



Robin & Alla Smith
15 Grosvenor Drive, Whitley Bay, Tyne & Wear, NE26 2JP
tel. +44 (0)191 3407926
e-mail: smith.robin@virgin.net <http://freespace.virgin.net/smith.robin/index.htm>

18 June 2010

**Spanish City Link Road
Planning Application No. 10/01335/LAREG3**

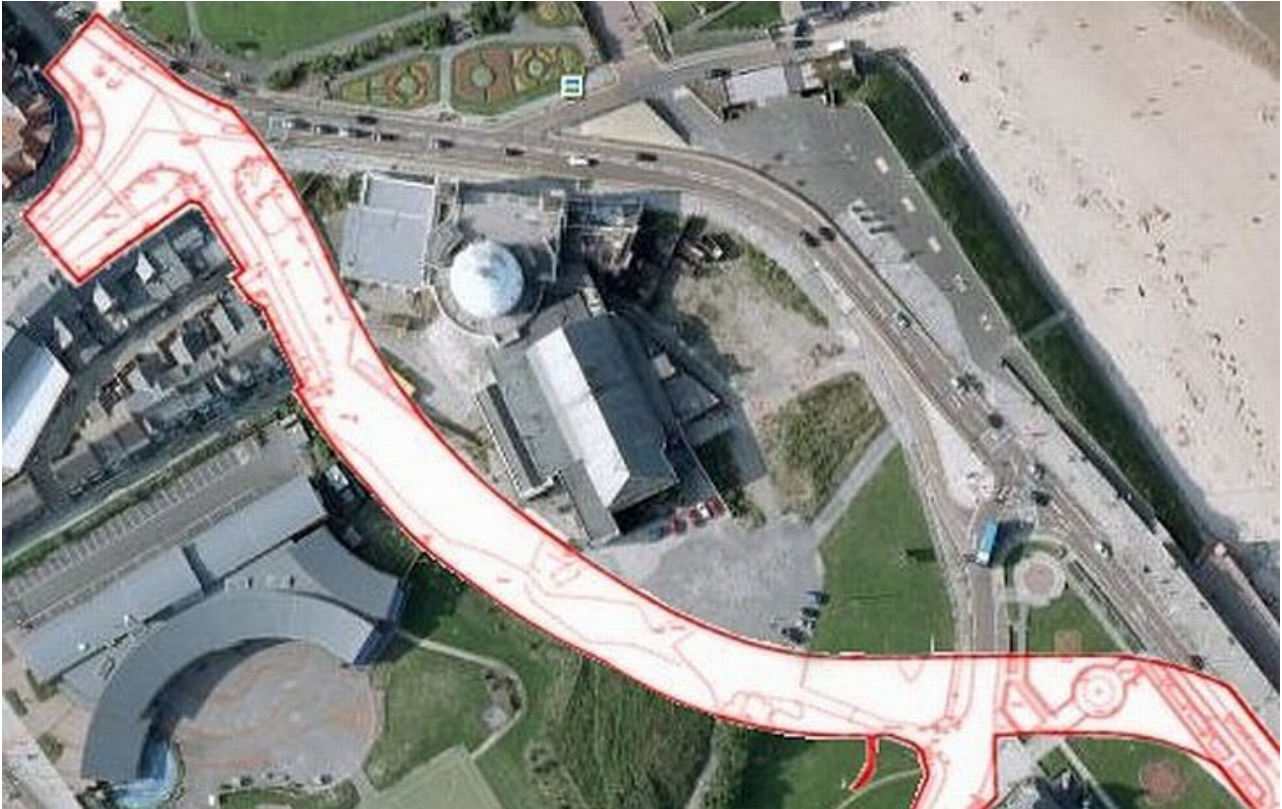
In this letter I raise objections to the proposed link road through the Spanish City development site that is the subject of the “Stage 1 Developer’s Pack” issued by the Council in October 2009.

