

**3<sup>rd</sup> Issue**

**TRANSPORT  
ASSESSMENT**

**for**

**MIXED USE  
DEVELOPMENT AT  
EAST WHARF,  
WATCHET**

**on behalf of**

**URBAN SPLASH LTD**

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Project: Proposed Residential Redevelopment at East Wharf,  
Watchet  
Client: Urban Splash Ltd  
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## 1. INTRODUCTION

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- 1.1 Waterman Boreham Transportation (WBT) are commissioned by Urban Splash Ltd to produce a Transport Assessment (TA) of their proposals for regeneration and redevelopment of East Wharf, Watchet.
- 1.2 This TA will thoroughly review all aspects of the existing local transport infrastructure in the vicinity of the proposed development site.
- 1.3 In Chapter 2, the location and existing land use of the proposed development site will be examined, including an assessment of the associated trip attraction.
- 1.4 Chapter 3 comprises an overview of the existing local infrastructure, focussing on pedestrian and cycle facilities, public transport and the local highway network and demonstrates that the site provides ready accessibility to the majority of Watchet's facilities within convenient walking and cycling distance from the site.
- 1.5 Relevant local development and transport policies are discussed in Chapter 4, which will demonstrate compliance of the site with transport related sustainable development criteria. After this has been established the development proposals are outlined in detail in Chapter 5.
- 1.6 The TA reviews the sustainability of the proposed development in Chapter 6.
- 1.7 Existing operation of the local transport infrastructure will be analysed in Chapter 7, which considers potential for improvement where required.
- 1.8 Summaries and conclusions on the transport implications of the proposed development of East Wharf Marina are presented in Chapter 8, which will confirm that there are no transport or highway reasons for objection to current proposals for development of a sustainable residential development of East Wharf, Watchet.

## 2. SITE LOCATION AND EXISTING LAND-USE

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### 2.1 Site Location

2.1.1 The location of the proposed development site is illustrated in Figure 2.1.

2.1.2 Watchet is a small coastal town in West Somerset with an approximate population of 3840; this population significantly increases for a short period during the summer months when Watchet receives an influx of holiday makers and day trip visitors.

2.1.3 Watchet is located approximately 7 miles east of Minehead, 14 miles west of Bridgwater and 45 miles south west of Bristol. Taunton is located 15 miles to the south east of Watchet.

2.1.4 The site sits adjacent to Watchet marina, which harbours predominantly leisure craft. The marina is central to the town's infrastructure, with Watchet's town centre retail and leisure area within a very short walk.

### 2.2 Existing Land Use

2.2.1 East Wharf currently contains a harbour side marina, comprising a small amount of mixed use / harbour related development, as summarised below:

- 84 parking spaces;
- 579sqm of boat shed;
- 128sqm of local radio station offices and studio;
- 132sqm marina office;
- 193sqm general marina use.

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1032sqm TOTAL DEVELOPMENT (+84 car parking spaces)

2.2.2 These uses serve a number of purposes for both local residents and visitors from further afield.

2.2.3 Although there are 84 parking spaces in East Wharf, these are only available for uses associated with the marina and need to be agreed by the Local Authority. They do not have planning consent for use by the general public.

## 2.3 Trip Attraction

2.3.1 The current trip attraction of East Wharf has been estimated, using the TRICS database, with reference to similar marina developments elsewhere in the country. The results of this analysis are summarised in Table 2.1 below:

**Table 2.1; Estimated trip attraction for existing marina uses**

<i>Period</i>	<i>Trip Rate/100sqm</i>		<i>Trips (1032sqm)</i>	
	<i>In</i>	<i>Out</i>	<i>In</i>	<i>Out</i>
<i>AM Peak</i>	<i>1.40</i>	<i>0.08</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>PM Peak</i>	<i>0.15</i>	<i>1.04</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Daily</i>	<i>3.46</i>	<i>3.58</i>	<i>36</i>	<i>37</i>

2.3.2 The provision of 84 parking spaces indicates an anticipated traffic generation in this instance of significantly more than that forecast with reference to TRICS. This higher level of parking has been provided by the marina owners in order to meet an observed demand and it is understood to be reflective of the significant increase in attraction of the marina facilities during the peak summer months. The TRICS analysis forecasts for an average day and hence does not allow for this seasonal peak effect.

