

Tuesday, 9th November 2010

A55 - Knock Road Public Inquiry

MR J ROBB; INSPECTOR: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, if you would so kindly take your seats. Bring your tea with you if you are still drinking. We will make a start. You are all very welcome once again. Just an introduction, Sheila Birney is taking over today as stenographer, as I mentioned yesterday morning. So again the same conditions apply; not too fast, please, tends to wear the fingers out when you are speaking, and if there are any queries I have no doubt she will ask people to repeat or to clarify. Okay, so we will make a start.

I understand, Francis, you want to make some comments.

MR FRANCIS O'REILLY: Mr Inspector, I have to say particularly, I'm sorry that not everybody who was here yesterday is here this morning, because I appreciated last night that my cross-examination of Mr Ratcliffe had caused distress, annoyance to quite a lot of the people who were present. It was not my intention to do so. I apologise if people felt intimidated by the way I asked the questions. It was obviously the first witness to be cross-examined, perhaps I have been too long involved in court where there are confrontational issues, and I do appreciate and fully accept that those who have come along have done so out of the best of interests and intent, that their concerns are entitled to be raised and heard, and indeed, in support of that I acknowledge that the minister felt that their concerns should be best addressed by the public inquiry. One of the

difficulties I think facing non-technical people is that cross-examination sometimes involves an area of expertise which is not within the scope of the person asking the questions. And I suppose Mr Ratcliffe acknowledges difficulties in dealing with technical matters just as I do.

What I would propose to do from here on is on occasions where it seems appropriate I would ask that questions of witnesses are posed in fact by Roads Service representatives and their experts who have been employed and that I would tend to stick to more general matters and possibly, certainly exclusively with legal matters, and other general matters of that nature, if that seems acceptable. But once again I understand and I was shocked, as it were, by the reaction particularly of Mrs McKinley that she had felt that my questioning of Mr Ratcliffe had caused her some doubt as to whether or not she would participate in any further or future public inquiry, and I regret that has happened. And all I can say is that now that I am aware of what the residents expect I will try and act and question in a manner that perhaps is more beneficial and less, seen as less intimidating

MR J ROBB; INSPECTOR: Well, I'm not sure what the feeling is in the room, but certainly from where I'm sitting here, I think that is a very positive contribution on which to begin this morning. It can be difficult, I think, for any of us to admit that we made a mistake, and I think you have made that admission this morning. I appreciate that that has, that you have done that. My approach to any inquiry is to have a certain amount of structure to keep the thing rolling along. I like a high degree of informality, as high as we possibly

can make it, and certainly I do not believe that confrontation has got a great deal of place in this room during the inquiry process. So, thank you for that.

Ian, do you want to make any comments to that?

MR IAN RATCLIFFE: Yes, thank you very much for that. I'm not seeking an apology. I just want to make sure that the business of the inquiry is not damaged by people feeling discouraged from participating. Nevertheless, I do appreciate the apology that was presented and I am pleased that Roads Service have acted pro actively to keep the business of the inquiry moving along as constructively as it can do. Thank you very much.

MR J ROBB; INSPECTOR: I think we are starting the day on an extremely positive note and I think that's much better than the way in which we ended yesterday afternoon. I understand, Rodney, you have some answers to some of the questions which were raised yesterday afternoon, at some stage yesterday, I'm not sure if it was the morning or the afternoon, which you have had a chance to consider. So over to you.

MR RODNEY MOFFETT: Thank you, Mr Inspector. Just to address the questions that were raised by Mr Wood in his presentation yesterday, if I can work through the various questions and answers. The first question he asked was for traffic flows on the A55 with and without the scheme. In his presentation yesterday Mr Pollock indicated that the future traffic flows in 2028 were in the region of 59,000. That's the extremities of the scheme. Within the scheme itself, without the scheme predicted flows are in the region of 54,272, whereas with the scheme flows are predicted at 54,458.

