

# **Tim Hancock Associates**

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**A38 Derby Junctions - TR010022 ("the Scheme")**

**Planning Act 2008**

**Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010**

**Markeaton Service Station, A38 Derby, DE24 4AA (the Service Station)**

**Supplementary Statement by Tim Hancock, B.Sc., FRICS, MEI**

**Relating to the effect of the Scheme in Reducing the Ability of the Service Station to Satisfy the Needs of Motorists using the A38 and A52 and the Benefits of Providing Advance Warning Signs as Part of the Scheme**

**On behalf of Euro Garages Limited**

**February 2020**

## **1.0 Markeaton Service Area – Background**

- 1.1 In December 2019, I produced a statement relating to the potential adverse effects of the Scheme on Markeaton Service Station, which together with the adjoining McDonalds Restaurant forms a Service Area, currently providing facilities for the motorist using the A38 and A52 strategic roads.
- 1.2 Ongoing technical discussion are continuing between the parties on the various matters raised.
- 1.3 One key outstanding matter relates to the provision of Advance Warning Signs within the highway, as part of the Scheme to mitigate the adverse effects of the Scheme.
- 1.4 There is evidently some concern as to whether the Service Area complies with the letter of the relevant policy in relation to such provision. In particular, the Service Area does not provide parking for HGVs or coaches although refuelling facilities are available.
- 1.5 This Supplementary Statement has been provided as a working document to assist in the negotiation relating to the issue of Advance Warning Signs.
- 1.6 As noted in my previous Statement, the Service Area is located at Markeaton Roundabout which forms the junction of the A38 and A52 roads. These roads are part of the strategic road network.
- 1.7 The Service Area comprises an Esso branded fuel filling station and a McDonald's restaurant together with associated parking. These facilities collectively provide services for private motorists and commercial vehicles including HGVs using this part of the strategic road network.
- 1.8 At present the Service Area occupies a highly prominent location visible to motorists approaching the junction in all directions. The absence of existing advance warning signs on the approaching routes has comparatively limited effect on the trading performance of the

facilities located at the Service Area because these are so prominent and passing traffic speeds are low. Approaching motorists are readily alerted to the existence of the Service Area which is clearly visible to them and which is advertised by prominent, nationally branded, signage. Motorists using the Service Area have the opportunity to refuel and obtain refreshment and rest, taking a break from their journey.

- 1.9 The Service Area effectively fulfils the principal objectives of Circular 2/2013 which seeks to ensure the regular provision on the strategic road network of facilities for the travelling motorist. The objective of Circular 2/2013 follows well established principles that have emerged over many years in relation to the provision of such roadside facilities. The requirement is essentially to satisfy the needs of the motorist in terms of the provision of facilities for rest, welfare and fuel. The enhanced safety of road users is the desired consequence.
- 1.10 A subsidiary requirement within policy is to meet the needs of the motorist at facilities that are located close to the strategic road network. The intention is to avoid a requirement for the motorist to detour significantly from the strategic road network and head into surrounding areas in search of such facilities. By meeting the needs of the motorist close to the strategic road network, congestion on local roads is avoided and a greater proportion of motorists is likely to use the facilities. Effectively located roadside facilities are commercially successful and effective in encouraging the motorist to take a break.
- 1.11 The existing access arrangements are effective and allow the motorist who is unfamiliar with the Service Area to readily gain access to it. The Service Area effectively serves all approaching traffic flows; it has an ingress and an egress on each of the principal frontages shared with the A38 and the A52 respectively. Fundamentally, therefore, the Service Area is well placed to meet the needs of transient traffic using this section of the strategic road network.

## **2.0 Existing Roadside Facilities**

- 2.1 The assessment of the effectiveness of an existing service area in satisfying the needs of the passing motorist requires a consideration of the other facilities on the relevant section of the strategic road network. The Service Area sits within a significant gap on the road network.
- 2.2 For northbound traffic on the A38, the preceding site is Derby Burton Services at its intersection with the A50. This site is located offline, and a significant detour is required for northbound A38 traffic to reach it via a grade separated junction. In practice the turn in ratio from the northbound carriageway is likely to be relatively low because of the length of this detour. This site is some 5.6 miles to the south of the Service Area.
- 2.3 The nearest online site on the A38 which is likely to compete more strongly with the Service Area is BP branded facility located at Egginton, about 7 miles south of the Service Area. This site is a small traditional service station and whilst it has some limited informal HGV parking it does not provide any significant hot food restaurant offer. Notwithstanding this, the site has the benefit of advance warning signs.
- 2.4 Traffic passing the Service Area having travelled on via the A50 from the west will also find the Derby Burton Services inconvenient because of the length of detour required to reach it. For this traffic flow the nearest preceding convenient site is the online Esso branded and McDonalds facility at Uttoxeter some 18.1 miles to the south and west of the Service Area. Some traffic on the A50 heading towards the Service Area will use the A516 as a shorter route and pass a small BP branded service station located at Burnaston. This site requires traffic to turn in from the offside however and in my experience turn in ratios are likely to be low. This site is located 4.1 miles south west of the Service Area.
- 2.5 Traffic passing the Service Area having travelled via the A50 from the east will pass the Derby Burton Services and find this relatively convenient.

