

Planning Officer's Report – LDCA DECEMBER 2020

APPLICATION	2020/87 – Rehabilitation of Field Road and Side Path Road: Selective Widening by cutting into the Hillside, Improving the Field Road/Side Path Junction, Replacing and Upgrading the road drainage, positioning Scree Netting on selected areas to retain Hillside debris and constructing Safety Barrier along part of the road, installing new water main under Field Road and Replacing the Road Base and Resurfacing,
PERMISSION SOUGHT	Permission in Full
REGISTERED	22 nd October 2020
APPLICANT	Project Management Unit, SHG
PARCEL	JT170093 and RV0106
SIZE	Approx.3.0 acres
LAND OWNER	Crown Estates
LOCALITY	Part of Jamestown and Rupert's Valley
ZONE	Coastal Zone
CONSERVATION AREA	Jamestown Conservation Area in Part
CURRENT USE	Highway
PUBLICITY	The application was advertised as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Independent Newspaper on 23rd October 2020▪ A site notice displayed in accordance with Regulations.▪ Press Notice for Public Meeting
EXPIRY	13 th November 2020
REPRESENTATIONS	None Received
DECISION ROUTE	Delegated / LDCA / EXCO

A. CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------|
| 1. Water Division | No Objection |
| 2. Sewage Division | No Objection |
| 3. Energy Division | No Objection |

4. Fire & Rescue	No Response
5. Roads Section	No Objection
6. Property Division	No Response
7. Environmental Management	No Objection - Comments
8. Public Health	No Response
9. Agriculture & Natural Resources	No Response
10. St Helena Police Services	Not Consulted
11. Aerodrome Safe Guarding	Not Consulted
12. Enterprise St Helena (ESH)	No Objection - Comments
13. National Trust	No Response
14. Heritage Society	Objection – Comments
15. Sure SH	No Objection - Comment

B. PLANNING OFFICER’S APPRAISAL

LOCALITY & ZONING

The development application site area is a linear highway corridor, Field Road and Side Path, of around 2.8km length and covering an area of approximately 3.0 acres. The development area runs southwards from The Brow (junction of Seales Corner, Napoleon Street and Side Path) to the junction of Side Path and Field Road and then north-east along Field Road to its junction with Haul Road in Rupert’s Valley.

Diagram 1: Location Plan



The entire length of Side Path and south-west section of Field Road are within the Proposed Jamestown Conservation and the whole application site is within the Coastal Zone.

Diagram 2: Application Site



THE PROPOSAL

Both Field Road and Side Path have zero residual life in engineering terms and are no longer economically maintainable. There is also an increasing risk of rapid and progressive failure, particularly of Field Road. Given that they are the key primary routes serving Jamestown, the Airport, the industrial area Rupert's with its critical national infrastructure (Power Station, BFI and wharf facilities), rehabilitation of both Field Road and Side Path is of national importance.

The R2 Road Project provides the opportunity to improve road safety, particularly on Field Road. Without this project intervention, in addition to the social and economic risks that would result from rapid, progressive road failure, the road safety risks would soon become untenable.

The objective of the proposed development is to upgrade both Field Road and Side Path by widening them for two lane traffic, improvement to the Field Road/Side Path junction, improve road safety through better sight line and reducing blind spots and installation of safety barriers along Field Road. The proposal is described as rehabilitation through selective widening by cutting into the hillsides, reconstruction of the road pavement with the removing of approximately 350mm of the existing surface and replacing it with new graded crushed rock road base material, and new slurry seal surfacing. The road drainage will also be completely replaced and upgraded, as it is currently inadequate. The proposal will also include the ducting of water main and telecommunication cables within the road.

BACKGROUND AND PLANNING HISTORY

Side Path and Field Road is the primary strategic route from Jamestown into Rupert's Valley and via the Haul Road to the Airport. Napoleon Street and the northern section of Side Path, length of around 2.0km also provides the primary route out of Jamestown and beyond the junction with Field Road access to the Briars, Alarm Forest, Longwood, Levelwood and the Airport. The road is cut into the hillside with a stone rubble (mortared) retaining wall supporting the lower edge of the road overlooking Jamestown. The initial access path and the route alignment probably dates back to the early settlement on the Island and has over the years been widened to vehicular traffic needs, developed and constructed to its current width. It is a steep, mainly a single lane road with many widenings and passing places. The condition of the road is very poor and in engineering terms has zero residual life and consequently needs regular maintenance.