The second question was how these were estimated. The

figures have been estimated following the parallel approach as set out in my presentation. Strategically using the Belfast transport model which confirmed that widening in itself has minimal impact, with no native flow change around the network. Similarly the figures were calculated using the local modelling system and were the figures quoted.

In terms of how the traffic flows have been used in the environmental assessment, predicted 18 hour flows have been calculated and were used initially by the environmental team in their scoping of the work required. Those figures were then subsequently used by the environmental team in the development of the noise and air quality models to try and assess the impacts the scheme would have in the various areas.

Mr Wood went onto question why we used NRTF. NRTF has been used to provide a comparison with the information generated by the Belfast transport model, so to give us a wider spread of information. NRTF, whilst not based on Northern Ireland figures, has been extensively used throughout Northern Ireland, both in the development of road schemes and the development of major transport infrastructure associated with developments and the like. It provides a reasonable method for assessing future traffic growth and as such was considered to be valid in this process, especially as we followed the parallel approach.

Mr Wood went on to ask about the increase in flow in the RACKS area. The potential future traffic flows are as set out in the residents association report issue three. While I appreciate that obviously there are assumptions we have made in terms of the controlling the right turn into

Sandown and there obviously are issues around that, the figures that we have quoted, if I can quote for you again, change in traffic flows in the peak hour for Shandon Park there will be an increase of 9.4 per cent with the increase in traffic to 1,047. Kensington Road, a decrease of 15.1 per cent with a result in peak hour traffic flow of 2047. Cherryvalley, predicting a decrease of 23.9 per cent with a resultant peak hour flow of 1,037. In terms of 24 hour flows, those to Shandon Park, 12,430, an increase of 2.3 per cent in the future year over 24 hour period. Kensington, 2,738, which is a decrease of 5.9 per cent. And Cherryvalley, 1,632, which is a decrease of 9.6 per cent.

The final point that Mr Wood alluded to was the potential in any spare capacity being taken up by traffic diverting to the route. And as I refer you back to the BTM, the predicted flows, I think as you will see from the figures generally, the predicted change, sort of diversion to the route due to the scheme, is minimal. Where our benefits are coming from is basically from small improvements to journey times along the route through the provision of this relatively small widening scheme. I think that addresses the issues raised if that's okay.

MR J ROBB; INSPECTOR: Thank you very much for that. Anyone wish to respond to that at this stage? You, I know, want to have a more considered response later onto other issues later on in the week. Anything you want to add?

MR IAN RATCLIFFE: Can I just clarify, the first, the increase in peak hour did you say plus 1,047?

MR RODNEY MOFFETT: Well this would be 1,047.

MR IAN RATCLIFFE: In the peak hour?

MR RODNEY MOFFETT: Yes. Is that okay?

MR IAN RATCLIFFE: And Kensington Road you said?

MR RODNEY MOFFETT: Two hundred and forty seven.

MR IAN RATCLIFFE: Okay. It seems a very high flow, 1,047 cars in the peak hour. I would like to pick that up later.

MR J ROBB; INSPECTOR: Absolutely, yes.

MR GARY LIVINGSTON: Mr Inspector, there were two items that I was to come back with yesterday. I did have them prepared yesterday, but we ran out of time. One was in respect to Mr Ratcliffe's question on 5.48 and 7.7, saying there's some conflicting statements there. The 5.48, after reading through, is, that's exactly what it says as far as the major source of accidents. I'm happy with that statement. The 7.7, just to clarify, where it reads:

"There is little or no scope to improve the layout of the junction as there is significant".

I think that was within the confines without any land take, there is little scope to improve that junction. So now with the land take on the southern side that will actually make significant improvements to that junction.

The second point was the question on the road safety audit. I can confirm the road safety audit there were 26 points are raised on the road safety audit of which only two were not accepted. If I could just outline them now.

