



**London Borough of Brent**

**Environmental Report**

**WEMBLEY STADIUM ACCESS  
CORRIDOR**

**November 2003**



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# WEMBLEY STADIUM ACCESS CORRIDOR

## Environmental Report

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Appendix 1 - Ecology Report



## 1 INTRODUCTION

The London Borough of Brent proposes to improve access for road traffic and pedestrians approaching and leaving Wembley Stadium and the surrounding estate via Great Central Way. This scheme is known as the Wembley Stadium Access Corridor or SAC (see Figure 1).

This report concerns the intended application for planning permission for stretch of the SAC from its junction with South Way / Fourth Way (including the junction) to Hannah Close, some 450 metres to the east (SAC Section 1). Along this stretch the existing highway is to be widened. The eastern section, between Hannah Close and the River Brent Bridge, will follow the existing line of Great Central Way, but with footways on both sides being widened beyond the existing highway boundaries. One footbridge will be constructed on each side of the existing River Brent Bridge to allow the existing bridge to be used exclusively by traffic. The existing junction with South Way / Fourth Way will be altered, and in order that the existing roundabout, which includes an electrical substation and communications mast, is left, the road will run slightly to the north of the current alignment. This is shown on Figure 2.

An assessment has been undertaken of whether SAC Section 1 might give rise to significant environmental effects. This document has been produced to report on this assessment and to allow the local planning authority to have sufficient environmental information to determine whether Environmental Assessment is required under Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999.

The assessment of many road projects takes account of the higher levels of traffic that will result from the development. It is considered that this particular development will not, in itself, give rise to higher levels, but will allow for more efficient flows.

The report describes each environmental topic, and comments on the likelihood of effects with regard to each of them.

## 2 SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A visit to the site and walkover survey was undertaken on 11 November 2003, by an environmental specialist and an ecologist.

The following documents were reviewed as part of the assessment:-

- “London Borough of Brent Unitary Development Plan, Revised Deposit Draft Version, 2001”.
- “Highways and Transportation Study, July 1997”, prepared by Scott Wilson. Chapter 9 - Environmental Appraisal.
- “Wembley Park Single Regeneration Budget Area – Scope for the Environmental Mitigation and Enhancement of the Stadium Access Corridor, November 1999”, prepared by Scott Wilson.



- “Environmental Desk Study on Wembley Park Single Regeneration, Budget Estate Access Corridor, October 2000”, prepared by Structural Soils Ltd.

### **3 DESCRIPTION OF SITE**

The SAC forms part of the highway improvement works proposed for the Wembley Park industrial area, which will ease congestion during events at the Wembley Stadium complex. A similar stretch of highway has been proposed at the northern end of the industrial estate (Estate Access Corridor). Together, they form the main access corridors into and out of Wembley Stadium on the eastern side.

#### **3.1 Junction of Fourth Way and South Way**

The current road layout includes a restricted traffic island, which functions as a free-flowing T-junction. Under certain circumstances however, this can be opened to allow westbound traffic along South Way to turn right into Fourth Way. The centre of the island is fenced, but broom and buddleia is visible above the fence. A 1.5m high brick wall runs along most of the southern verge line.

The proposed alignment will run to the north of the existing alignment, and the roundabout, and will release the traffic island and all existing road on the southern side of it, as well as part of the road for some 250 metres eastwards, for possible landscaping. Further discussion on landscaping possibilities is provided in Section 8, below.

#### **3.2 Fourth Way to River Brent Bridge**

This stretch of road is fairly open with wide footpaths, and landscaping is limited. On the southern side a 1.5m high brick wall runs along most of the verge line with a small strip of grass adjacent to the Carey Group buildings. The northern side of the road is bounded by areas of hardstanding used for parking at the adjacent industrial and office units, with occasional chain link fencing. There is no existing landscaping along the north side.

#### **3.3 River Brent Bridge to Hannah Close**

The River Brent, at the crossing point, is designated as part of the River Brent green chain, a public open space and also part of the Brent Bends Site of Metropolitan and Borough (Grade I) Nature Conservation Importance in the Brent UDP (2001). Taken as a whole the River Brent Green Chain has considerable wildlife and amenity value.