Field Road is the primary route between Jamestown (Side Path) and Rupert's, and used for access to the Power Station, BFI and Rupert's Wharf, as well as many businesses and dwellings in Rupert's Valley. The opening of the Haul road has created a new road link from Jamestown through to Deadwood, Longwood and the Airport via Rupert's, however this is a much longer and time consuming route to Rupert's Valley from Jamestown as an alternative. Field Road is also cut into the hillside, primarily a steep, single lane road with few passing places and very poor sight lines. Field Road is in a very poor condition due the road pavement having zero residual life, as well as damage caused by heavy vehicles, rock and scree debris, all requiring regular maintenance. It has a combination of a safety rail in very poor condition and a low stone rubble (mortared) retaining wall supporting the lower edge of the road overlooking Rupert's valley.

The 2016 SHG commissioned WSP engineering condition report formed the supporting document for the development application seeking outline permission for the rehabilitation works for these road in 2017, Ref: 2017/84. The WSP Report was considered too technical and complex for planning consideration purposes, and planning application was kept on hold pending resubmission of relevant information in an acceptable format. For reasons unknown, the development application has not been progressed. However, the development and economic activities and operations have continued to grow within Rupert's Valley with the objectives of developing the port related services and facilities in Rupert and to develop James Bay for tourism and leisure related activities. Now with the grant of development permission, Ref: 2020/41, in August 2020 for the port freight container operation in Lower Rupert, the need to upgrade this nationally strategic transport route between the port operations in Lower Rupert and the commercial and civic centre in Jamestown has become necessary, important and a priority, as the road needs to be able accommodate the

increase in the vehicular traffic, particularly HGV, along this route and ensure it is also safe for all road users.

There have also been number of other projects granted development permission in past few years, notably the Rockfall Mitigation project for Rupert's Valley and Jamestown, Ref: 2019/62, that was the precursor to the relocation of the port operation that has been implemented to safeguard future investment, and the Fibre Optic Cable development, Ref: 2019/111, that will be landing on the Island via Rupert's Beach in 2021. There is also now the imminent construction of the Rupert Sewage Treatment Plant, granted development permission in 2016, Ref; 2016/54.

PRE-APPLICATION PROPSAL DEVELOPMENT

Prior to the submission of the development application, the applicant had engaged with the planning officers in the formulation of the proposal and were advised that they should undertake constructive engagement with the wider community, local businesses and stakeholders before formalising the proposal and submitting these formally and that detailed supporting documents setting out the case for the proposal should be provided with development application. Application was also received for the Planning Authority to adopt an Opinion under the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulation.

The applicant held number of consultation meeting to engage with the local residents, business operators and stakeholders to identify issues and concerns that need to be addressed, this also included a walk around the area.

DETAIL OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The development application covers a total area of approximately 3 hectares, from the Brow above Napoleon Street, along Side Path for a length of 1.3 km long to the junction with Field Road and then along Field Road for a length of 1.5 km to its junction with Haul Road. Field Road currently has an average width of 4.3 m and Side Path currently has an average width of 4.9 m. The proposal is to increase the minimum width of both roads to 5.5 m to enable two lane of traffic movement.

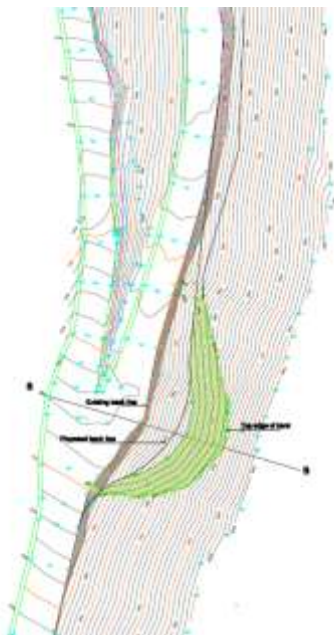
The terrain of both roads is formally classified as 'mountainous'. For Field Road the average gradient is 16.5% and the maximum gradient is 20% and for Side Path the average gradient is 13.5% and the maximum gradient is 16%. Side slopes of both roads are up to the vertical where they have been cut into the hillside, and are typically 45 degrees elsewhere. The proposal is to cut into the hillside and stabilising the bank with retaining wall using gabions with rock reused from the project excavations where

possible as is the case at present along these roads. Through this process of cutting back some improvement in the sight can also be achieved. Due to mountainous terrain it is not possible to remove the many bends that create blind spots, however there will be some improvements. These physical constraints are common traits of the roads on the Island and drivers are averse to these conditions and will act as speed control.