### **3. EXISTING LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE**

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#### **3.1 Introduction**

3.1.1 Local transport infrastructure is illustrated in Figure 3.1, 3.2 & 3.3 and described below. This clearly demonstrates that travel by all modes is well catered for in the vicinity of the development site.

#### **3.2 Pedestrian and Cyclist**

3.2.1 The site is located a very short walk from the centre of Watchet. The main street (Swain Street) can be reached within minutes via a direct footway (along Harbour Road and West Street) to its eastern end, by cutting through a car park to reach the centre of the shopping street, or along the pedestrianised harbour side to reach the western end.

3.2.2 Within a short walking distance many local amenities can be safely and conveniently accessed. These include:

- a bank;
- a chemist and pharmacy;
- an opticians;
- a doctors;
- a dentist;
- a library;
- a Post Office; and
- a launderette.

3.2.3 Other facilities within easy walking distance include 5 public houses; many cafes, restaurants and take-aways; newsagents and local shops.

3.2.4 Within Watchet, local sporting clubs for the following activities can be reached on foot from the site:

- Football;
- Bowls;
- Cricket;
- Tennis;
- Boxing; and
- Boating.

3.2.5 Leisure facilities are therefore easily and conveniently accessible on foot and by bicycle from the proposed development site.

3.2.6 Whilst there are no dedicated cycle lanes in Watchet, the narrow town streets do not allow for motorised vehicles to be driven at speed, and as illustrated above, many amenities are located within a mile of the site, making cycling and walking safe and convenient modes for accessing local facilities.

### **3.3 Public Transport**

3.3.1 Watchet is served by 4 regular bus services to nearby local centres, as summarised below:

Service 14 to Bridgwater;  
Service 28 to Minehead;  
Service 38 to Taunton; and  
Service 615 to Bridgwater College

3.3.2 All of these bus services are readily and conveniently accessible from the development site by means of a short walk.

3.3.3 The bus services to Bridgwater and Taunton are convenient for connecting to the national rail network available at these towns. Thereby, public transport is a viable alternative to the car for both local and national journeys.

3.3.4 Watchet Town Council currently list 5 different taxi firms based in the area, allowing travel around town for those unable to walk or cycle.

3.3.5 For young people aged 16 - 25, Somerset Rural Youth Project run a Moped Loan Scheme. There is a fleet of 50 mopeds available on loan to young people living in rural Somerset. The scheme offers moped training to inexperienced riders.

3.3.6 Watchet is also well served by local coach services, with coach parking available near to the site.

3.3.7 Within a short walk of the proposed development is located the West Somerset Railway, which is an enthusiasts steam railway, running along the Somerset coastline. Although predominantly for tourism purposes, this facility does appeal to holiday makers and day visitors who wish to visit Somerset's coastal towns, including Watchet and thereby reduces demand for car journeys along the coastline.

3.3.8 Watchet is therefore well served by public transport linking to local villages and larger nearby towns. This permits travelling further afield by public transport on the national rail system. There is also a demonstration of progressive thinking with regard to individual transport needs of different demographic groups.

### **3.4 Highway**

3.4.1 The site represents the terminus of the well maintained Harbour Road, which becomes the B3191 and can be taken west as the coastal road to Blue Anchor and Carhampton; or south towards the A39 (Bridgwater or Minehead) and A358 (Taunton). Approximately one mile out of Watchet the B3190 can be used as an alternative to the B3191 relief road for similar routes.

3.4.2 Four large car parks are situated within the town on:

- Anchor Street;
- Market Street;
- Swain Street; and
- Harbour Road.

3.4.3 These are all within easy walking distance of the site, and illustrated in Figure 3.2.

3.4.4 Poor visibility has been noted at the nearby Harbour Road / Brendon Road junction, for traffic approaching the junction from across the railway line. The current levels of visibility available here are illustrated in Figure 3.4. This results in some delay and potential danger for vehicles leaving the town and, we are advised, causes concern in the summer months when Watchet receives an influx of tourist visits.

3.4.5 WBT are advised by officers of Somerset County Council that there are no local capacity issues throughout the majority of the year. The towns road network becomes busy during peak summer months, although throughout the rest of the year the town suffers no material capacity or congestion concerns.

