designers to consider 85th percentile speeds as reflective of real-world conditions when setting sight distances, even in rural settings where built-up features are absent.

Similarly, DMRB – which is more relevant to the site's access arrangements, given its rural setting and location on a national speed limit road – allows for adjustments in visibility splays based on actual measured speeds (85th percentile speeds) rather than design speed alone. DMRB guidance stresses practicality and acknowledges that overly conservative designs may not align with observed driver behaviour, leading to unnecessary engineering measures. Guidance outlined in DMRB CD185 also states that "all speed measurements (spot and journey speed) shall be undertaken in free flow conditions where vehicles are unlikely to be accelerating or braking".

Vehicle speeds along Damask Green Road were measured using these conditions and therefore it is deemed that visibility splays measuring 89m (north splay) and 67m (south splay) are acceptable and representative of vehicles travelling along the road as they follow DMRB methodology and calculations, while corresponding with the recorded 85th percentile speeds of 37mph (southbound vehicle speed) and 31mph (northbound vehicle speeds). This methodology and use of 85th percentile speeds are widely accepted and utilised to outline required visibility splay lengths at accesses where ATCs have been laid.

The drawing contained at **Appendix D** shows that visibility splays compliant with recorded 85th percentile speeds are achieved at the site's southern access, splays remain wholly within land owned by the applicant and/or highway authority.

To demonstrate this, similar planning applications have been outlined below that were approved by Hertfordshire County Council as the local highway authority, using ATC surveys to calculate 85th percentile speeds, informing access visibility requirements. Whilst it is understood that all planning applications are reviewed on their own merits, the planning applications below show access arrangements that are comparable to that proposed at Friends Green Farm.

- REF: 20/01431/S73
- REF: 07/22/0956/F
- REF: 3/24/1532/CUAPN

This highlights that ATC speed surveys and the use of calculated 85th percentile vehicle speeds are a widely accepted method employed when submitting planning applications and a method that Hertfordshire County Council as the local Highway Authority welcome. This is further supported by the principles outlined in Hertfordshire County Council's Speed Management Strategy and Place and Movement Guidance, that explain the use and merits of 85th percentile speed surveys for obtaining required visibility splay lengths.

It is unclear why the reviewing Highway Officer is deviating from normal practice in this instance and not accepting the previously submitted visibility splays.

Stage 1 Road Safety Audit

“The applicant was advised that a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit (RSA) was required for any vehicle access proposal, this has not been provided”

Following the receipt of the second highways comments a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit has been completed at the site access. The full safety audit is contained at **Appendix E**.

The results of the audit outlined one safety issue relating to the restriction of visibility to the south of the access by vegetation. The auditor recommended that the existing vegetation is cut back to the junction of Warrensgreen Lane and maintained accordingly thereafter.

The obtained highway boundary mapping along Damask Green Road highlights that the vegetation referred to in the RSA is likely to be located within the ownership extent on Anchor House. However, it is the responsibility of the owner/Highway Authority to ensure that any vegetation overhanging the public highway (which is depicted in the photo contained in the completed RSA) should be trimmed back so that visibility along Damask Green Road is not impeded. It is therefore assumed that once the requested vegetation trimming has occurred, visibility south of the proposed access will be unrestricted, as outlined in the RSA.

No other safety issues were raised regarding the access.

Detailed Design Plans

“Unless verified otherwise, it would appear that the southern vehicle access has been built without highway authority approval. Vehicle accesses off classified (C class) public highway roads require the submission of detailed technical plans to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, in consultation with the Highway Authority. Any vehicle access built off the public highway without approval

The plans should show the detailed engineering designs and construction of the vehicle accesses/driveway gradients and associated highway works concerning the extent of work required for linking with the public highway. Given the class of use and vehicle types expected the design of vehicle access will need to be supported by swept path drawings, visibility splays, with acceptable Stage 1 Road Safety Audit etc. and arrangement for surface water drainage to be intercepted and disposed of separately so that it does not discharge from or onto the highway carriageway.”