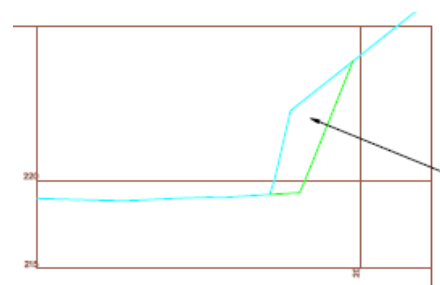
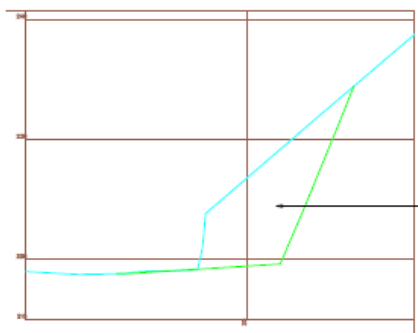
Along the length of these two roads there are number of areas where extensive cut-back into the hillside will be required and due to the physical make-up the hillside extensive shoring work will be required to stabilise the bank. This is indicated in the detailed plans for the sections of the road.

The proposed junction alignment of Side Path and Field Road is a crucial aspect of this development proposal. Given the sharp angle of the turn in both direction of traffic (from Jamestown - Side Path into Field Road and from Field Road into Side Path for Jamestown), considerable cut-back into the hillside is required in order to enable the largest of HGVs on Island to be able make the single movement turn, also with two vehicles negotiating the turn in each direction.

Diagrams 3 & 4: 10.0m Radius Turn



Diagrams 5 & 6: 7.5m Radius Turn



The details submitted shows two options with a 10.0m radius turn and a 7.5m radius turn to indicate the potential land take-up in each and the likely impact on the landscape. Whilst ideally a 10.0m radius would provide the optimum turning circle for all large vehicles, the physical change in the hillside from the cut-back that would be required would be considerable. The cut-back into the hillside required for the 7.5m radius turn is also considerable given the nature of the terrain, landscape and environmental impact, but this radius will still leave some difficulty for the larger vehicles to turn in a single movement and when two vehicles from the opposite direction approach the junction together.

In order to leave the option open for the applicant to assess the details of this junction alignment, having considered the two options, this can be included as condition should the Authority and the Governor-in-Council be minded to grant development permission. The important issue for consideration is potential visual impact on the landscape arising from the cut-back into the hillside. Given the rugged mountainous terrain and landscape, the level of cut-back into the hillside and the potential slope and treatment required for 10.0m radius junction would not be considered to have any greater or lesser visual impact on the landscape for a 7.5m radius junction in this location. Similarly it is unlikely that the level cut-back into the hillside will have any significant impact on the ecology of the area. This is demonstrated by the photograph of the hillside elevation at the junction.

Diagram 3. The Hillside Elevation at the Field Road and Side Path Junction



The development application does not include any proposal for the future traffic management along Napoleon Street as a consequence of the potential increase in the vehicular traffic accessing Jamestown and in particular HGVs. Whilst this development will not result in the potential increase in vehicular traffic along this upgraded

strategic highway and Napoleon Street, increased vehicular traffic will be due to the development permission granted for the Port Freight Container development in Lower Rupert's Valley, however two project are mutually inclusive. In the report on the development application considered by the Authority it explicitly made clear that the future transport, traffic management and highway improvement will be to subject future development application where the potential increase in vehicular traffic and improvement to the highways would be proposed.

There is no doubt that there will be an increase in traffic movement along this strategic highway and within Jamestown in the future with the development of the port facilities in Rupert's Valley and it is likely cause highway safety issues for all road users. Through the grant of development permission any existing issues or problems should not be exacerbated, but through the development management process and in the assessment development proposal opportunity should be taken to resolve those issue, concerns and problems. It is therefore considered reasonable and appropriate that there should be a commitment from the applicant to put in place and deliver traffic management proposals to alleviate any potential traffic congestion and highway safety issues and concerns.