### **3.5 Road Safety**

3.5.1 The level of personal injury accidents at the junctions of Washford Cross and Brendon Road (B3191) / Swain Street have been examined for a 3 year period from October 2003 to September 2006.

- 3.5.2 Three Personal Injury Accidents (PIA's) have been recorded in the vicinity of the Brendon Road / Swain Street junction, during the 3 year survey period. Two of these were classified as "slight" and one was "serious".
- 3.5.3 The one serious injury was sustained by a child passenger on a bus travelling along Brendon Road when it braked suddenly to avoid a collision with a vehicle that had pulled out in front of it.
- 3.5.4 The first "slight" accident was caused when a "drunken pedestrian staggered into the road" and collided with a vehicle.
- 3.5.5 The second slight accident was caused when the setting winter sun blinded an unprepared driver who hit a stationary trailer.
- 3.5.6 Two of the three accidents in Watchet occurred during the month of August.
- 3.5.7 To summarise the PIA data for Watchet; only 3 accidents involving personal injury have occurred in the three year survey period. Of these, one was classified "serious". There is no apparent pattern to these accidents and it is concluded that these are random accidents that are not indicative of an operational problem with the highway network in this location.
- 3.5.8 Two of the three accidents (including the serious one) occurred in the month of August, which is during the peak holiday season in Watchet and the highway network is subject to additional demand, largely by visitors who may be unfamiliar with the local infrastructure.
- 3.5.9 During the same period (Oct '03 – Sept '06) 8 PIA's occurred at the nearby Washford Cross junction. All 8 were classified as "slight".
- 3.5.10 50% of the PIA's at Washford Cross occurred in May to July, 25% of the total occurred in July.
- 3.5.11 50% of the PIA's at Washford Cross took place between 13:00 to 16:00, with 25% of the total in the hour 14:00 to 15:00.
- 3.5.12 88% of PIA's at Washford Cross occurred in "fine" weather and 75% occurred during daylight hours.
- 3.5.13 A significant 20% of drivers breathalysed (drivers were breathalysed in 7 out of the 8 PIA's in the report) tested positive for alcohol.
- 3.5.14 To summarise the PIA data for Washford Cross, all eight accidents were classified as "slight",

with the majority occurring in daylight in fine weather. Half occurred during the peak tourist season.

- 3.5.15 With one fifth of breath tests being positive this must be considered as a contributing factor to any road safety issue, which is not due to junction design, highway capacity or any other highways issue.

### **3.6 Recent Road Safety Improvements**

- 3.6.1 The junction of Washford Cross has been the subject of localised improvements in an attempt to reduce vehicle speeds, both for through traffic travelling on the A39 and for side road traffic approaching the junction. These improvements have been prompted by the junction's poor accident record and have the sole purpose of improving the safety of operation of the highway in this location.
- 3.6.2 Somerset County Council's drawing SS000483-TP-003 illustrates the improvement scheme implemented and is included as Appendix A.

### **3.7 Conclusion**

- 3.7.1 The local highway network currently operates generally safely and within capacity for the majority of the year. For a short period during the summer high season the network becomes busier, due to an influx of holiday makers and day-trippers.
- 3.7.2 Of the two locations of road safety concern, one has recently undergone improvements aimed solely at benefiting road safety and the other, although providing substandard visibility, does not exhibit a bad accident record.

## 4. POLICY

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### 4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The importance of transport planning issues within the planning policy framework has increased significantly in recent years. During the early 1990`s in Britain there was an increasing awareness of the environment and the concept of sustainability as a planning principle was established. Sustainability focuses on satisfying the needs of the present without jeopardising the environment for future generations. This principle was formally expressed as national planning policy in the government White Paper (Transport and the Environment) published in 1994. The planning system must now make adequate provision for development whilst taking account of the need to protect the natural and built environment for the future.

4.1.2 The concept was subsequently included in the 1998 Transport White Paper “A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone”. The main emphasis of the White Paper is to achieve a more sustainable infrastructure by encouraging better integration between land use and transport, tackling pollution and congestion, improving public transport, reducing car use and promoting travel choices other than the private car. Thus travel by foot, bicycle and public transport are all to be encouraged.