The Highway officer has stated that detailed technical plans for the new southern access should be submitted and approved by the Highway Authority. Whilst these plans will be submitted, it is the applicant intention that conditional approval for use of the access will be obtained first, with detailed technical plans submitted to discharge a condition that will be put in place by the Local Planning Authority. From the transport consultant's experience, detailed design drawings are typically completed following approval of a scheme being granted.

Requirement of Second Vehicular Access

“The HA will not support second vehicle accesses serving the same site without any substantive justification and design compliance, and to reduce the potential for more conflict points in this case between vehicles and vehicles.”

The applicant has outlined that the second access point has been constructed as it allows patrons and delivery vans to access the site and turn within, without congesting the main car park, located in the north of the site. Use of the new southern access also negates the need for patrons and delivery vans to drive past any garage workshop doors where staff members may be walking. This arrangement therefore reduces the likelihood of conflicts occurring between vehicles and staff members, while also limiting the risk of valuable stock/repaired cars in the northern car park being damaged.

The proposed plans contained at **Appendix A** depict a turning head located to the northeast of the new southern access, within the site. This turning head allows delivery vehicles to manoeuvre efficiently, enabling vans to access and egress the site solely using the southern access point.

As highlighted in the originally submitted Transport Technical Note, the second access point will not result in additional traffic to or from the site. Instead, it redistributes the existing traffic flow. Since the total number of vehicle movements remains unchanged, the overall impact on traffic levels is neutral.

Conclusion

The proposed southern access aligns with established highway design principles outlined in MfS and DMRB, emphasizing the use of actual driver behaviour and 85th percentile speeds to determine visibility requirements. Measured vehicle speeds along Damask Green Road demonstrate that the proposed visibility splays are suitable and compliant, as confirmed by both technical guidance and precedent from similar planning applications.

A Stage 1 Road Safety Audit identified only one safety issue related to vegetation impeding visibility, which can be resolved through trimming and maintenance. No other safety concerns were raised.

The applicant intends to follow standard practice by seeking conditional approval of the access, with detailed technical plans to be submitted post-approval to meet local authority requirements.

The applicant has advised that the new southern access point has been constructed to reduce congestion in the northern car park, improve safety by avoiding staff areas, and minimise the risk of damage to vehicles. A turning head near the southern access facilitates efficient vehicle manoeuvring. The second access point redistributes existing traffic without increasing overall vehicle movements, resulting in a neutral impact on traffic levels.