The projected increase in vehicular traffic along these road associated with the various development is set out in the table below. Whilst project increase in the vehicular traffic along Field Road is significant, however along South Path and into Napoleon Street is small in comparison

Road	Current Traffic Count (Both Ways)	Proposed Traffic Volume (Both Ways)	% Change in Traffic
Field Road	272	654	140.44
Side Path	800	926	15.75 *

**This equates to an increase of 14 vehicles per hour (08.00 – 17.00) in Napoleon Street (an additional vehicle every 4minutes)*

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS

The applicant submitted an application for Screening Opinion in respect of the proposed development and the proposed development was assessed In accordance with the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulation as set out in the Land Planning and Development Control Ordinance 2013. The conclusion of the Screening Opinion undertaken was that there will be an impact of the proposed development on a

number environmental factors, however, it is not considered to be significant to require a full EIA Report. This was supported by the Chief Environment Officer. The summary of the Screening Opinion is set out below:

The Screening Opinion undertaken concludes that whilst there is some significant adverse impact from the proposed development, particularly during the period of construction and some adverse impact post the construction with the operation of the improved Field Road and Side Path with increase in traffic, however the overall adverse environmental impact is not considered to be significant to require a full EIA report. In order to address the environmental issues apparent at this stage the following should be considered and incorporated into the detailed design stage of the project and submitted as part of the full planning application:

- *Construction management plan to include management of dust, emissions, noise, waste and traffic;*
- *Rockfall mitigation plan;*
- *Transport accessibility for the residents of Rupert during the period of construction to ensure that they are not economically or socially disadvantaged during any planned road closure of Field Road;*
- *Potential impact of the increasing volume of traffic, particularly heavy goods vehicles, along Napoleon Street to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all road users. This should include proposal for traffic management and parking control, policing and enforcement within Napoleon Street for periods when there will be higher level heavy goods vehicles transporting goods to the shops.*
- *Assessment of the retaining historic stone wall along Side Path Road.*

For reference, prior to the submission of the development application in 2017, Ref: 2017/84, Screening Opinion adopted in 2016 in respect of the road rehabilitation project drew a similar conclusion; that a full EIA Report is not required.

In view of the conclusion reached on the assessment of the proposed development in preparing the Screening Opinion and the Opinion adopted by the Authority in this respect, this is in compliance with the EIA Regulation.

In compliance with the advice to the applicant, the applications has been accompanied with Environmental Management Plan setting out details to measures mitigate against the potential impact of the development, particularly during construction. As construction of Field Road will require a complete closure of the road, alternative arrangements need to be in place to ensure residents in Rupert's Valley are not economically and socially disadvantaged or at risk, particularly in case of emergency. For the duration of the construction works on Side Path, alternative access is available through Market Street and Constitution Hill, though insurance will be required that this route can cope with the volume of traffic particularly around the General Hospital. The applicant is also investigating the opportunity to run a ferry service between Rupert Valley and Jamestown for the duration of road closure.

C. POLICY CONSIDERATION

The proposed development is assessed against the LDCP Policies set out below:

- Coastal Zone: Policies CZ1

- Road and Transport Policies: RT.1(a) RT.4 and RT.5
- Built Heritage Policies: BH.1 and BH.5

The Land Development Control Plan policies identified above are the principle policies for the assessment of the proposed development. There is, unfortunately, no specific policy in the Coastal Zone Section of the LDCP which provides support for the development or upgrade of these roads. However, as objective of the Primary Policy CZ1 is to retain the natural appearance and ecology of the coastal zone, these roads are long established in the coastal zone landscape and the slight widening of the road would have minimal visual impact on the natural landscape of this area. Similarly, the widening would have minimal impact on the local ecology.

The Road and Transport policies are the most relevant LDCP policies for the assessment of this development application and the Primary Policy RT1 supports the construction of new and the upgrade of the roads that are appropriate to Island's development needs. The upgrade of these strategic roads is important and necessary for the future growth and development of the Island and in sustaining its economic, social and environmental welling.

Similarly assessment against policy RT4 in principle supports the upgrade of the Field Road as there are no existing footpaths that will be adversely affected by the proposal nor do they oppose the development being proposed. There is footpath accessible on the ridge in Field Road and the proposed rehabilitation works will affect access.

Policy RT5 requires proposal for roads should be subject to Environmental Impact Assessment and appropriate design standards. The proposal for the development of this road has been assessed against EIA Regulations and the conclusion of the Screening Opinion concluded that a full EIA is not required. Recognising the strategic importance of these road the construction of the road will be the highest standard in compliance with Highway Authorities own guidance.