- 2.6 Having passed the Service Area, traffic travelling north on the A38 will find no significant facilities until reaching the Swanwick Services some 13.4 miles to the north-east. This offline site requires a significant detour for northbound traffic and in my experience is unlikely to serve a significant proportion of this offside traffic. There are no online facilities as far as the M1, some 16.3 miles to the north east of the Service Area.
- 2.7 Beyond the M1 motorway traffic flows will follow various routes but it is worth recording that the first motorway service area at Tibshelf is some 19.1 miles to the north and east of the Service Area.
- 2.8 Some traffic travelling north on the A38 after passing the Service Area will continue its journey by heading north on the A6 towards Bakewell. This traffic will pass a Shell branded site at Allestree some 2.3 miles.
- 2.9 Traffic passing the Service Area having used the A52 will have had very limited opportunity to pass service area facilities whilst there are limited facilities in Ashbourne itself some 10.7 miles before the Service Area. The nearest online facility on this route is a small traditional filling station at Mayfield some 12.6 miles from the Service Area.
- 2.10 The Service Area is also well placed to serve traffic emanating from Derby city centre. Much of this traffic will be commencing a significant journey on the strategic road network.
- 2.11 It is clear from its strong existing trade that the Service Area currently performs a major role in serving the needs of the passing motorist on the strategic road network. It lies within what would otherwise be significant gaps on the network.

### **3.0 The Scheme**

- 3.1 The proposed highway improvements have the fundamental purpose of improving the efficiency of the strategic road network. In particular, they will achieve this by allowing northbound and southbound on the A38 to travel the Markeaton intersection by means of a free-flowing underpass.
- 3.2 The construction of a grade separated gyratory system junction is likely to mean that many passing motorists, particularly those on the A38 will not be aware of the existence of the Service Area until it is too late to access it, if indeed, they become aware of it all. As a consequence, following completion of the improvements, only traffic using the junction itself to change route will pass the frontages of the Service Area. Through traffic on the A38 will pass through the junction at speed and at a lower level than the Service Area following the construction of a new underpass. As a direct consequence of these improvements, the needs of this category of traffic are considerably less likely to be satisfied. These motorists will be less likely to take a break for rest and refreshment and be at a slightly greater risk of running out of fuel. Whilst the number of vehicles that actually do run out of fuel is small the consequences in my experience are disproportionately serious and constitute a considerable concern in highway safety terms. In my experience of redeveloping large service area sites, I am acutely aware of the effects of a gap in provision and of the considerable number of temporary signs that are often required during such works on highway safety grounds. At present, due to the at grade form of the junction, approaching traffic can easily weave to the nearside lane to access the Service Area. Once the highway improvements have been completed motorists who are aware of the Service Area as they approach it may undertake potentially dangerous and late turning manoeuvres to gain access. Motorists who have used the Service Area previously as a well-known landmark facility may be surprised at the new arrangements and equally make a late turn.
- 3.3 I conclude that the Service Area will be significantly less likely to meet the needs of the motorist once the highway improvements are completed. As well therefore as leading to a considerable

loss of trade and value as a direct consequence of the improvements in commercial terms, the safety of the travelling motorist will be prejudiced as a direct consequence of the improvements that are intended to improve highway safety and efficiency.

#### **4.0 Advance Warning Signs**

4.1 Motorists who use the all-purpose road network are familiar with advance warning signs, located on the immediate approach to roadside facilities that alert them in good time to their existence. This reinforces the use of such facilities and helps to ensure that the needs of motorists are met. Motorists have confidence in this signage and are content to rely upon it. As a consequence, where advance warning signs are provided motorists commence their manoeuvre to leave the strategic road in good time and safely reach roadside facilities. This is the case whether motorists have to weave from the outside lane, the middle lane or the nearside lane.

4.2 In my experience however, where a third lane is added the reduction in trading performance often confirms that the overall effectiveness of a service area is reduced even where advance warning signs are provided.