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

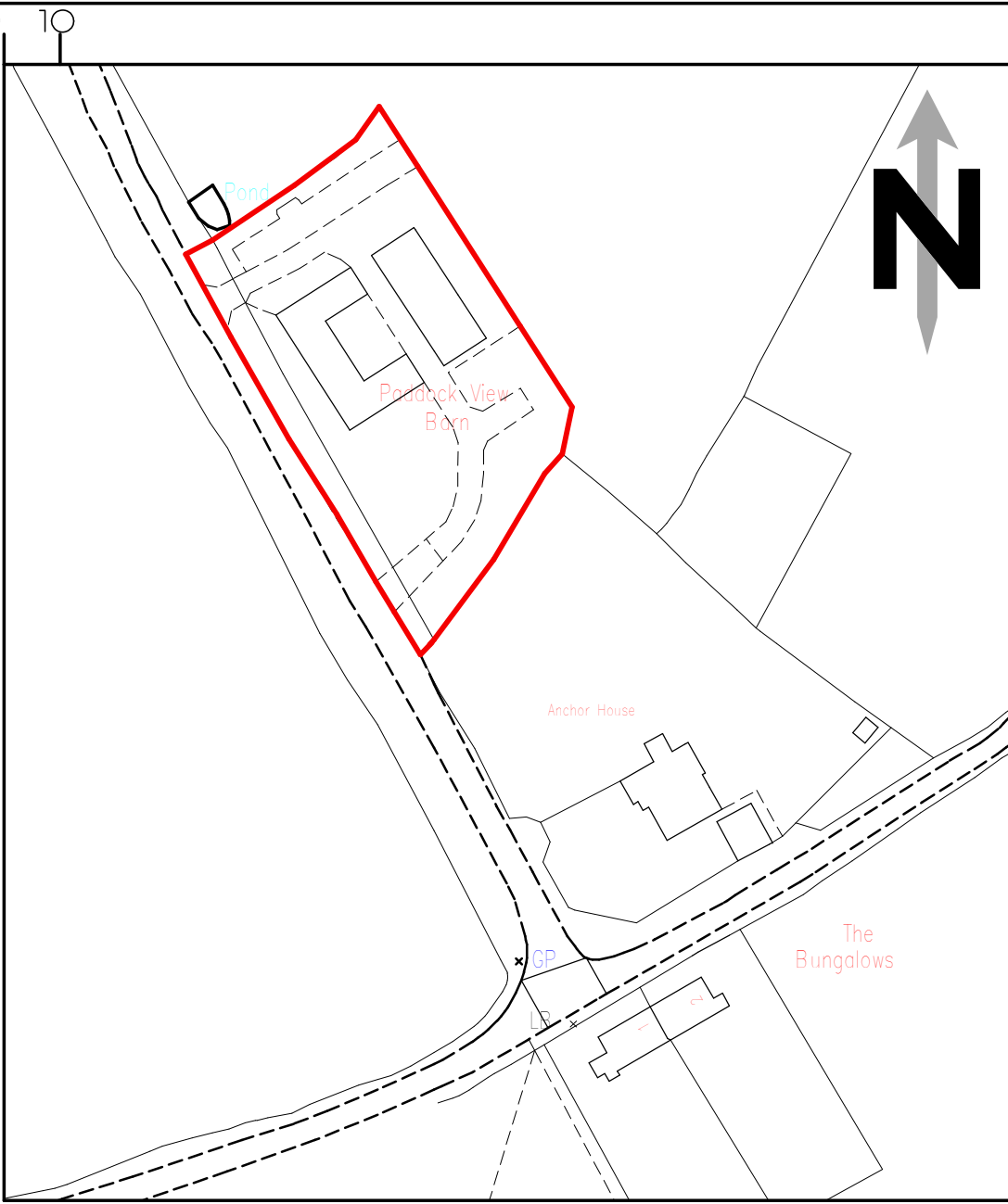
Appendix B – 1st Hertfordshire Highways Comments

Appendix C – 2nd Hertfordshire Highways Comments

Appendix D – Visibility Splay Drawings

Appendix E – Stage 1 Road Safety Audit

Appendix A – Location Plan



LOCATION PLAN (1.1250)



IMPORTANT NOTES

LA ARCHITECTS OWN THE COPYRIGHT OF THIS DRAWING. THIS DRAWING IS NOT TO BE USED/ ALTERED/ CHANGED BY ANY OTHER PARTY WITHOUT WRITTEN CONSENT FROM LA ARCHITECTS.

PLANNING

No.	Date	By	Contents

WWW.LEESARCHITECTS.CO.UK

Revisions



LEES ARCHITECTS

EMAIL: STUART@LEESARCHITECTS.CO.UK TEL: 07581475019

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 @ A1	Date	05/23	Drawn by	SJL
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Paper Size.	Org. No.	Rev.
A1	FGP1-1	

Appendix B – 1st 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 – 2nd Highways Response 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: 18 September 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

AMENDED 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:

This Highways Response Note has been prepared to provide additional information to Hertfordshire County Council regarding the proposed redevelopment at Friends Green Farm.

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).

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

It is understood that the reviewing highway officer has rounded up recorded 85th 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 85th 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.

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 85th percentile speeds, which are in line with DMRB requirements for assessing road safety and required visibility splay length. The 85th 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.