Whilst whole of Side Path and small section of Field Road is within the Jamestown Conservation Area there is no other heritage or historic assets along this route as specifically listed building or structure. So with the section of the site that is within the conservation area need to be conserved and enhanced within its historic setting and value, particularly as the alignment of the retaining wall along Side Path which dates back to when Side Path was first constructed in the late 17th century during the Island's early settlement, however much of the construction of the wall is not original and appears more recent, mid to late 20th century. The hillside edge is much changed as there has been on-going widening of the road over the years to improve vehicular movement. Much of the works against the hillside of the road have been to make the safe the access road from rockfall and to halt soil erosion. Therefore assessment of the proposed development against Built environment Policies BH.1 and BH.5 is important.

The road widening and upgrade does not impact the retaining wall and with the proposals to make good and conserve this retaining wall and its historic feature this is considered to be a positive outcome of the development. The widening of the proposal for the upgrade of the existing roads with widen along its route against the hillside with selective cutting and shoring up the land would have minimum visual impact as there has been a changing landscape and visual changes arising from further cutting into the hillside will be similar. Where the proposal is build retain wall against the hillside this will be similar to the method of previous construction and will utilise much the material that is mined. It is considered that in principle the policy objectives are adhered to conserve the historic features and upgrade where opportunity is provided during the implementation.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

A public consultation meeting was organised to provide an opportunity for the local community to seek clarification on the proposed development and to express their view. The meeting was attended by 22 people. The main issues raised are summarised as follows:

- upgrade of these roads is a temporary solution for the traffic between Rupert and Jamestown due to constraints in Napoleon Street and the Government should consider the coast road;
- alternative route through the valley should be considered to over the gradient issue
- concern regarding access during construction
- concern on the volume of traffic through Napoleon Street and the potential of hold-ups

REPRESENTATION

A representation has been received from the Heritage Society and two members of the public, Aubrey George and Martin Peters, to the overall proposal, the details and the process and the details of the information included on the development application. There is also letter of support from Enterprise Saint Helena. These representations are summarised below:

- representation raised by a member of the public is regarding management of heavy goods traffic and control of delivery by business and developers through Napoleon Street;
- applicant to discuss the need of the businesses for transport of goods from Rupert to their premises;
- representation regarding the option for coast road as a solution to the traffic solution between Rupert and Jamestown;

- drawings are poor of quality, how the various plans link, no longitudinal sections or elevations of the road proposals, no landmarks to locate places on the roads or key to decipher the colours;
- drawings do not clearly indicate the top of any excavation into the bank and not possible to ascertain the height and length of any cutting and cannot establish the effects of cuttings on the landscape;
- Side Path and Field Road junction is completely ambiguous and there are two alternative schemes and this is confusing, application should be for one project;
- insufficient information to assess the application and what there is, is confusing;
- Design and Access Statement, when the applicant consulted Heritage Society this scheme was not presented;
- applicant recognises the importance of LDCP policy RT1a, there is no justification presented for the widening of Side Path from an average 4.9m to 5.5m throughout;
- traffic figure presented show increased use on certain days, this increase can be accommodated throughout the day between the morning and evening peaks and the increase does not equate to the intensity of use at peak times;
- no justification based on increased traffic or improved flow and no justification is presented to improve safety as no current safety issues were raised;
- proposal will affect the landscape but there is little or no information as to how;
- Chief Planning Officer has given an opinion that an EIA is not required but has not enabled the Screening Opinion to be viewed by the public and this appears contrary the current EIA Guidelines and the Governor in Council;
- there remains a question over the use of steel barriers and gabions as both are out of character on the Island and walls are more in keeping;
- dumping of spoil proposed at three site in Ruperts and the Haul Road is again an undecided proposal which is not a proper application;
- consultation process when a project is an application should not include choices, that is for pre-application;
- Heritage Society objects to the application due to insufficient information.

The representation from Enterprise Saint Helena is in support of the development and consider the improvement and upgrade of the strategic transport corridor is important for the economic growth and wellbeing of the Island following the relocation of the port freight facilities in Rupert's Valley.