#### **5.0 Signage Policy**

5.1 Whilst standards relating to motorway service areas are closely controlled in terms of the provision of parking and toilet facilities in particular, standards in relation to trunk and county road service areas have been much less closely regulated. Whilst Circular 2/2013 has sought to improve roadside facilities away from the motorway network it has largely failed in my experience. Limited progress has been made in securing formal agreements in relation to trunk road service areas.

5.2 In many cases, trunk road facilities have been provided with advance warning signs even though in certain respects, they might not completely comply with the minimum standards specified in Circular 2/2013.

5.3 The Service Area provides the minimum standards in most respects. There is a range of hot and cold food provided, extensive parking, toilet facilities and fuel for private cars, LGVs and HGVs. In my experience many service stations have the benefit of advance warning signs which support the needs of the motorist and improve highway safety even though formal HGV and coach parking are not provided.

5.4 By way of example, the trunk road services on Bedford Bypass, the A428, provide a fuel forecourt and hotel. There are no restaurant facilities and no HGV or coach parking. Advance warning signs have been provided. Relatively newly constructed facilities on Braintree Bypass, the A120, have been provided with advance warning signs but again no HGV or coach parking is available. As a consequence of the upgrading of the A1 trunk road, twin service station sites at Markham Moor and Retford were taken offline by highways improvements. I negotiated the provision of advance warning signs, although neither site meets the standards for HGV and coach parking. On the M6 motorway in Cumbria, twin sites were affected by the M6 extension proposals and I negotiated the granting of advance warning signs to motorway rest area designation even though neither site satisfied the necessary criteria. Historically, Ministerial undertakings had been given to the retention of these facilities rather than their destruction, notwithstanding the failure to meet the necessary standards. A practical view prevailed. It was better to retain the facilities to help meet the needs of the passing public.

## **6.0 Conclusions**

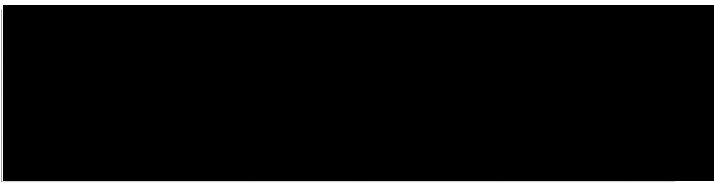
6.1 In my submission this is a case where there is a strong and compelling argument in road safety terms for the provision of advance warning signs. Those responsible for making the decision as to whether advance warning signs can be provided should focus on these benefits to the travelling public and not dismiss this request on account of the failure of the Service Area to comply with the arbitrary standards within the policy.



- 6.2 As a direct consequence of the Scheme, the Service Area will effectively become off-line to the A38 traffic flows, particularly northbound traffic. To a lesser degree southbound traffic on the A38 will also suffer a reduction in effective service area provision as it travels through the new junction. Whilst I would expect less of this trade to be recaptured through the provision of advance warning signs, such signage would play an important role in alerting those motorists who are running out of fuel to the existence of the facilities. This would be an important benefit in highway safety terms.
- 6.3 Although not directly relevant to the issue of advance warning signs, it should be stated clearly that the revised access arrangements for the traffic that does still seek to use the Service Area after the completion of the Scheme, will become significantly less effective and tortuous for the reasons explained previously in my earlier Statement. The Service Area will consequently become less attractive. It is readily accepted by experts in petrol retailing that off-line sites, which do not have the benefit of advance warning signs will be significantly less effective at serving the needs of the passing motorists.
- 6.4 There are examples of service areas that have been rendered redundant by the adverse effects of road scheme where trade has reduced to the level that the business was no longer viable. For example, Hawley Park, near Stowmarket and Tabley Mere on the A556. Both sites have gone out of industry.
- 6.6 This loss of service area provision in this case would be mitigated significantly by the introduction of advanced warning signs which would allow the Service Area to re-capture a proportion of what will otherwise be lost trade.
- 6.7 It would be indefensible, in my view, to sanction such extensive damage to these roadside facilities in the interests of highway improvement, which actually causes a reduction in highway safety to the travelling public.

6.8 It is an incidental matter that the failure to provide advance warning signs would substantially increase the costs of compensation payable on account of increased damage to the Service Area. Failure to provide such signage will mean that the public will pay twice; they will pay compensation for the unnecessary damage caused by the Scheme to the Service Area and they will suffer the reduction in the provision of effective roadside facilities on the this stretch of the strategic road network.

This concludes my Statement.



Timothy David Hancock

17<sup>th</sup> February 2020