As shown in the following figure, extracted from the associated planning application document, ‘Location Plan’ (OS Extract – 204681.pdf) the proposed link road bisects the development site, passes close by the Marine Park First School and cuts through Brook Street Gardens.



One result of this proposal is the removal of a large area from the development site that, among other disadvantages, places a significant constraint upon prospective developers' proposals.

The following figure shows the link road overlaid on an aerial view of the site (from Google Earth) and more clearly shows the extent of the road to illustrate its impact.



In the 692 page 'Transport Assessment' (Other – 204686.pdf) the link road comprises a 7.3 m wide carriageway, footways on each side of 2 m width, and a cycle path of 1 m width shared with the footway on the west side. This makes a total, nominal width of 12.3 m and is the reason why the proposed link road appears so much wider than the existing Strategic Route adjacent to the Promenade that it is intended to replace.

The proposed road itself removes a substantial area from the development site (including Whitley Park) and divides the Brook Street Gardens site, previously marketed for development separately, such as to greatly reduce its development potential and land value.

In a report to the Council's Regeneration Sub-Committee in February 2008 it was stated that "*Brook Street Gardens has been marketed and 17 bids received. The bids have been initially evaluated and we are seeking clarification of a number of issues prior to confirming the bid that provides best value.*" At the February 2010 meeting of the Council's Finance Sub-Committee that I attended, in response to questions from Councillors, a Council Officer explained that the new link road would cost some £1.75 million and that the estimated value of the Brook Street Gardens site would be reduced from £275 thousand to £100 thousand as a result of south east end of the proposed link road passing through it.

The same Council Officer re-affirms these figures in a report; 'Whitley Bay Road Re-alignment' dated 17 March 2010 but then goes on to state - *"it should be recognised that the question of land value is academic"*. The value of Council owned land is not academic – it is an important contributor to the Council's assets on the Balance Sheet of the Annual Accounts and the unnecessarily premature expenditure of some £1.6 million on building the proposed link road with the corresponding devaluation of potential value of the development site is of direct interest to those who pay for it, taxpayers. It may also be the reason why there has been only a small number of expressions of interest in response to the 'Stage 1 Developer's Pack' (as stated in the response to question 2 of a Freedom of Information request recorded in RFI 2474).

An alternative to having a road that is a Strategic Route through the development site is to confine any road to one that is a Local Road (one that simply provides direct access to residential and commercial properties within the site). This would enable prospective developers greater freedom in their proposals as was allowed by the earlier 'Stage 1 Developer's Pack' issued in late 2008.

Another disadvantage of introducing a Strategic Highway adjacent to Marine Park First School is a large increase in noise from traffic; particularly during weekday peak hours, **unless** measures are taken to reduce it.

The topic is covered by the associated planning application document, 'Noise and Vibration Assessment Report' (Other – 204684.pdf). The single page 'Non-Technical Summary' states: - *"A 3m high noise barrier positioned approximately 1 metre from the back of the western footway along the perimeter of Marine Park School would provide over 7 dB(A) reduction in noise level, resulting in only a minor noise impact at the school."* This statement is qualified by what is written in the body of the report, section 8.2. Table 8.1 (paragraph 8.2.6) indicates that the noise level at the NE end of the link road would be increased by 10.4 dB **without** a 3 m high barrier. In the same section a factor that emphasises the need for noise reduction measures (a barrier or barriers) is that - *"The school sits on ground at a higher level than the scheme. Hence, the improvements in the noise climate resulting from the barrier are reduced. Optimising the barrier location during the detailed design stage would be likely to provide an improved barrier performance"*.

The need for a noise barrier (or barriers) increases the width of the route taken out of the development site from 12.3 m to 13.3 m, making the proposed link road even more intrusive.

In short, I would like the Planning Application to be rejected or at least have the decision deferred so that consideration of potential developers' proposals, with and without a link road be evaluated and then submitted to public consultation.

Yours sincerely,

Robin Smith

To:-

Planning Department, North Tyneside Council, Quadrant East, Silverlink North, Cobalt Business Park, North Tyneside, NE27 0BY