Designing visibility splays commensurate with the 85th 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.

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 85th 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.

Conclusion

Visibility splays that are achievable at the southern access were calculated using appropriate methods, including 85th 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.

Highways comments:

Use of 85th percentiles are acceptable where natural/man-made features exist which restrict the ability of drivers to travel at high speeds, such as acute bends in the road or the ability to see too far ahead in the road, in those site specific circumstances and other considerations are the 85th percentile applicable, neither of these exist as acknowledged by the applicant's consultant who in their response stated that "the road is long and straight in places".

DMRB & Manual for Streets (MfS) indicate reduced sight stopping distances may be acceptable where the street environment physically influences driver behaviour i.e., where material constraints exist in a built-up area with an active mixed-use frontage. The same principle can be applied to rural roads too.

Whilst it is welcomed that most drivers drive at lower speeds along the site's frontage off Damask Green Road, nevertheless there is nothing restricting/ preventing drivers to legally travel at the speed limit of up to 60mph and as previously stated that given the site specific conditions no flexibility in visibility splays can be applied.

It should be noted that whilst most drivers drive safely and within speed limits, unfortunately a minority don't, and is why traffic calming measures are introduced even on roads with low speed limits to influence driver behaviour and thereby deter any attempt at excessive speeding.

The visibility splay shown for the proposed southern vehicle access has been found to be incorrect, visibility splay envelopes should be over the applicant's land and/or the public highway, the southern visibility splay shown is over third party land and therefore can only achieve approx. 10m, significantly substandard, and therefore not acceptable.

The applicant was advised that a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit (RSA) was required for any vehicle access proposal, this has not been provided.

On the submitted visibility splay drawing no. SK02 RevB, it states "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", the southern splay straddles over the southern neighbouring property whose boundary extends to the back of the roads carriageway and not set back as shown on the submitted drawing.

Unless verified otherwise, it would appear that the southern vehicle access has been built without highway authority approval. Vehicle accesses off classified (C class) public highway roads require the submission of detailed technical plans to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, in consultation with the Highway Authority. Any vehicle access built off the public highway without approval

The plans should show the detailed engineering designs and construction of the vehicle accesses/driveway gradients and associated highway works concerning the extent of work required for linking with the public highway. Given the class of use and vehicle types expected the design of vehicle access will need to be supported by swept path drawings, visibility splays, with acceptable Stage 1 Road Safety Audit etc. and arrangement for surface water drainage to be intercepted and disposed of separately so that it does not discharge from or onto the highway carriageway.

Notwithstanding, planning permission granted for 23/01259/FP was on the basis that the continued use of the existing northern vehicle access (substandard visibility splays) was only acceptable because the proposed use (niche market) would generate less vehicle trips than the previous existing use, and that the alternative southern vehicle access would be not acceptable due to substandard visibility splays, consequently it was conditioned, including a personalised planning condition, that only the northern vehicle access was acceptable. To obtain approval the applicant removed the southern vehicle access from the application.

It is unacceptable that the applicant has now applied for the removal of the condition on which approval was granted.

There are many things in policies and guidance's that are not specifically mentioned and are reliant on the LHA officers review, consideration and informed judgement based on information provided, justification and site specific highway conditions. In practice the approach of all highway authorities is to minimise vehicle accesses wherever possible.

The HA has considered the applicants requirement for a second vehicle access and given that the applicant has not submitted any justification for the second vehicle access other than, there are no accidents on the road for the above reasons and that it is not in any HCC policies or guidance's that you cannot have a second vehicle access, this can be said for a third vehicle access or a fourth etc.

The HA will not support second vehicle accesses serving the same site without any substantive justification and design compliance, and to reduce the potential for more conflict points in this case between vehicles and vehicles.