The first point was in relation to the gradient on the hill from Knockwood Park to Shandon Park. The road safety said about excessive gradient on the footpath and the provision for wheelchair users. What we say is we were content with the design because the existing gradient wasn't really feasible to provide as levelling the gradient at the

entrance and providing a refuge would actually increase the gradient at the exit and create a greater hazard.

The second point of the road safety audit was basically in relation to the A55 junction with Kensington Road, and the summary there was the potential for vehicle cycle conflict increases while crossing the junction. The recommendation was doing a little bit of a squaring up of the junction to reduce potential number of conflict points and. We basically said the design team has reviewed the junction and overall with the cycling provisions we provide, we are happy with that junction. They are the two points I had to clear up from yesterday's proceedings.

MR J ROBB; INSPECTOR: Thank you very much for that. Any responses to that? Okay, well that's fine. Thank you for those clarifications. If anyone wishes to give further consideration to those they can come back later on in the inquiry, you are very welcome to do so.

I think we are now moving onto Iris Nesbitt who would like to make a contribution to the inquiry. You are very welcome. If you would come forward. We don't have a black chair unfortunately. I hope we are not intimidating. You are very welcome.

MRS IRIS NESBITT

MRS IRIS NESBITT: My name is Iris Nesbitt. I live at number 6 Shandon Park. I am a committee member of RACKS but I am really speaking personally here and on behalf of my immediate neighbours who live at the Knock Road end of Shandon Park. We have been very concerned about the proposed scheme for the last 19 years, so this is just a personal view for us. We know that Ian has put our case very

eloquently yesterday, and I don't intend to repeat things that he already said.

We have mostly lived there for about 30 years, except for one family we are all residents of longstanding. However, it's not that we are just against all change, we appreciate that improvements need to be made to the Knock Road. But we are concerned that this present scheme will have an adverse effect on our safety, environment and the quality of our life and we don't think it's going to significantly improve anyone else's. Roads Service tell us that this scheme will improve safety at the Knock Road, Shandon Park junction, and we who use this every day know how hazardous it is at the moment. It's extremely alarming turning right at any time. But we are concerned that a 24 hour right turn from Knock Road will make Shandon Park and Kensington Road less safe for us residents, because it will attract far more traffic into our very narrow road that has two right angle bends and twists and gets very narrow. We are in favour of improving the Knock Road, Shandon Park, Sandown Road junction by staggering the lights to eliminate the right of way confusion. It has been a little bit helped by the measures that Roads Service have put by the dotted lines across the road, but it's still a problem. And we feel that if the light sequences could be altered so that traffic coming down Shandon Park is only allowed to move when traffic coming up Sandown Road is stationary, that would possibly eliminate what seems to have caused several accidents in the past. We are not against some widening of the Knock Road, of the A55 either, especially for the construction of cycle routes, better footpaths. However,

although it might seem logical that wider traffic lanes on this stretch of Knock Road would make it safer, in fact the prospect of the lanes narrowing at Shandon Park lights seems to have a slowing down effect on impatient drivers as they come over the brow of the hill. They see the lights and the narrower road and we are concerned that uniformly wider lanes might encourage them to disregard the change from forty to 30 miles an hour and speed towards traffic lights. So we are not quite sure whether that will have the effect that it should have.

Ascot Link, we residents at the bottom of Shandon Park are very concerned at the prospect of the construction of Ascot Link. We feel that our safety would be adversely affected if commuters from Ascot Park and Gardens have to filter into the incredibly long queue of cars coming down Shandon Park at peak time in the morning. It regularly stretches beyond Shandon Park golf course. We have a terrible job at the moment trying to reverse into that line of traffic and if there are also cars coming down the steep gradient of Ascot Link into that lane, we can't really see how anybody's going to move in the mornings. It's bad enough as it is. We are concerned about the steep gradient of the proposed Ascot Link that it would be very dangerous for cars in icy weather, because unlike the Knock Road, which presumably has the same gradient, it won't be gritted. And roads safety gives safety as the justification for spending this quite large amount of money on this road for these houses. Their figures show that there were five accidents, two of them slight, on the Ascot Park, A55 junction between 2001 and 2008. And that actually is many fewer than at other

junctions where no action has been proposed. I see that two of the serious accidents were caused by the driver losing control of the vehicle, and the thought of anyone losing control of their vehicle on that steep gradient, coming down into a long line of cars in Shandon Park seems to us to be even more alarming.