4.1.3 There has been a change in regional and local transport policy to reflect this strategic approach. The principles of sustainability and integrated transport are now well established and a fundamental part of planning and transport policy in Britain.

4.1.4 Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs) and Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) set out the Government’s policies in relation to various aspects of planning. This national guidance has to be taken into account by local authorities in their preparation of their Development Plans and also sets the framework for regional planning policy.

### 4.2 Planning Policy Guidance 13; Transport (PPG13)

4.2.1 With regard to transport, the Planning Policy Guidance on Transport (PPG 13) is the key piece of national guidance. The guide, which was revised in March 2001 to take on board the new policy impetus, is in line with the objectives contained within the White Paper to integrate planning and transport at the national, regional and local levels in order to:

- ***“promote more sustainable transport for both people and for moving freight;***

- ***promote accessibility to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking, cycling and***
- ***reduce the need to travel, especially by car.***

4.2.2 In order to meet the objectives of the guidance development proposals should:

- ***“ensure that a realistic choice of access by public transport, walking and cycling is offered where new jobs, leisure and services are created;***
- ***reflect parking policies, alongside other planning and transport measures, to promote sustainable transport choices and reduce reliance on the car for work and other journeys;***
- ***where possible, give priority to people over ease of traffic movement and plan to provide more road space for pedestrian, cyclists and public transport.***

4.2.3 PPG13 introduces the use of Transport Assessments (TA) for developments over a certain size (***“where developments will have significant transport implications”***), to move away from an emphasis on vehicle movements and traffic generation towards concentrating on sustainable travel modes such as walking, cycling and public transport.

### **4.3 Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (PPS 3)**

4.3.1 Planning Policy Statement 3 provides guidance on the location, design, context, accessibility, sustainability and mix of new housing allocations and developments, and state’s the Government’s key objective in relation to housing to ***“ensure that everyone has the opportunity of living in a decent home, which they can afford, in a community where they want to live.”***

4.3.2 PPS3 requires that LPA’s identify suitable locations for housing that offer good access to jobs, key services and infrastructure.

4.3.3 To achieve this, the Government is seeking:

***“...***

***To create sustainable, inclusive, mixed communities in all areas, both urban and rural”***

4.3.4 *Within the context of the above objectives, PPS 3 states that “The specific outcomes that the planning system should deliver are:*

...

**Housing developments in sustainable locations, which offer a good range of community facilities and with good access to jobs, key services and infrastructure.**

...”

4.3.5 With regard to providing housing in sustainable locations, PPS 3 states that, “***accessibility of proposed development to existing local community facilities, infrastructure and services, including public transport***” should be taken in to account.

#### 4.4 Somerset County Council Local Transport Plan (LTP)

4.4.1 The transport objectives of the Somerset LTP are to:

- Improve safety for all who travel
- Reduce social exclusion and improve access to everyday facilities
- Reduce growth in congestion and pollution and improve health
- Support sustainable economic growth in appropriate locations
- Protect and enhance the built and natural environment

4.4.2 The LTP accepts that low density nature of existing housing provision together with the sparse distribution of population makes the provision of viable public transport more challenging.

4.4.3 The LTP believes that it has a strong role to play in helping to reduce Somerset’s “higher than regional average” death rate from coronary heart disease by promoting walking and cycling and also by helping to provide access to social networks. Studies have shown these factors to be key in achieving the desired reduction.

4.4.4 The LTP explains that Somerset’s population has grown by 6.3% in the last decade; however car ownership has increased by 29%. These changes have combined to produce increased delays and longer journey times on the county’s congested routes during the peak hours. Traffic has grown by 23.6% in Somerset over the last ten years which is significantly greater than the national growth of 18.3%.

4.4.5 The LTP suggests that all development proposals should be expected to contribute positively to improving access to basic services, and managing the demand for transport by bringing about a

shift towards more trips being made in the most environmentally, socially and economically appropriate way. To be acceptable, proposals for development should be compatible with the existing transport infrastructure.

- 4.4.6 New developments should achieve good connections into the existing cycling and pedestrian networks. Cycle parking facilities should be provided, following the standards set out in the countrywide parking strategy.
- 4.4.7 Appropriate infrastructure should be provided to ensure that there is suitable access to public transport services.
- 4.4.8 Developments which would generate significant transport movements should be located where provision may be made for access by walking, cycling and public transport.
- 4.4.9 Existing port and wharf facilities should be safeguarded from development that would prejudice their potential in the transport network.

