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**Eatenden Lane
Mountfield
Robertsbridge
East Sussex**

Planning, Design & Access Statement

| | Name | Position | Signature | Date |
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Contents

| | Page No |
|--|----------|
| 1. Introduction Study Limitations | 1 |
| 2. The Site and Setting | 2 |
| 3. Planning History of Site and Area | 4 |
| 4. Site Proposals | 4 |
| 5. Planning Policy Framework Principle of the use Impact on highway movement and safety | 5 |
| 6. Summary | 6 |

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This planning, design and access statement has been prepared on the instruction of British Gypsum to support the planning application for the realignment of the site entrance at Eatenden Lane, Robertsbridge, East Sussex.

Report Limitations

- 1.2. The findings, recommendations and conclusions of this report are based on information obtained from a variety of external sources which are understood to be reputable. However, Evans & Langford LLP cannot guarantee the authenticity or reliability of any data and/or records provided by third parties and no liability can be accepted for any erroneous information or the conclusions drawn from it.



Google map view of the site

2. The Site and Setting

- 2.1 The site is situated on Eatenden Lane, Mountsfield just to the south of the railway crossing. Vehicular access is gained from the A2100 London Road via a private access road, which crosses Eatenden Lane before proceeding to the British Gypsum site. The site is centred on approximate grid reference 574185, 119700.
- 2.2 There are residential properties on both sides of Eatenden Lane, and an industrial yard leading from the western access road. On the south western corner of the junction is a shed with woodland (Little Hucksteep) behind.
- 2.3 The site is situated within the High Weald National Character Area (NCA). The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) covers 78 percent of the NCA. The closest site is the River Line SSSI which is 1.5 miles to the west.
- 2.4 An Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) has been completed by Golder Associates (UK) Ltd. This has found that no statutory or non-statutory nature conservation sites will be adversely affected by the proposal. Habitats at the site are generally of negligible or low ecological value and no valued ecological features will be affected by the development.
- 2.5 A level survey of the site shows the site to lie between 39.70m along the access road to the west rising up to approximately 43.70m along Eatenden Lane. Eatenden Lane falls relatively steeply through the junction.
- 2.6 The current junction is staggered, with HGV's required to make a sharp left right turn in order to negotiate the junction. This results in vehicles crossing to the wrong side of the road at a location where visibility is limited by vegetation on private gardens. The additional low speed turning is also causing the surface to break up which impacts upon skid resistance through the junction.



Google streetview of the site (looking north)

- 2.7 The current crossfall around the junction encourages the accumulation of water particularly on the eastern side of the junction. On occasion, in winter months this freezes and creates a safety issue.

3. Planning History of Site and Area

3.1. There have been no applications relating to the junction within the last ten years.

4. Site Proposals

4.1 The application site is currently occupied by a staggered junction.

4.2 This application proposes a realignment of the junction to provide a straighter alignment for HGV vehicles. Visibility will be improved as vehicles will be able to stop squarer to the junction. Skid resistance will also be improved.

4.3 A new retaining wall up to 1.6m high will be provided along the northern edge of the access road and just west of the new junction, with an Armco barrier to provide edge protection.

4.4 A number of ecological improvements have been proposed within the EclA to mitigate any impacts from the works. Mitigation measures have been specified in the report, in accordance with East Sussex, South Downs and Brighton & Hove Waste and Minerals Plan 2013 policy WMP27. Proposed enhancement measures at the site include the erection of bat and bird boxes, planting with native grassland and wildflower species, which will have a positive impact on the ecological value of the site.

5 Planning Policy

5.1 It is submitted that the key issues to consider in relation to this application are:

- Whether the realignment would be acceptable to East Sussex Highways in principle;
- Impact on highway movement and safety.

5.2 Principle of the realignment

5.2.1 The application site falls within an area covered by Rother's Core Strategy. Clause 18.24 notes that 'in terms of road safety, indicators demonstrate Rother is significantly worse than the regional and national average'. Policy TR2 (v) states that improvements in the provision of transport will be achieved through 'promotion of road safety through education and design'.

5.2.2 East Sussex, South Downs and Brighton & Hove Waste and Minerals Plan 2013 policy WMP12 aims to 'safeguard and maintain supplies to and from the British Gypsum works throughout the Plan period.' The works site at Robertsbridge is also safeguarded under policy WMP14.

5.2.3 Discussions of the proposal have been held with East Sussex County Council Highways, and they are generally in favour of the proposal. During a site meeting, the safety issues which this scheme seeks to address were acknowledged. This proposal does not seek to increase the number of vehicle movements from the works.

5.3 Impact on highway movement and safety

5.3.1 As stated in section 2.6, currently HGV's are required to make a sharp left right turn in order to negotiate the junction. Drivers have reported a number of near misses at the junction, but this is quite likely to be under reported. This proposal will realign the junction to allow a straighter passage through, which will provide greater visibility of oncoming vehicles along Eatenden Lane.

5.3.2 The tarmac surface will also be regraded and re-layed. This will improve the surface regularity and skid resistance at the approach to the junction.

5.3.3 These measures will meet the objectives of WMP18 and WMP26 to improve safety of access to the strategic highway network, and will have a positive impact on the highway network.

5.3.4 In order to address the surface runoff, an inspection has been undertaken of the existing drainage system. A number of gullies were found to have either been buried

or filled with silt and therefore not operational, hence the high volume of surface runoff entering the junction. Under this scheme the drainage system will be cleaned by ESCC Highways following site discussions. This will help ESCC to meet the East Sussex Highway Asset Management Drainage Strategy objectives of 'Defining the Highway Drainage Assets' and 'Working in Collaboration with People'.

6 Summary

- 6.1 This junction provides access for HGV's to the British Gypsum site in Mountfield, East Sussex, which is noted as a significant employment site. Granting permission for the junction realignment is considered acceptable as it will improve the safety of the highway network.
- 6.2 This proposal will realign the junction to provide a straighter alignment for HGV vehicles. Visibility will be improved as vehicles will be able to stop squarer to the junction. The drainage system will be cleaned to prevent surface flow and as a result skid resistance will also be improved by preventing icing.
- 6.3 The proposals are in accordance with Council policy objectives, in particular Rother's Core Strategy and East Sussex, South Downs and Brighton & Hove Waste and Minerals Plan 2013.
- 6.4 This statement has demonstrated that the proposals are consistent with relevant policy, and acceptable in terms of design and access. Accordingly, it is requested that this application be given favourable consideration.