There is also Kingsden Link which will run parallel to our drive. We can not see how Roads Service justify the construction of Kingsden Link which will make the entrance to Shandon Park even more congested and dangerous. Because there will be a minor side road on either side of the road so close to the traffic lights, we are afraid that once the road is constructed at the moment just for a handful of residence it won't be busy, but we know that Roads Service plan to sell off surplus land which could be bought by developers and so that this could well become a main, well, a larger road attracting even more traffic to this junction which is already so congested.

About this congestion; Roads Service seem to have decided that congestion on the A55 would be lessened if this widening scheme goes ahead. But we who use the road regularly know that the bottleneck occurs at Forestside which has already been very much widened, at Castlereagh junction, the same has applied, at Kings Road where they recently did improvements and at the Upper Newtownards Road, which has simply been widened. And motorists only ever wait for one change of lights at Shandon Park. It's never been congested there, because there are no right turns. So we feel that the proposed right turn from Knock Road into Shandon Park will actually cause more congestion and traffic

delays here. But one of our big concerns is the environment. And our previously quiet residential area has already suffered from increased levels of noise, vibration and air pollution from the rising traffic along the Knock Road over the last 30 years, and from more commuters using Kensington Road, Shandon Park as a rat run. And we are appalled at the prospect of this becoming much worse if more traffic is encouraged to use these roads, and if the 89 mature trees which give us some protection are felled, and Roads Services plans to replace some of them with a few saplings simply won't compensate for these big, mature trees.

The surplus land, or paddocks as they have been called, as they called them, which Roads Service owns, we had expected to be retained as an environmental buffer, as has happened in the Knockdene section of Knock Road. Otherwise we shall be very, very close to a major road and I was interested in Mr Holbeach's remarks yesterday, because I don't see how the environmental impact as a result of that can be slight on our houses.

We feel that the Knock Road widening scheme seems designed merely to facilitate the transient motorist and shows complete disregard for the damage done to the environment and to the architectural heritage of our area. Planning as it does, the want on destruction of three more beautiful Edwardian and Victorian houses, period houses, part we feel of the architectural heritage of east Belfast. And the transformation of number 1 Shandon Park into a virtual traffic island. My neighbours there will have the Knock Road on one side, Kingsden Link on the other side of them and we just feel that this is an unacceptable change

for the benefit of, the possible short term benefit of motorists.

When we moved to number 6, 33 years ago, there were two elegant semi detached Edwardian houses with large gardens next to us and there were two opposite. The two next to us, along with many other, well, all of them, all four, with many others on the south side of the A55 were vested 17 years ago for the lavish road widening scheme option C, which never happened. So for many, many years now they were allowed to become neglected by Roads Service, they were allowed to become derelict, and finally they were demolished. And the fact that they now propose to photograph the three remaining ones before they demolish them and describe them for the arc identifies is not much comfort to us. We feel we have lost a very valuable part of our culture and architectural heritage for no visible benefit at all. And this scheme, we see, was advised by the forward planning team. But it seems to me to be a very old fashioned response to the problem of congestion; simply knock down a few houses and widen the road a bit. I mean, Roads Service themselves know, because they have told me, that the increasing congestion lasts up to two years and more cars are attracted to the area, so that congestion is just as bad as ever and encourages more private motorists to use the road.