#### **4.5 East Wharf Development Proposals**

- 4.5.1 The location of the proposed development site promotes sustainable accessibility to the town's locations which are likely to generate regular visits, including;
  - Retail;
  - Leisure;
  - Employment; and,
  - Healthcare.
- 4.5.2 This, therefore, represents a highly sustainable location. If and when journeys further afield are required, the public transport provision available from this site removes the necessity to use the car.
- 4.5.3 Proposals are demonstrably compliant with the guidance provided in PPG13, PPS3 and the Somerset LTP and the availability of a car is not a requirement to lead a quality lifestyle at this location.

## 5. DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

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- 5.1 Proposals by Urban Splash for redevelopment of East Wharf, Watchet comprise a mixed use development of predominantly residential units, with additional community and marina related uses.
- 5.2 Residential uses on this site will comprise 86 privately owned 1 and 2 bedroom flats and duplex apartments with 74 parking spaces, whilst the marina, commercial, council and plant/facilities uses of this site will total 1631 sqm GFA. In addition, the development will provide a boat museum and other community uses, including a function room, café and exhibition area.
- 5.3 The residential unit to car parking space ratio of 86% is appropriate in this location due to its highly sustainable nature. In addition, the car park will be managed on a license only basis which will increase flexibility through not having spaces allocated to each residential unit. All local amenities are available on foot as is access to efficient bus and rail travel providing links to employment and retail centres. Availability of a car is not therefore a requirement at this location.
- 5.4 Multi-modal trip attraction and generation of these proposals has been forecast with reference to the TRICS database. The database has been interrogated with reference to privately owned flat developments and the resultant modal split is summarised in Table 5.1, below. This demonstrates low level of car use and supports the 86% parking ratio proposed. Moreover, the location of this site within a very short walk of the town centre shopping streets makes it realistic to assume that the walk and cycle modes will be more attractive in this instance than in general, making the TRICS forecasts, below, onerous assumptions in terms of traffic generation.

**Table 5.1; Forecast modal split of trips associated with the proposed residential development at East Wharf, Watchet**

<b>Car occupants %</b>	<b>Walk %</b>	<b>Cycle %</b>	<b>Bus %</b>
51.0	29.7	1.2	18.1

5.5 Further analysis of the database has identified traffic generation rates and allowed multi-modal trip generation of the proposed residential development to be forecast. The resultant multi-modal forecast for the proposed residential development is summarised in Table 5.2, below.

**Table 5.2; Multi-modal trip generation of the proposed development of 86 flats at East Wharf, Watchet**

	Period	Mode					
		Walk	Cycle	Public Transport	Car Occupants	Car Driver*	Person Trips**
Trip rates / flat	AM Peak	0.151	0.006	0.092	0.259	0.190	0.508
	PM Peak	0.134	0.005	0.082	0.231	0.158	0.452
	Daily	1.287	0.052	0.784	2.210	1.771	4.334
Trips (Arr + Dep)	AM Peak	13	1	8	22	16	44
	PM Peak	12	0	7	20	14	39
	Daily	111	4	67	190	152	373

\* Car driver figure is also included in car occupants

\*\* Person trips equates to the sum of Walk, Cycle, Public Transport and Car Occupants trips, Car Driver being included with Car Occupants

5.6 Other uses within the site will not be provided with parking spaces and, hence, will not generate car trips into the site. Car journeys associated with non-residential uses within these proposals will be required to park elsewhere and travel into the development site by other means. It is anticipated that these journeys will comprise predominantly pedestrian trips, although other sustainable modes are conveniently available.

5.7 The proposed non-residential uses within the site will, in combination with other factors and initiatives, undoubtedly improve the attraction of Watchet to day trippers and holiday makers. It is not anticipated, however, that the attraction of the non-residential development will be sufficient to attract significant additional trips in its own right. These trips will represent linked trips in

association with other destinations within the town. It is therefore inappropriate to allocate additional vehicle trips solely to the non-residential uses proposed within this site.