Recommendation:

Refuse

Reasons for Refusal:

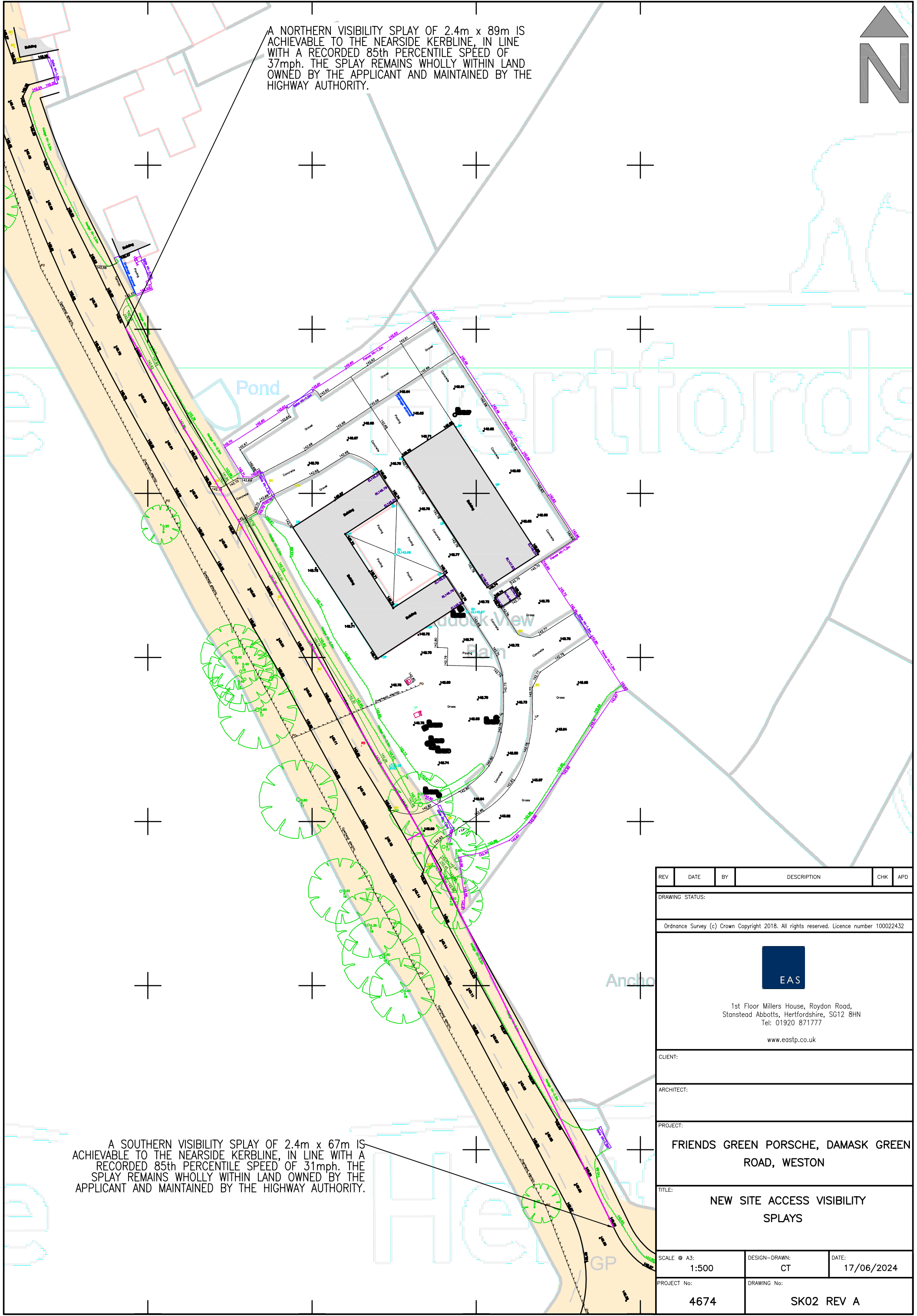
The application has failed to demonstrate a satisfactory policy and design-led approach for the above reasons, thereby the proposals would exacerbate existing highway conditions, which are prejudicial to the highway safety of all road users.