So in conclusion, surely we feel the money available would be better spent on resurfacing our existing roads, which I think you saw from the photos and videos yesterday, are in a dreadful state, full of dangerous pot holes and ridges, and the provision of more bus services. I realise this probably doesn't come out of the same amount of money,

but there are no east, west or even east south links, although we have a large number of Queen's students in our area. Safe, really separate, safe and separate cycle paths for the number of school children who are brought to school by car at the moment every day, when during school holidays there is no problem of congestion on our roads. And in the E route, not down the green way which we all love and we all enjoy, but down the Upper Newtownards Road as I believe was a plan with dedicated bus routes.

And finally, as public service budgets are to be savagely cut because of the financial crisis. So my neighbours and I wonder why 11.9 million, maybe it's more now, should be spent on a scheme which, in the long run, we feel would benefit no one, and add to the carbon emissions which we are all being urged to reduce. And we are convinced that the proposed road widening scheme is unsafe, environmentally damaging and a waste of public money. Thank you very much for letting me speak.

MR J ROBB; INSPECTOR: Just stay there for a little moment if you would, please, Iris. Thank you very much for that. That was a very eloquent presentation, thank you very much for that.

MR FRANCIS O'REILLY: By way of what I hope is correction, Mr Inspector, not challenges as such not challenging as such.

(To the witness): Mrs Nesbitt, you seem to think that the Kingsden Link will run from the Knock Road through to Shandon Park.

MRS IRIS NESBITT: No, no, from the Knock Road, no, I'm not quite sure where it runs from, because that never actually appeared on the plans we had. It was only ever pencilled in by Gary, I think, wasn't it. Do you remember when you showed

it to me you said, well, this is just an idea we've got. So I know of course where Kingsden Link is at the bottom of my garden, and I know there are two roads there and I believe it's going to serve those people, because Kingsden Link is going to be stopped, isn't it?

MR FRANCIS O'REILLY: It is, but I thought that you thought that something in addition to the Ascot Park link was going to emerge onto Shandon Park?

A. Yes, I did think that.

Q. No, that is not the plan. That is something supported by Mr Thompson who owns one of the houses and by Professor Hendry who owns another house, but, no, the Roads Service plans actually to, as it were, give a single access from the Knock Road to a number of properties, but that the access will stop as a dead end and will not emerge onto the Shandon Park.

A. I see, thank you.

Q. I don't know if that gives you some reassurance.

A. That's very reassuring.

MR J ROBB; INSPECTOR: If I could interject, there may be some slight confusion on this, because later on today we will actually be getting a presentation which, a couple of presentations, which in fact will, as far as I believe, suggest that that link should be made. So it is a proposal which is being made by other people as it stands at the moment, and my understanding is that that is not what Roads Service intend to do. So it's understandable that that confusion --

MRS IRIS NESBITT: I think it was a proposal that Gary actually showed me was just one of the ways they were thinking. Our

theory is that once the surplus land is sold off it will be, you know, obviously something that would be again considered to run it out into Shandon Park.

MR FRANCIS O'REILLY: Well, despite the fact that Roads Service does indeed own surplus land at that stage, it has no development proposals and, therefore, it is not in favour of such a road emerging onto Shandon Park, particularly --

MRS IRIS NESBITT: Not yet.

Q. Particularly if there is likely to be a link road up to the Ascot Park, Ascot Gardens area, Mrs Nesbitt.

A. Right, thank you.

Q. Mrs Nesbitt, just generally, I'm not sure whether you differ from RACKS in what you are saying.

A. No, not at all.

Q. Well, Mr Ratcliffe did say yesterday he felt that four lanes, as it were, all the way, would generally be of benefit allowing for the consequences for Shandon Park and Kensington Road, would you accept that four lanes is appropriate, or do you differ from what Mr Ratcliffe said?

MR RATCLIFFE: Could I clarify, because I didn't say that four lanes would be of benefit to Shandon Park.

MR FRANCIS O'REILLY: No, I didn't say that. I said four lanes would be of benefit to the Knock Road with the consequences for Shandon Park.

MR RATCLIFFE:: Thank you.

MRS IRIS NESBITT: No, I'm on the committee and I have been present at almost every meeting. I don't differ from anything that Ian said. It probably will be good for Knock Road, but you appreciate our concerns.