- 5.8 The access and circulatory network within the site boundary is not proposed to be offered for adoption. A security gate will prevent unauthorised access to the car park, boatyard and service yard; and sufficient land is available in advance of the barrier to provide an adoptable standard turning head in advance of the barrier. This turning head can be offered for adoption under Section 38 of the Highways Act if the highway authority consider this desirable.

## 6. SUSTAINABILITY

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- 6.1 The applicants, Urban Splash, pride themselves on providing award winning sustainable living environments. The proposed development of East Wharf is extremely sustainable for several key reasons, outlined below.
- 6.2 All local amenities are available within a short and realistic walking distance of the proposed development site. These features are outlined fully in Chapter 3 and include shops, banks, places to eat and drink, a post office, many leisure and recreational facilities and places of worship. None of these amenities require a car to access them, in fact in most instances this would be less convenient than walking due to the layout of Watchet's footways with many pedestrian routes conveniently available.
- 6.3 The development site is very close to Watchet's bus stops which include a covered shelter in good condition. From this stop regular bus services allow convenient travel further afield to major retail areas, places of employment and education, thus removing the need for these trips to be made by car. In addition, these bus links allow reliable connection to the national rail network at Bridgwater and Taunton.
- 6.4 Also adjacent to the site is the West Somerset Railway. Whilst this is provided predominantly as an enthusiast and visitor attraction, it serves well the purpose of permitting day trips along the Somerset coast by means other than the car and thereby assists in reducing day trip and holiday makers car trips using coastal roads into and out of Watchet, reducing seasonal congestion, assisting to control emissions and thereby contributing to the sustainability of Watchet as a resort.

## **7. HIGHWAY OPERATION**

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### **7.1 Introduction**

7.1.1 As discussed earlier, the local highway network currently operates with substantial spare capacity for the majority of the year. It is therefore considered inappropriate to provide a qualitative assessment of highway operation, as capacity is clearly not a material issue throughout the majority of the year.

7.1.2 What has been undertaken is a qualitative assessment of highway operation, whereby key locations have been investigated in order to identify shortfalls or operational issues, including junction geometry and available visibility. These assessments have been assisted through discussion with highways development control officers of Somerset County Council, to identify specific areas of concern.

7.1.3 In discussion with officers, three locations of concern were identified on the local highway network. These are the junctions of;

- Swain Street / Brendon Road;
- B3190 / A39; and,
- Swain Street bridge crossing of the North Somerset Railway line.

7.1.4 These locations are identified in Figure 7.1 and are discussed below.

### **7.2 Swain Street / Brendon Road**

7.2.1 This junction currently suffers from inadequate visibility for traffic exiting Swain Street, across the railway bridge and turning in either direction onto Brendon Road. Visibility in both directions is severely constrained by the stone walls at the edge of the carriageway. No footways currently exist on either side of Brendon Road, or on this part of Swain Street.

7.2.2 It is noted that, despite the acknowledged sub-standard visibility available at this location, the junction does not exhibit a poor accident record and, historically, has been generally safe in operation.

7.2.3 Opportunities to improve visibility at this location are severely limited. If the stone walls were to

be removed, or lowered to below 1.05m, in order to allow visibility to be maintained above the wall line, there would not only be an impact on the character of the area, but this would allow access to the railway embankments, which is unlikely to be acceptable on safety and security grounds. In order to address this issue, it would be necessary to erect a fence on top of the lowered wall and, given the acute angle of view required, this would be likely to impinge once more on available visibility.

- 7.2.4 Another opportunity to improve visibility at this location is to construct a localised buildout into the carriageway of Brendon Road, enabling vehicles on Swain Street to edge within the current carriageway in order to see further along Brendon Road. In order to be effective, however, this buildout would be required to be of the order of 2.0m, which would leave insufficient remaining carriageway width on Brendon Road. This option has therefore not been progressed.
- 7.2.5 Opportunities for improving the available visibility at this location are therefore clearly limited. An alternative is to alter the junction form in order to reduce, or remove the necessity to achieve visibility splays along Brendon Road. Opportunities to provide a mini-roundabout have been investigated, whereby all vehicles are required to give way to traffic approaching from the right. Visibility to the right for traffic on Swain Street is severely limited, but a clear view of the adjacent Brendon Road entry give way line is available from an 'x' distance of 2.0m.
- 7.2.6 After discussions with Local Highways Officers it was clear that the installation of a mini roundabout at this location would be considered undesirable.
- 7.2.7 Given the low levels of traffic attraction associated with the proposals and in light of the existing history of safe operation of this junction, it is considered that specific junction improvements are inappropriate in conjunction with this development.

