



Application by Four Ashes Limited for an Order Granting Development Consent for the West Midlands Strategic Rail Freight Interchange

Unaccompanied Site Inspection 1

Examining Authority's Record of an Unaccompanied Inspection of the Application Site and its Surroundings

Tuesday 26 February 2019

Paul Singleton, Examining Authority (ExA) for the application, undertook a first Unaccompanied Site Inspection (US1) on Tuesday 26 February 2019. The purpose of the inspection was for the ExA to familiarise himself with the general layout of the site and its immediate surroundings and to identify some of the key physical and landscape features referred to in the application documents and relevant representations. The ExA observed the application site generally from all of the public vantage points visited but this SI did not include a detailed review of the application plans and photo montages from all of the viewpoints identified in the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment submitted as part of the Environmental Statement.

The inspection was undertaken by car and on foot using public roads, the canal towpath and other publicly accessible areas. As the ExA did not enter private land this allowed the inspection to be carried out on an unaccompanied basis and made it unnecessary under the Examination Rules¹ for notice of the site inspection to be given. No other persons were present at the site inspection and the ExA did not engage with any other persons about the purpose of his visit or the proposed development.

The route followed by the ExA was planned in light of the application material and the issues raised in the relevant representations.

US1 is recorded in this note for the following purposes:

- (1) To inform the applicant and interested parties (IPs) of actions already taken by the ExA; and
- (2) To enable the applicant and IPs to consider which additional site the ExA might need to inspect or to view in greater detail as part of any future accompanied or unaccompanied site inspection.

¹ Rule 16 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010

The Examination Timetable published on 4 March 2019 includes dates reserved for an Accompanied Site Inspection (ASI) and a deadline for IPs to submit their suggestions as to the locations or features that they wish the ExA to visit and observe as part of that ASI. IPs should preferably review this note of the USP already undertaken by the ExA before they respond to the Case Team with their suggestions and nominated locations.

Particulars of Unaccompanied Site Inspection – US1.

US1 took place between approximately 12.00 and 17.00 hours in dry, warm and sunny conditions and including the following key locations.

1. By car from J13 M6, travelling south on the A449 through Dunston and Penkridge.
2. A c.20-minute walking tour of Penkridge centre including the railway station whilst observing traffic conditions and flows on the A449 and the operation of the main junctions and both observing and using the pedestrian crossing facilities in the centre of Penkridge.
3. By car from Penkridge south on the A449, crossing Gailey roundabout and turning back at the junction with Brewood Road to travel north on the A449. Turning right into Station Drive and following the route along Station Drive, Station Road and Vicarage Road, Straight Mile and Stable Lane. Assessing the nature of the routes and junctions, the general character of these corridors and the visibility of the Site from these routes.
4. Crossing the bridge carrying Vicarage Lane over the M6 on foot to view traffic conditions on the motorway and the operation of the north bound off slip to J12 as well as viewing parts of the Site from that vantage point.
5. Viewing of Calf Heath Reservoir, the Sailing Club and Angling Club facilities on foot from the access road to the reservoir and viewing of parts of the Site across the reservoir.
6. By car from the Reservoir access road via Vicarage Road and A5, through J12. Inspection of existing access to the quarry and Avenue Cottages and then along the A5 to Gailey roundabout turning around at that junction and stopping in the layby on the east bound carriageway.
7. On foot from Gailey Canal Bridge through Gailey Wharf and along the canal towpath to Long Moll's Bridge. Viewing the canal corridor and Conservation Area and its setting, the listed buildings at Gailey Wharf, the canal bridges and crossings, older and newer industrial and commercial development and other land uses adjoining the canal. General assessment of the character of the canal corridor and Conservation Area and the visibility of the Site from the towpath.
8. On foot from Long Moll's Bridge via Deepmore Lane, Straight Mile, Woodlands Lane, Stable Lane and Vicarage Road back to its junction with Station Road at the canal crossing. General observation of the character of these corridors and the residential properties and other receptors fronting onto these routes. Viewing of the Site from these vantage points including an initial assessment of its landscape features and character and of the existing buildings and structures in views from these vantage points. Assessment of traffic flows and conditions on Vicarage Lane.
9. On foot along Station Road and Station Drive to the Four Ashes PH viewing the existing industrial, commercial areas and residential property along this corridor.

10. On foot from the Four Ashes PH to the public right of way to Croft Lane, viewing traffic conditions and flows on the A449, the Station Drive and Gravelly Way junctions with the A449, and pedestrian and cycle facilities along that route; the appeal site and landscape features within and adjoining the site and the WCML corridor.
11. On foot via the public right of way over the fields and crossing the railway bridge to Croft Lane, viewing the site and its context and the character of the railway corridor.
12. On foot from Croft Lane, viewing the residential properties in this location, back to the A5 and Gailey Canal Bridge.
13. By car from the A5 south along the A449 to the M54 and on to Wolverhampton.