

TWPTA

New Tyne Crossing

Proof of Evidence on
Landscape / Townscape
and Visual Impacts

By Colin Jubb

Summary

DRAFT 2

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1** I have assessed the landscape / townscape and visual impacts of the project in accordance with the methodology suggested in the Institute of Environmental Assessment and Landscape Institute Guidelines.
- 1.2** This involved carrying out an assessment of the character and quality of the existing, landscape / townscape and visual amenity by means of site surveys undertaken during the course of numerous site visits made at different times of the year. The changes, which the development would make, were then assessed using a process of reasoned subjective judgement.
- 1.3** In order to standardise the level of significance of the effects, I applied a six-point scale ranging from severe adverse to beneficial. The criteria for each of these six categories are covered in detailed in my Proof of Evidence.

2.0 The character of existing landscape / townscape

- 2.1** The character of the effected landscape / townscape on both sides of the river, can generally be described as fragmented. This can be attributed to the disruption resulting from the construction of the existing road tunnel in the 1960s, and the lower density of re-developed areas generally. I have sub-divided the area into smaller area's of different character. See appendix C.

North Tyneside

- 2.2** The land immediately to the south of the metro line embankment is relatively flat and covered by rank vegetation and sparse hedgerows. The Coast-to-Coast (C2C) Cycleway crosses it from east to west via a footbridge across the A19. The area to the east of the A19 is subject to illegal tipping.
- 2.3** The residential areas in East Howdon, are separated from the A19, Tyne Tunnel approach roads by the Howdon bypass. Earth mounding and a belt of maturing planting screens the bypass from the properties in Brinkburn Street and Howdon Road. See appendix B.
- 2.4** The remaining land is predominantly industrial in character, dominated by the approach roads and ancillary buildings associated with the existing road tunnel.
- 2.5** The area immediately adjacent to the River is occupied by a large expanse of concrete hard standing (the fabrication yard) which is screened from the north by a substantial stone wall some 3.5m high. The few industrial buildings within the yard are between 30 to 40 years old.

South Tyneside

- 2.6** The area adjacent to the River was reclaimed from industrial land and made into a public park during the 1980's. However, it is not overlooked and is relatively isolated which has resulted in it being little used and subject to vandalism. See appendix D. The area contains three listed buildings, details of which are given in my full proof.
- 2.7** From Chaytor Street to the High Street is largely open in character due to the presence of the playing fields associated with St Peter's and Dunn Street schools and the gardens surrounding the former residential home.
- 2.8** Between the High Street and the ring road is a densely developed residential area containing Victorian terraces as well as more recent redevelopment. However, the terrace to the west of Stothard Street was cleared some years ago and has not been redeveloped.
- 2.9** The area to the south of the ring road is dominated by roads, roundabouts and overbridges.
- 2.10** To the east the land falls away to the Don Valley, which is largely open in character. It is both a wildlife resource and an informal recreation area.
- 2.11** To the west, the land rises steeply to the housing on Epinay Walk. The steep embankment is covered with woodland between the A19 and the housing. Immediately to the east of Epinay Walk is a triangular area of grassed open space.

3.0 Potential impacts

North Tyneside

- 3.1** The new toll plaza, and associated buildings, would be constructed in the triangular area of land to the east of the existing A19. It would provide the opportunity to regrade the land and improve the coast-to-coast (C2C) cycleway whilst maintaining the visual amenity of residents in East Howdon.
- 3.2** The construction of the tunnel portal would remove the existing planting between the East Howdon Bypass and the new tunnel approach road. Although the loss of planting is regrettable it would not be significant.
- 3.3** Three industrial buildings would need to be demolished within the fabrication yard along with a section of the stone boundary wall adjacent to Tyne View Terrace. However, I understand that it is the intention to rebuild the wall and the buildings.

South Tyneside

- 3.4** Although the Riverside Park would have to be cleared it is the intention that it would be reinstated. At the same time it is recognised that the Park does have severe security problems resulting from its current layout, which would be addressed in the new design.

- 3.5** Residents in Stothard Street, parts of the High Street and Salem Street in particular would experience a reduction in their visual amenity throughout the construction of the Tunnel. However, it would be temporary and following completion of the re-instatement works, would be restored to its original condition or improved in the case of Stothard Street.
- 3.6** The development requires a new ventilation building, which for engineering reasons must be sited close to the southern portal. In this location it would be sufficiently removed from nearby residents to have little visual impact.
- 3.7** Construction of the Jarrow Junction would require the removal of the planting below Epinay Walk along with much of the area of incidental open space to the east of the housing which would have a significant impact.
- 4.0** **Landscape reinstatement and mitigation measures**
- 4.1** Throughout the development of the project considerable effort has been given to removing or reducing adverse impacts and realising the beneficial opportunities, which the scheme presents.
- 4.2** I have included within my Proof of Evidence, illustrative layouts, see appendix K and L, showing the landscape reinstatement and mitigation proposals for the construction area. These were also included in the Environmental Statement and show the minimum landscape structure, which the Concessionaire would be required to provide. The Concessionaire would be required to submit detailed landscape proposals to the relevant local authority for the discharge of the landscape conditions prior to work commencing, as is the case with any similar large development project.
- 4.3** In the case of South Tyneside, the restoration proposals have been prepared in collaboration with the local authority planning department to ensure that they do not conflict with the aims and objectives of the Council's Development Plan for the area. The proposals can be summarised as follows:
- 4.4** Substantial new planting comparable in scale with the engineering structures would be provided at both the northern and southern entrances to the tunnel.
- 4.5** Three buildings within the Howdon Yard along with the stone boundary wall adjacent to Tyne View Terrace would be re-built thereby minimising any potential impact.
- 4.6** Jarrow Riverside Park would be re-instated, but in a way, which would increase visibility thereby encouraging its greater use.
- 4.7** Ferry Road would be re-opened to improve the visibility of access to the Pedestrian Tunnel thereby encouraging its greater use.
- 4.8** Ormonde Street and Friar Way would be re-instated in a way which allows the extension of the Riverside Park southwards to Monestary Court.
- 4.9** Landscaped open space would be created on the covered sections of tunnels between Salem Street and Howard Street. The aspect for residents in Stothard Street would be improved and recreational space for local people created.

4.10 At Epinay Walk, the provision of a boundary wall treatment similar to that existing between Priory Road and St. Paul's, would provide a secure boundary and acceptable screening for residents.

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 Although the project would impact on the landscape and townscape on both sides of the River it is on the south side that it would have the greatest effect.

5.2 On the north side of the River, the scale of the landscape is such that it would be able to accommodate the changes particularly with the extensive woodland planting which is proposed.

5.3 South of the River is more densely developed although within the construction corridor, the Riverside Park, the school playing fields, the grounds of the former residential home and other areas of open space left over following previous redevelopment, reduces the density. Consequently, after completion of the landscape reinstatement, the appearance of most of the area would not change significantly from what it is at present. However, there would clearly be changes to individual sites such as at Epinay Walk

5.4 The restoration proposals allow for the creation of high quality landscaped public open space. However, they would also assist potential redevelopment opportunities particularly along the edges of the corridor, which would be enhanced by the green outlook provided by the landscaped open space.

5.5 In conclusion, I consider that the landscape and reinstatement proposals, which I have described, are appropriate and achievable and represent an acceptable means of integrating the New Tyne Crossing into its surrounding environment.