### **7.3 B3190 / A39 – Washford Cross**

- 7.3.1 Operational issues at this location currently comprise a combination of lack of visibility for traffic emerging on the A3190 (southbound) and high vehicle speeds of traffic approaching from both directions on the A39. The southbound entry to this junction on the A3190 is on the inside of a bend. Hedgerows and trees line the back of the highway adjacent to this junction on either side and these severely limit visibility in both directions.
- 7.3.2 This junction has been subject to improvements by Somerset County Council (illustrated as Appendix A). As discussed in Section 3, these improvements have been constructed with the sole purpose of providing road safety improvements at this hazardous junction.

- 7.3.3 Although the operation of this junction was observed to be poor, the levels of generated traffic associated with the development proposal are low. Moreover, it is considered extremely unlikely that more than only nominal traffic volumes will be attracted through this junction. On this basis, it is considered that the development will not result in a material impact on the operation of this junction and therefore no junction improvements are proposed over and above those recently completed by Somerset County Council.

#### **Swain Street Railway Bridge**

- 7.3.4 Discussions with highways officers have identified a concern over the operation of the Swain Street bridge across the West Somerset Railway. This bridge is narrow and provides no footways in either direction. Vehicle strikes of the bridge parapets give cause for concern and officers also wish to see improvements to the pedestrian route from the town centre in a southerly direction, over the railway line.
- 7.3.5 Reference to Table 5.2, above, demonstrates that forecast trip generation associated with the proposals is unlikely to represent a material increase in demand across local infrastructure. Peak hour traffic generation of the proposals is likely to be less than 20 vehicles and pedestrian movement are anticipated to be of a similar order.
- 7.3.6 These trips will distribute across local infrastructure and not all will cross the railway bridge on Swain Street. Indeed, of the walk trips, the majority will be associated with journeys to and from the town centre and uses thereabouts and it is considered that only a small proportion will be required to cross the railway line. Of those pedestrian trips that do cross the railway, it is likely that many will use either the surface level crossing near to the site access, or the pedestrian railway bridge, adjacent to the station, rather than using the Swain Street bridge to access Brandon Road. Additional demand across the Swain Street bridge is, therefore, likely to be extremely light.
- 7.3.7 In light of the above discussion, it is not considered that the development proposals will generate material impact on the pedestrian, or traffic operation of the Swain Street railway bridge.
- 7.3.8 Notwithstanding the above, discussions with highway officers have identified a desire to promote improvements of the Swain Street railway bridge, such as to enhance the pedestrian environment and make pedestrian trips across the bridge more pleasant and attractive. Due to the physical constraints of the existing bridge, provision of a segregated pedestrian route across the railway will prove difficult to achieve. This is likely to require substantial and costly construction and it will also be necessary to achieve numerous licenses, permissions and Orders to facilitate this improvement. It has been agreed in discussion with highways officers that the complications

involved in providing the desired improvements are such that the improvements would be better implemented by the County Council, under powers available to them, to which the developer would not have direct access. The County Council are therefore seeking a financial contribution from the developer, in order to fund these improvements.

- 7.3.9 It is understood that the financial arrangements associated with the acquisition of this site from West Somerset District Council allow for payment of an overage sum, which will reflect the development cost, adjusted to reflect abnormal cost liabilities, in light of the enhanced development value achieved. If off-site highway improvements of the kind described above are considered by both the Planning and Highway Authorities to be worthy of implementation, it is considered appropriate to contribute a sum from this agreed overage payment towards such works. Given the low levels of trip generation associated with the scheme, it is inappropriate to require the developer to fund such improvements outwith the overage payment and to so do would, in any case, represent an abnormal development cost, which would offset the scale of overage payment appropriate. Details of the size of contribution which could be achieved from within the overage sum should be negotiated between planning and highways officers, but should reflect the small scale of generation, hence only nominal impact associated with the proposed development.