Along the river, there is a narrow band of parkland and trees both north and south of the bridge. Around the crossing point the vegetation is predominantly patches of dense bramble scrub, with numerous small stands of the invasive plant Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), and scattered trees many of which, namely Poplar (*Populus* sp) and Osier (*Salix viminalis*), have been planted.

Moving eastwards along Great Central Way, the road and verge line widens and there is a landscaped area adjacent to the premises to the north. This consists of grassy areas, low growing shrubs and small trees (e.g. cherry).

On the southern side of the road there is an area of dense bramble undergrowth including Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*). This is a highly invasive species, which must be managed with considerable care during construction. It is discussed further in Section 8.2.

#### 4 PLANNING POLICY

The Brent UDP (2001) contains various policies relating to urban regeneration and environmental enhancement, many of which could be considered to be directly applicable to the proposed works. These include:-

- Strategic policy STR36, regarding the protection of wildlife in the planning of developments.
- Built Environment policies BE6 and BE7, which require consideration of planting and landscaping in developments.
- Environmental Protection policies EP1 and EP9, which consider, respectively, the possible need for Environmental Impact Assessment, and the requirement to deal with land contamination issues.
- Open Space, Sport and Recreation policies OS5, OS12, OS14 and OS17, which consider, respectively, the continuity of Green Chains (in particular the River Brent), development on Sites of Metropolitan and Borough (Grade1) Nature Conservation Importance, the protection of Wildlife Corridors, and the creation of wildlife habitats adjacent to areas of nature conservation importance.
- Wembley Regeneration Area policies WEM8 and WEM21, which consider, respectively, access infrastructure within the area, and the setting and quality of the River Brent Corridor.

These policies will be taken account of in the detailed design of the works. For example, the new footbridges will be designed so as not to cause detriment to the R Brent open space and the enhanced access to the open space from the new road provided as part of the scheme will allow for more effective management of the R Brent open space.

#### 5 AIR QUALITY

Brent Council has declared an Air Quality Management Area for NO<sub>2</sub> and PM10 in many parts of the district. However, the site is not included in the area. As stated above, the development is not anticipated to give rise to additional traffic, and therefore not give rise to increased emissions.

The construction process will have the potential to have some impact on air quality (e.g. dust). However, as long as the contractor uses best practice, it is not considered that the impacts will be significant.

It is not considered, therefore that the development will give rise to significant air quality effects.

## **6 ARCHAEOLOGY AND CULTURAL HERITAGE**

One building will be demolished if development is carried out pursuant to the SAC section 1 scheme. This building is of limited visual, architectural or historic quality. It is little used if at all. No other buildings will be directly affected by the SAC Section 1. The only impacts will be accommodation works of a minor nature to some of the lands fronting the SAC. No listed buildings, conservation areas, scheduled ancient monuments or other significant features of the built environment will be affected.

Verbal consultation has been held with English Heritage (Kim Stabler). As a result of this conversation it is considered unlikely that the proposals will give rise to any significant effects.

## **7 CONTAMINATION**

It is known that land to the east of the River Brent has been used for railway sidings, while land to the west of the river was used for the Empire Exhibition and later used to form the current industrial estate.

During construction of the existing Great Central Way in the mid-1980's no ground contamination was found. On-line widening of Great Central Way will form the SAC and it is therefore considered that ground contamination is unlikely to be present.

Given the limited extent of the proposed works and the generally low level of environmental sensitivity of the location of the development, any localized issues of ground contamination are not considered to give rise to significant environmental effects of a level requiring full environmental assessment.

## **8 ECOLOGY**

### **8.1 Survey**

The ecology survey report is attached as Appendix 1.

## **9 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL**

The area is typical of an industrial setting and suffers from tightly packed industrial units leaving little scope for environmental enhancement. With the redevelopment of the Wembley Stadium complex, which is currently under way, any opportunity to enhance the area will help to create a more pleasing environment through which stadium visitors will travel. The Stadium Access Corridor as a whole provides an opportunity to create a high standard, visually

stimulating approach with striking views of the new stadium from 1-2km away. The process of creating this view will commence with the development of Section 1 of the SAC. In landscaping terms, it can be compared to Olympic Way in that it will form a major transport artery to the stadium complex.