Signed

Senober Khan

11 October 2024

Appendix D – Visibility Splay Drawings



A NORTHERN VISIBILITY SPLAY OF 2.4m x 89m IS ACHIEVABLE TO THE NEAR-SIDE KERBLINE, IN LINE WITH A RECORDED 85th PERCENTILE SPEED OF 37mph. THE SPLAY REMAINS WHOLLY WITHIN LAND OWNED BY THE APPLICANT AND MAINTAINED BY THE HIGHWAY AUTHORITY.

A SOUTHERN VISIBILITY SPLAY OF 2.4m x 67m IS ACHIEVABLE TO THE NEAR-SIDE KERBLINE, IN LINE WITH A RECORDED 85th PERCENTILE SPEED OF 31mph. THE SPLAY REMAINS WHOLLY WITHIN LAND OWNED BY THE APPLICANT AND MAINTAINED BY THE HIGHWAY AUTHORITY.

REV	DATE	BY	DESCRIPTION	CHK	APD
DRAWING STATUS:					
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EAS 1st Floor Millers House, Roydon Road, Stanstead Abbots, Hertfordshire, SG12 8HN Tel: 01920 871777 www.eastp.co.uk					
CLIENT:					
ARCHITECT:					
PROJECT:					
FRIENDS GREEN PORSCHE, DAMASK GREEN ROAD, WESTON					
TITLE:					
NEW SITE ACCESS VISIBILITY SPLAYS					
SCALE @ A3:			DESIGN-DRAWN:		DATE:
1:500			CT		17/06/2024
PROJECT No:			DRAWING No:		
4674			SK02 REV A		

Appendix E – Stage 1 Road Safety Audit



BETH NEWISS AND ASSOCIATES LIMITED
is a company registered in England and Wales
with company number 15125283

ROAD SAFETY AUDIT STAGE 1

PROPOSED NEW SITE ACCESS

‘FRIENDS GREEN PORSCHE’

DAMASK GREEN ROAD, WESTON, HERTFORDSHIRE

REPORT REF: BN-EAS-24-136



BETH NEWISS AND ASSOCIATES LIMITED
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**ROAD SAFETY AUDIT
STAGE 1**

PROPOSED NEW SITE ACCESS

'FRIENDS GREEN PORSCHE'

**DAMASK GREEN ROAD,
WESTON,
HERTFORDSHIRE**

REPORT REF: BN-EAS-24-136

Client: EAS
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Job no	BN-EAS-24-136	Issue no	1	Date	November 2024
Prepared by	BN	Verified by	JB	Approved by	BN

PROJECT DETAILS	
Report Title:	Stage 1 Road Safety Audit
Date:	November 2024
Document reference and revision:	BN-EAS-24-136
Prepared by:	Beth Newiss and Associates Limited
Design Organisation:	EAS Transport Planning
Project Sponsor:	Friends Green Porsche
Overseeing Organisation:	Hertfordshire County Council

REV	ISSUE PURPOSE	AUTHOR	CHECKED	APPROVED	DATE
0	Stage 1 Road Safety Audit drafted for Audit Team discussions.	BN	JB	BN	14/11/2024
1	Stage 1 Road Safety Audit finalised and issued to the Design Organisation.	BN	JB	BN	15/11/2024

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DISTRIBUTION

ORGANISATION	CONTACT	COPIES
EAS	Callum Turner	1

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 OVERVIEW:

This report results from a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit (RSA) carried out on the proposed new site access on Damask Green Road in Weston, Hertfordshire in association with Friends Green Porsche. The audit was requested by EAS on behalf of Friends Green Porsche.

1.2 SCHEME BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

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.

The proposals subject to this Road Safety Audit 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.

1.3 SITE LOCATION:

The site under consideration is located circa 1.5km south of the village of Weston, with Stevenage town centre located 5.3km to the southwest.