OFFICER RESPONSE

There are number of issues raised in this representation. Firstly, the appropriateness of the widening and upgrading proposal against any other highway option previously mooted by the Government is not directly related to the proposed development set out in this development application, because this development does not prejudice the Government from reconsidering the coast road in the future if that is seen as ultimate solution for the transporting of goods between Rupert's Wharf and Jamestown and sufficient funding is available to finance this project. Similarly, any other new road

schemes are not prejudiced by the improvement of Field Road and Side Path. Response to the other issues raised are set out below:

- linear development such as highway networks, it is considered that level of detail provided on the plans is adequate for the assessment of the proposed works;
- sections of the road where there is significant cut into the hillside and reinstatement works, details drawings are provided;
- options for the junction are submitted with 7.5m and 10.0m radius turning to indicate the level of land cutting required for the junction alignment, this provides the opportunity to assess the potential impact on the landscape;
- Screening Opinion in respect of the proposed development was prepared and the Opinion adopted by the Authority has been set out in the report and is considered to meet with the requirements of EIA Regulations;
- there are no proposals to remove or alter the retaining wall along South Path and with the applicants intention to repair and restore the retaining wall should improve the condition and historic value of the wall;
- retaining wall or other forms protection to stabilise the hillside will similar to the construction methods already used and it is considered that these will not be obtrusive in the landscape;
- installation of road safety barriers along Field Road are designed to provide safety for road users;
- applicant has been in discussions with local businesses and other operators of HGVs in respect of potential and perceived constraints in Napoleon Street and how this could be best managed;
- transportation of goods and use of HGVs from Rupert to warehouses and business premises in Jamestown could potentially cause traffic issues in Napoleon Street at the peak operation times if car parking is not controlled and managed effectively, the applicant has been advised to consider traffic management options, including car parking control and enforcement, and this will be condition should development permission is granted.

OFFICER ASSESSMENT

The development proposals set out in the application and accompanying documents for the upgrade and improvement of Field Road and South Path provides sufficient information and level of design details to determine the impact of the proposed development in the local area and on the landscape. During the formulation of the proposal the applicant had been in consultation with the planning officers to agree the information that will be required and applicant had consulted with the local community, businesses and stakeholders.

The proposed development is supported by number Land Development Control Plan policies against which the development has been assessed, in particular the Road and Transport policy RT1. The improvement and upgrade of Field Road and South Path is important for the future development needs, economic growth and wellbeing of the

Island, as this strategic transport route is works are urgently required in order to sustain the future increase in vehicular traffic with the development of the freight port in Lower Rupert's Valley. Whilst the issues raised regarding previous options for transport links between Rupert and Jamestown, the coast road, or the tunnel, that the Government has considered may still be better and more sustainable, the proposed upgrade and improvement proposed in this development application does not prejudice the delivery of the alternative road link. The current application has to be considered on its merit and it considered that the details for the upgrade and improvement of these road are acceptable.

Getting the alignment of the Field Road and South Path junction is important to enable large vehicles to negotiate the turn safely and preferably in a single movement is important. Whilst the objective is have the minimum impact on the landscape and to avoid scarring through cutting into the hillside, it is considered that visual impact on the landscape is no greater with 10.0m radius than it is with 7.5m radius junction. In view of this, details design of the junction can also be conditioned to enable the applicant to review all options before finalising the design.

The applicant was advised to include detailed proposals for traffic management for Jamestown and in particular for Napoleon Street. Due to the restricted width of the road and with parking on both sides, access can at times be difficult. With the increased vehicular movement and in particular larger vehicles using this road for transport of goods, the existing problem would be exacerbated in the future unless action is taken to manage traffic, include control of parking, along this road from The Brow to Main Street. It is therefore considered appropriate that should the Members be minded to support development application and recommend to the Governor-in-Council to grant permission then a condition requiring a traffic management plan and with a date for its implementation should be included. Development application process is an opportunity to ensure that wider improvements and benefits should be achieved as planning gain. As the condition will relate to works outside of the application redline boundary, then this must through Section 25 (Development Agreement) of the Land Planning and Development Ordinance 2013.

There will be considerable disruption during construction with the closure of the Field Road and the only alternative route to Rupert's Valley is via Longwood which is well out of the way and will take a long-time. The applicant has considered a ferry service as an option for the residents and worker. During construction, where arrangement for emergency vehicles to access the road, this will be accommodated. The applicant will be required to undertake a risk assessment for the project implementation with the appointed contractor to ensure that construction is managed effectively. Similarly, the closure of Side Path for construction will require an alternative route via Market Street and Constitution Hill. To ensure that this route is able to manage the increase

level vehicular traffic, traffic management proposals will need to be in place for the length of this route to ensure accessibility.