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28 November 2018

Joanna Vincent
Inquiry Manager

By email only to: joannavinc@personaassociates.co.uk

Dear Joanna

**CLIENT: E&K BENTON LIMITED
NETWORK RAIL LEVEL CROSSING PUBLIC INQUIRY
TUESDAY, 4 DECEMBER 2018**

Further to the Inquiry session attended by my client on 23 November and in advance of the next hearing date on 4 December at which my client will appear, I am instructed to submit further information on behalf of my client on the proposals under consideration.

My client has since the hearing on 23 November, revisited the route of the footpaths and we comment as follows:

1. Starting from the Stanford le Hope side of the Level Crossing, my client walked to Southend Rd, Victoria Rd, through the underpass, across the Gasworks field (land immediately to the south of the A1013 Stanford road), up the steps of the embankment, along the verge of Stanford Road (A1013), around the A13/Interchange roundabout then down the steps onto Footpath 83 (that forms part of the Stan's Walk) and links to the level crossing footpath 32. It took 25 minutes to join up with footpath 32. The roundabout was very easy to navigate. Even with no pedestrian lights, the traffic lights provide easy and safe opportunities to cross.

As an alternative, my client also walked the Network Rail proposed route but did not cross the A13 to join with footpath 32 on the north side of the A13 as it was too dangerous to cross.

We have also attached photos of the level crossing which my client found to provide a good level of visibility along the track in both directions. Furthermore, the gate and light system that was evidenced at the hearing on 23 November, in my client's opinion, offers a straightforward and safe method of ensuring users can cross the railway.

We understand from my client's report of the discussions at the hearing on 23 November that Network Rail inferred that Thurrock Council do not want to direct users to the Interchange roundabout but three of the current footpaths already lead there, one of which, footpath 38, is the very popular Stan's Walk which has a large organised national walk every year and my client is not aware that there been any problems crossing it.

As my client understands from discussions at the hearing on 23 November, the level crossing meets all the safety criteria so shouldn't be closed but, if it is, the best solution is for users to be directed to the proposed footpath and steps up to the Manorway to the east of the railway line then walk around the Interchange roundabout to connect to footpath 38. To assist users, pedestrian crossing lights could be installed.

My client also learnt at the previous hearing that the proposed footpath to the west of the railway line would provide a short walk for dog walkers but why should this be imposed on his land when the short stretch of Footpath 32 currently on his land that Network Rail is looking to replace is not used as a self-contained singular walk. The point is to link to footpath 32 on the other side of the A13, not to create additional recreational footpaths, so the Interchange should thus be used.

We have enclosed photos (at the bottom of this letter) which were taken by my client at various intervals on the above routes which my client may wish to refer to at the hearing on 4 December.

2. A further point that has arisen my client's understanding from their attendance at a Thurrock Council Local Access Forum last year which discussed plans for a cycle network through Thurrock which matches Network Rail's proposed new footpath around the boundary of my client's land.
3. We also understand that there are proposals to install a 3-metre wide bridge from land known as the Gasworks field (immediately south of the A1013 Stanford Road) into my client's small triangular field situated between the railway to the west, the A1013 Stanford Road to the east and the A1014 Manorway to the north in order to "futureproof" this for a cycle route network.

My client strongly objects to any proposals such as this which are seeking to provide additional rights of access through the Network Rail level crossing closure scheme, which appears to be a way of forcing through the wider plans by the Council 'by the back door'

Please do let me know if you have any immediate queries.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M R Holland', followed by a large, stylized flourish or checkmark.

M R Holland MRICS
Director

HOLLAND LAND AND PROPERTY

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c.c. Tom Benton, E&K Benton Limited

Enc. Photos (below)



Bottom of embankment steps to A1013 Stanford Road



Top of embankment steps adjacent to A1013 Stanford Road



Top of steps looking north to Stanford Interchange from A1013 Stanford Road



Looking north towards Horndon on the Hill from the Interchange (note tarmac footpaths)



Top of steps to footpath 83 'Stan's Walk'



Top of steps looking west from Interchange towards Stanford-le-Hope/A1013 Stanford Road



Looking south from Interchange towards Stanford-le-Hope (note tarmac footpaths)



Current level crossing gate/light arrangement



Visibility lines at crossing along railway line (1)



Visibility lines at crossing along railway line (2)