MR FRANCIS O'REILLY: Absolutely.

MRS IRIS NESBITT: Thank you.

MR FRANCIS O'REILLY: Thank you.

MR STEPHEN POLLOCK: We don't have any further questions. I mean, there are lots of issues raised there and points of difference and so forth. I think we have already presented our case and a lot of these issues would have been covered and also the responses we provided to a series of the presentation really by RACKS covers a lot of the issues in terms of overlapping with what Mrs Nesbitt says. So I think the evidence will be before the inspector on that and we wouldn't have any need to challenge anything further, anything further Mrs Nesbitt has presented.

MR J ROBB; INSPECTOR: Yes, that's fine, thank you very much. I mean, there is a degree of overlap. And even if I would say at the outset, let's keep it clean and avoid repetition. That's a plea rather than instruction, and actually doing that is quite difficult. We value your contribution this morning. It has been most helpful. Thank you very much indeed.

(The witness withdrew)

MR J ROBB; INSPECTOR: I think we have Mr Carey Thompson now.

MR CAREY THOMPSON

MR CARY THOMPSON: Gentlemen, before I begin, first of all what I would like to do is to give you each a pack of documents. These have all the relevant documents as they relate to 62 Knock Road, including my presentation, that of Mr Black our road consultant and also the correspondence with Roads Service. I thought it might be helpful.

MR J ROBB; INSPECTOR: Thank you very much.

MR CARY THOMPSON: And there is a copy here too.

MR J ROBB; INSPECTOR: Perhaps in fairness to your document as you go through it, perhaps it will help us follow your presentation.

MR CARY THOMPSON: The presentation is included. It's the first document that you should come to.

MR J ROBB; INSPECTOR: Thank you.

MR CARY THOMPSON: Can everybody hear if I don't use microphone?

MR J ROBB; INSPECTOR: Would you like to use the mobile ...

MR CARY THOMPSON: Thank you. Thank you very much.

Gentlemen, I wonder if I could start this morning by introducing myself, both to you, to Roads Service and to the other members of the public who are here. My name is Carey Thompson. I'm the current owner of the site at number 62 Knock Road and I'm representing my father Peter Thompson and myself today. And what we would like to do is draw the inquiry's attention to a number of very serious concerns we have about the Roads Service proposals as far as they relate to number 62 Knock Road. As I mentioned, Douglas Black, our roads expert, will be speaking after me. He will focus on the technical aspects and issues. I will be giving a presentation as a long term resident of Knock Road.

I think the first thing I would like to say is that we have no objection whatsoever to the widening of the Knock Road. However, what we do object to is, first of all, a Vesting Order in respect of the land at 62 Knock Road. Secondly, the access proposals for the residents on the south side of the Knock Road. It's proposed that all the residents will access the Knock Road directly. And thirdly, we object to the stopping up order, in respect of a right of way we have to Roads Service land at 62 Knock Road, and we

will be making presentations to that effect tomorrow afternoon.

What we would also like to do is to strongly urge the inquiry to reconsider the option of an access for the residents on the south side of the Knock Road onto the Knock Road via Shandon Park. We have heard this morning already from Iris Nesbitt, there are some concerns about that, and I will do my very best to try and allay those concerns during the course of this presentation.

I think it's quite important for me to explain to the inquiry why the site at 62 Knock Road is of such personal significance for me. The site was purchased by my parents in 1963 and we lived there as a family until 1989 when my parents sold part of the site, including the part that had a house, to Roads Service, but retained a significant part of the site. That was transferred to my ownership in 2007 and it's a very deep seated desire of mine to build a house on that site; a house that would provide a home for my wife and children, my father. As you can see, there is already a strong connection, over 47 years, to this particular site on the Knock Road, and I would very much like to think that my children could grow up in the safe, happy environment that I had the benefit of having growing up on that part of the Knock Road.

