

12 July 2013

Delivered by email and post

Planning and Building Control
Staffordshire Moorlands District Council
Moorlands House
Stockwell Street
Leek
Staffs
ST136HQ

F.A.O Jane Curley

Dear Sirs

VARIATION OF CONDITION 50. CHURNET WORKS, MACCLESFIELD ROAD, LEEK: MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT TO INCLUDE A SUPERSTORE: APPLICATION REF. 10/00041/OMAJEI.

I write on behalf of my client, Sainsbury's Supermarkets Ltd, to seek a variation to Condition 50 of the planning permission granted on 4th May 2011, and subsequently reissued following minor amendments on 27th March 2012, for the development of a superstore led mixed use development at Churnet Works, Macclesfield Road, Leek. Condition 50 states that:

"The retail developments hereby approved shall not be brought into use until full details of the proposed alterations at the Church Street / St Edward Street junction (illustrated on drawing no. 9T7453/SK016) and the Stockwell Street / Ball Haye Street junction (illustrated on drawing no. 9T7453/SK013), which shall incorporate further two-dimensional revisions as recommended in the Stage 1 Safety Audit (attached to this consent) and in accordance with engineering details, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and the works have been completed in accordance with the approved details. The details submitted shall include means of construction, surface water drainage and street lighting details".

A variation of this condition is now sought to delete the requirement to complete the works to the Church Street / St Edward Street Junction. Thus this application seeks a variation to Condition 50 so as to read:

"The retail developments hereby approved shall not be brought into use until full details of the Stockwell Street / Ball Haye Street junction (illustrated on drawing no. 9T7453/SK013), which shall incorporate further two-dimensional revisions as recommended in the Stage 1 Safety Audit (attached to this consent) and in accordance with engineering details, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and the works have been completed in accordance with the approved details. The details submitted shall include means of construction, surface water drainage and street lighting details".

The application was submitted via planning portal (reference: PP-02764239), as such the application fee of £195 has been sent via post. A technical highways report, produced by Royal Haskoning (Sainsbury's Highway Consultants) providing detailed highways analysis in support of the application proposals is also enclosed with the requisite application form.

Background

In granting planning permission for the application proposals Sainsbury's was required to undertake works to three junctions in Leek Town Centre: the A53 Church Street / A520 St Edward Street priority junction, the A523 Stockwell Street / Buxton Road / A53 Ball Haye Street / Ball Haye Road signal controlled junction and the Haywood Street / Ball Haye Street / A523 Ashbourne Road / Derby Street roundabout junction (known locally as the War Memorial Junction). These works were to support both Sainsbury's application proposals and wider masterplan proposals for the town.

The improvements to the A523 Stockwell Street / Buxton Road / A53 Ball Haye Street / Ball Haye Road signal controlled junction and the War Memorial Junction have been implemented. In line with agreement reached through a S278 undertaking, the legal agreement needed to undertake works to a public highway, these works were undertaken by Staffordshire County Council (SCC). SCC is also responsible for the delivery of the junction works at the A53 Church Street / A520 St Edward Street. Ahead of the Christmas period 2012 Staffordshire Moorlands Borough Council requested that these works be delayed until the New Year, so as to avoid adversely impacting on retail trade in the town centre. Subsequently, the works to this junction have not yet been implemented.

This context has provided opportunity to review the situation and consequently Sainsbury's has taken the opportunity to monitor traffic flows in and around Leek since the opening of the store in January 2013. This monitoring exercise indicates that the works to the A53 Church Street / A520 St Edward Street junction are no longer considered necessary. It is on this basis that the application to vary condition 50 of the planning permission for the Churnet Works site is submitted.

The Church Street / St Edward Street Junction

The current operational performance of the junction has been reviewed following the partial opening of the Churnet Works site. The supporting technical report produced by Royal Haskoning considers the current operational performance of the junction and highways generally in Leek. It also contrasts this to the predicted vehicular movements in the town. The conclusions of this work are summarised below:

- Surveys undertaken in 2013 at the Church Street / St Edward Street junction have demonstrated an overall reduction in the levels of traffic that were predicted at the time of the original application in 2010;
- Traffic flows through the junction are more than 400 vehicles fewer than predicted for the weekday PM peak period and over 100 vehicles fewer during the Saturday peak;
- The predicted queues and delays at the junction have not occurred. Observed traffic flows are significantly below the levels predicted during the previous assessment and the queues forecast by the modelling assessment have not occurred.

In conclusion, in the context of current traffic conditions, the permitted amendments to the Church Street / St Edward Street junction would not improve the performance of the junction and the local highway network.

Whilst the application site has not been fully built out it is considered that the principal cause of the lower than anticipated traffic movements through the junction is a reduction in the background levels of traffic. Given the age of the original application (2010) this is likely attributable to a variety of reasons. The prevailing economic conditions have impacted on the manner and extent to which residents of Leek use

their cars, similarly the key destinations and trip generators in the town will have changed since the original highways assessment was prepared. For example the loss of jobs at the former offices of the Britannia Building Society will have impacted traffic flows in Leek.

In terms of the overall Highway strategy agreed at the time planning permission was granted for Churnet Works i.e. the wider town centre junction improvements, it has been evident that works to both the A523 Stockwell Street / Buxton Road / A53 Ball Haye Street / Ball Haye Road signal controlled junction and the War Memorial Junction have proved important both in terms of current traffic flows but also in developing the highways capacity for future developments in the town.

The end result of the changes of circumstance that have occurred in the time that has elapsed since the preparation of the application material is that the final junction improvement i.e. to the Church Street / St Edward Street junction are not necessary at the current time.

I trust you find the enclosed application acceptable and are to determine it therefore in a timely manner. Should you have any queries about the information submitted however please do not hesitate to contact me or my colleague Duncan Mason.

Yours sincerely

Duncan Mason
Associate Director