## 8 DISCUSSIONS WITH HIGHWAYS OFFICERS

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- 8.1 In discussions pursuant to agreement on highways and transport issues concerning this proposal, two predominant issues have been identified. Areas of primary concern of highways officers appear to have been;
- available car parking capacity in the centre of Watchet; and,
  - pedestrian safety on the existing Swain Street railway bridge.
- 8.2 These issues have been investigated in detail in progressing this TA and substantial negotiation with highways officers has resulted in a position of difference concerning the validity and importance of these issues, but agreement concerning opportunity for improvement to address the Council's concerns. Copies of important correspondence between Waterman Boreham and officers of Somerset County Council concerning the above issues are appended as Appendices B and C.
- 8.3 With regard to the quantum of car parking available in central Watchet, it is the position of Waterman Boreham, on behalf of the developer, that the proposals will have no material impact on car parking demand in central Watchet. The site does not have planning permission for use as a public car park and, in the absence of such, could be closed at any time and thereby removed from the town's parking stock. Its use is informal and cannot be assumed to be available and ongoing. A parking study undertaken by consultants (Faber Maunsell, April 2005) has identified that Watchet has sufficient parking capacity available and Waterman Boreham have re-assessed the data collected in that study to verify the conclusions reached. This has given no cause for concern in the conclusion that sufficient parking capacity exists to cater for all but specific major public events. It is impractical and inappropriate to design a car parking strategy for a town in order to cater for peak parking demand which occurs only at times of specific public events.
- 8.4 An element of enhancement of the parking stock in the vicinity of the development site is proposed as part of this development. Details of this analysis and the improvements proposed are included in the correspondence at Appendix B.
- 8.5 Issues of pedestrian safety across the Swain Street rail bridge are discussed above and have also been negotiated at length with highway officers. Opportunities for providing minor enhancements to the alignment of the highway on the approach to the Swain Street bridge have been investigated and, combined with further minor works on the bridge deck, these have been

proposed by the applicant. Officers have reviewed these proposals and concluded that they will not provide the desired effect.

- 8.6 These negotiations continued to investigate further opportunities and officers have made Waterman Boreham aware of their position in that a separate pedestrian route across the railway is what they perceive to be required. This could comprise a pedestrian bridge attached to the side of the existing masonry road bridge crossing the railway.
- 8.7 These negotiations concluded with an identification that such an improvement could be provided by means of an agreement with officers of the planning authority, to contribute from the agreed overage payment towards provision of such a facility, notwithstanding that the generation of the proposed development will be insufficient to generate impact of a scale which would justify such expenditure and such a contribution should be considered as planning gain.
- 8.8 Details of the above will require to be agreed between officers of the planning and highway authorities.

## **8. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

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### **8.1 Summary**

- 8.1.1 The proposed development at East Wharf will add a high quality, sustainable residential development to Watchet.
- 8.1.2 The site is ideally placed to provide sustainable living due to the concentration of many essential and leisure amenities, which are located within a short walking distance.
- 8.1.3 The proposed development will also be well served by good public transport to a variety of destinations, both within Watchet and further afield.
- 8.1.4 The development will result in no material impact on highway capacity in a network operating generally within capacity, other than at peak summer tourist times, when demand increases significantly.
- 8.1.5 Highways officers wish to receive a contribution towards provision of enhanced pedestrian facilities at the Swain Street railway bridge. It is clearly demonstrated in this report that such a contribution is not necessitated by the proposed development, as trip generation will be insufficient to produce material impact. It is further agreed, however, that such a payment could potentially be made available via the agreed overage payment to West Somerset District Council, which is associated with the acquisition of this site by Urban Splash. Details of this payment should be agreed between officers of the relevant authorities.

### **8.2 Conclusion**

- 8.2.1 The proposed development at East Wharf, Watchet, will provide a sustainable living environment that will not impact on the existing local transport network.
- 8.2.2 A mechanism is established for calculating payment of a sum to West Somerset District Council for acquisition of the site. This includes an additional payment which will reflect abnormal development costs and there is potential for a proportion of this payment to be contributed for transportation improvements in Watchet, particularly associated with improved pedestrian provision at the Swain Street railway bridge.
- 8.2.3 There are no defensible transport reasons for refusal of planning permission for this proposed residential development in Watchet town centre.