The full address of the site is Friends Green Porsche, Paddock View Barn, Friends Green, Damask Green Road, Weston SG4 7BU.

The site is bound by the wider Friends Green Farm site to the north, undeveloped land to the east and an existing dwelling to the south. In the west, the site is bordered by Damask Green Road which offers access into Weston to the north and Stevenage to the south.

1.4 THE PROPOSED WORKS:

The proposed works to be audited within this report and detailed:

- Introduction of an additional access located in the southwestern corner of the site.

1.5 The Road Safety Audit was undertaken during November 2024. The Road Safety Audit was requested by Callum Turner of the Design Organisation – EAS Transport Planning, on behalf of the Project Sponsor – Friends Green Porsche.

1.6 The Road Safety Audit comprised of an examination of the Audit Brief and drawings provided as detailed in **Appendix A1** and a visit to site.

1.7 SITE VISIT:

A visit to the site was undertaken by the Audit Team, together, on the 13th November 2024 between 10:15 and 10:45am.

During the site visit the weather was dry and bright. The road surface was dry. Minimal traffic was observed during the site visit. Cyclists (2No), but no (0) pedestrians were noted.

It should be noted that proposed access appears to have already been constructed.

1.8 COLLISION DATA:

The Audit Team were presented with collision data within the audit brief which detailed information for the 5-year period to 2022 and was retrieved from CrashMAP. The information retrieved detailed that there have been no (0) collisions within the immediate vicinity of the proposals.

1.9 SPEED DATA:

To Transport Technical Note details that 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 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.

It is noted that Hertfordshire County Council has made the following comments regarding the speed data received and the proposed visibility splays:

'It should be noted that given the speed limit (of Damask Green Road) 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'

1.10 EXISTING AND PROJECTED TRIP GENERATION:

Existing and projected trip generation information is presented within the Transport Technical Note issued alongside the audit brief. This detailed the following:

EXISTING TRIP GENERATION - Totalling the existing trip generation associated with both the car showroom and car garage uses, it is estimated that the site currently generates 13 vehicle movements per day, including one delivery made by van.

For robustness it is assumed that all existing staff trips to the site (8 vehicle trips) will be made in network peak hours, although a vast majority, if not all of visitor and delivery trips to the site (6 vehicle trips), are currently made outside of network peak hours.

PROJECTED TRIP GENERATION - 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.

1.11 AUDIT TEAM INFORMATION

The Road Safety Audit has been undertaken by an Audit Team whose qualifications and experience accord with the requirements of the Local Authority.

The Audit Team consists of the following members:

Beth Newiss	Jason Bown
MCIHT MSoRSA	MCIHT MSoRSA
Beth Newiss and Associates Limited – Registered Office 19a Grange Hill, Coggeshall, Essex, CO6 1RE	
TEL: 07962349262	Email: bethnewissandassociates@gmail.com

Audit Team approval has been historically sought and received from Anna Mayers of Hertfordshire County Council.

1.12 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The terms of reference of this Road Safety Audit are as described in GG119 except for the Audit Team members' experience which are in line with the Adopting Authority requirements.

This Road Safety Audit has been undertaken based on the Road Safety Audit Team's previous experience and knowledge in undertaking Collision Investigation, Road Safety Engineering and Road Safety Audits. The scheme has been examined and this report compiled, only with regard to the safety implications for road users of the scheme as presented. It has not been examined or verified for compliance with any other standards or criteria. However, in order to clearly explain a safety problem or the recommendation to resolve a problem, the Audit

Team may on occasion have referred to a design standard for information only.

A technical audit has not been included.