The area that will be released to the south of the South Way roundabout, and eastwards, represents an opportunity for landscaping enhancement. Depending on the development plans, this area could be made into a significant landscape feature incorporating public footpaths and seating for users of the industrial estate. The use of varied shrubs and small trees would serve to break up the heavy urban landscape. Consideration will need to be given to the potential for vandalism and hence the number and age of tree saplings to be planted.

The general open layout of the area beside the road between the River Brent and the South Way Junction provides opportunity for landscaping and enhancement including the provision of public seating and cycle paths.

The general road lighting could be improved using light columns of a more visually attractive design. This, coupled with the additional landscaping, would add to the overall attractiveness of the area. The Stadium Access Corridor should be viewed more as an avenue leading to the stadium complex and should be landscaped accordingly. There should be sufficient space for landscaping on both sides of the road for tree and shrub planting to create a tree-lined avenue. It would also ease the congested industrial landscape.

As described in Section 3.3, the landscaping to the north of the eastern end of the road is pleasant, and there is not considered to be any need for additional planting. To the south of the road Japanese Knotweed has been identified, and the effects of this are discussed in Section 8.

## **10 NOISE AND VIBRATION**

As discussed above, the development should not give rise to additional traffic, and therefore there should be no increased noise or vibration impacts of significance, as a result of the scheme.

The construction process is likely to give rise to higher noise levels than are current at the site. However the site is located in an industrial area that already has relatively high traffic levels, and is adjacent to a railway line. The nearest residential receptors are at least 100 metres from the site, and across the railway line. It is considered unlikely, therefore, that the construction process will give rise to significant noise or vibration effects. Any potential impacts will be mitigated by the contractor's use of best practice during construction.

## **11 WATER QUALITY AND DRAINAGE**

The western section of the road is on a non-aquifer, while the eastern part is on a minor aquifer. In addition, the site is not located on a source protection zone,

and therefore the underlying groundwater resource is not considered to be sensitive. The impermeable area due to the works will be slightly larger than the area of the current road and footpaths. However, this is unlikely to be of a scale to give rise to significant effects on the groundwater recharge. There is not considered to be any significant impact on groundwater by either the construction works or operation of the road.

The River Brent, is rated by the Environment Agency to be of fair quality as regards chemistry and biology.

The drainage of the widened road will be designed in accordance with industry guidelines, and will be to the approval of the Environment Agency.

Two new footbridges will be constructed, one each side of the existing road bridge (which will not be affected, structurally). Their soffit levels will not be below the soffits of the existing bridge, and the span will be no less than the existing bridge. There will therefore be no reduction in waterway area, and thus no impact on the flood regime of the river.

The slight additional impermeable area will have a small impact on surface water runoff. However the small scale of this is unlikely to give rise to a significant effect on flood flows.

It is therefore considered unlikely that the improved road will have any significant impact on water resources.

The construction process has the potential to cause pollution to the River Brent. However, as long as construction best practice is used, pollution can be prevented. A number of guidelines should be followed by the contractor, including:-

- Adherence to the Environment Agency's Flood Prevention Guidelines.
- Care must be taken to prevent run off or deposition of debris into the river.
- Materials should not be stored or refuelling carried out close to the river.
- Every care should be taken to avoid uncured concrete dropping into the river.

## 12 CONCLUSIONS

It is considered unlikely that the proposed works will give rise to any significant environmental effects.

Even though the ecological effects are unlikely to be significant, there are issues of seasonality. In order to avoid disturbance to nesting birds, site clearance should, if possible, be carried out between September and March. If this is not

possible then the affected area should be surveyed for nesting birds by suitably a qualified person.

It is recommended that bat boxes should be incorporated into the design of the footbridges.

There are opportunities for landscaping proposals, particularly in the area to the south of the South Way Roundabout. The opportunity should be taken to improve the ambience of the road by imaginative planting along much of its length.

There is little risk of effects related to water quality, air quality and noise although the appointed contractor should be required to employ best practice.

**APPENDIX 1**  
**ECOLOGY REPORT**