- 1.13 Recommendations made in this report are proportionate and viable suggestions for improvement to eliminate or mitigate, in accordance with GG119, and do not imply that a formal design review has been undertaken. There may be alternative methods of addressing a problem which would be equally acceptable in achieving the desired elimination or mitigation and these should be considered when the Design Organisation responds to this report.
- 1.14 The Designer Organisation Response to the RSA should be formally recorded and reported to the Overseeing Organisation and the RSA Team so that a record of the Audit process is contained in the As Built design pack to be provided and retained by the Overseeing Organisation on final completion.

2.0 PREVIOUS ROAD SAFETY AUDIT(S)

- 2.1 The Audit Team are not aware of any previous audits having been undertaken.

3.0 SAFETY ISSUES RAISED AT THIS STAGE 1 ROAD SAFETY AUDIT

3.1 GENERAL

3.1.1 PROBLEM

Location: A – Damask Green Road

Summary: Visibility is restricted by vegetation; an approaching driver may be unaware of the potential exiting motorist resulting in sudden braking and potential conflict. Furthermore an exiting driver may have limited visibility of an approaching vehicle, further heightening the risk of conflict.

On site observations noted that there is vegetation to both sides of the carriageway between the southern access and the junction with Warrengreen Lane. There is a concern that this vegetation (particularly to the eastern side of the carriageway) restricts both the forward visibility of the junction as well as the side visibility from the junction. See below:



Motorists approaching northbound may not be aware of the junction until they are closer. Drivers exiting the junction may also have limited visibility of approaching motorists, resulting in them having to encroach into the carriageway. This may result in conflict at the junction. This would be further exacerbated in the summer months or if the existing vegetation is unmaintained.

RECOMMENDATION: It is recommended that existing vegetation (shown within the proposed visibility splay) is cut back to the junction of Warrengreen Lane and maintained accordingly thereafter.

3.2 JUNCTIONS

3.2.1 The Audit Team have no comments relating to 'JUNCTIONS' at this stage.

3.3 LOCAL ALIGNMENT

3.3.1 The Audit Team have no comments relating to 'LOCAL ALIGNMENT' at this stage.

3.4 WALKING CYCLING AND HORSE RIDING

3.4.1 The Audit Team have no comments relating to 'WALKING CYCLING AND HORSE RIDING' at this stage.

3.5 SIGNING, LIGHTING AND CARRIAGEWAY MARKINGS

3.5.1 The Audit Team have no comments relating to 'SIGNING, LIGHTING AND CARRIAGEWAY MARKINGS' at this stage.

4.0 AUDIT TEAM, DESIGN TEAM AND OVERSEEING ORGANISATION STATEMENT(S)

4.1 AUDIT TEAM

We certify that this audit has been undertaken in accordance with the principles of GG119.

NB: The Audit Team qualifications and experience accord with the requirements of Hertfordshire County Council.

Audit Team Leader

Beth Newiss MCIHT MSoRSA



Date: 14th November 2024

Audit Team Member

Jason Bown MCIHT MSoRSA



Date: 14th November 2024

4.2 DESIGN ORGANISATION STATEMENT

On behalf of the Design Organisation, I certify that:

1) The RSA Actions identified in response to the road safety audit problems in this road safety audit have been discussed and agreed with the Overseeing Organisation.

Name:	
Signed:	
Organisation:	
Position:	Date:

4.3 OVERSEEING ORGANISATION STATEMENT

On behalf of the Overseeing Organisation, I certify that:

- 1) The RSA Actions identified in response to the road safety audit problems in this road safety audit have been discussed and agreed with the design team and;
- 2) The agreed RSA will be progressed.

Name:	
Signed:	
Organisation:	
Position:	Date:

APPENDIX A1

INFORMATION PRESENTED FOR AUDIT

INFORMATION PRESENTED FOR AUDIT

Documents:

Audit Brief Received via email

Transport Technical Note 4674/2023 Dated June 2024

ATC Data

HCC Response

Drawings:

4674/SK2 REV A

New Site Access Visibility Splays

FGP1-1

Existing Development Site and Location Plan

ST0384

Typographical Survey

APPENDIX A2

LOCATION PLAN