In terms of where we have got to for putting a construction on the site, we had outline planning permission in January 2009. We are close to submitting our final application and will do so before the end of this year. And just for the inquiry's information, we received notice of vesting in November 2009.

We have three basic objections to the Roads Service proposal for direct access onto the Knock Road. Firstly, on the grounds of safety. Secondly, on the grounds of land use. And thirdly, because we believe there is a better option, namely access via Shandon Park. And I'll go into detail on each of those three points.

Roads Service in their document snappily entitled - A55 Knock Road Widening Access Option and Central Meridian Appraisal 20th November 2009 - stated that one of the key aims of the design was to enhance the safety of access and exit for residents living on the Knock Road. And, gentlemen, it may be a document you are already familiar with, but I have enclosed it in your pack at Tab 6, I believe. It's paragraph two point one and I think it might be worth while just to read that in full. It says:

"One of the key design issues of the A55 Knock Road widening scheme is to enhance the safety of access ..."

Sorry, it's Tab 6:

"Is to enhance the safety of access and exit from properties for residents living on the Knock Road between Shandon Park and Kensington Road. Currently these residents have to exit directly onto the Knock Road via substandard access with poor visibility. The construction of the new road will affect these accesses further so an alternative access road must be provide today mitigate this problem".

So far we are in agreement with the Roads Service. However, if that is the test by which Roads Service option is to be considered, then it fails that test. And it fails that test for two principal reasons: The first one is that the type of accident that might occur, accessing directly

onto the Knock Road, is likely to be much more severe than it is today. And we have heard two pieces of evidence this morning that point to that conclusion. Firstly, we have heard from Roads Service that in terms of the volume of traffic on the A55 Knock Road, after the arrangements have been, road widening has taken place, they are not predicting an increase in the volume of traffic. What they are talking about is improved journey times, or what I would call cars going faster. And we have already heard from Iris Nesbitt that the constricted nature of the road along the front of 62 Knock Road, does lead to cars travelling at a slower speed. So what we are talking about here is the prospect of a much more serious type of accident occurring for residents of the south side of the Knock Road.

The second reason why it fails the safety test is on the grounds that there is a much more likelihood of there being an accident. Cars are going to be sitting in the Knock Road looking to turn right for a much longer period of time, because you will have to go in and out of one access. Secondly, and this point has been referred to already, Roads Service in that same appraisal road, talk about the development potential of the land that is owned at Shandon Park. And that could lead to more cars making use of that access route directly onto the Knock Road. Clearly there is going to be significantly greater difficulty for residents wishing to turn out right from the Knock Road, and this is acknowledged by Roads Service in their letter of the 16th of July 2009 which you can find in your pack. It's at Tab 8, page 2. I'm not going to quote from it, but what they propose is that you simply turn left onto the Knock Road at

busy times and either access Shandon Park or turn right down the Sandown Road. If it's helpful to the inquiry I'll read out the relevant section. It's page 2 under safety of residential access:

"At present we can see that at peak times it is difficult for you to turn right onto the A55 Knock Road across three lanes. We believe that the current proposal would make this stretch of road safer for users travelling along the A55".

That's users, that's not people living on the road, and the reason given is:

"Due to increased footway widths which provide additional site distance in both directions".

They then go on to say:

"For residents exiting the proposed access road, an alternative during peak times would be to exit left and use the improved signalized junction at Sandown Road which will have a dedicated right turn lane, the travelling time on this route returning via Knockvale park is approximately three minutes. Another option would be to use Shandon Park".

Douglas Black will be talking about that proposal from a technical perspective, but if I can talk about it as an owner. First of all, I think it's deeply unsatisfactory, and, secondly, I think it's a very clear acknowledgment on the part of Roads Service that they see there to be a danger in terms of trying to turn out right across three lanes of traffic.

A point which has not been considered, at least not in the literature that I have seen, is the potential for conflict in the central reservation between those residents

of the south side of the Knock Road where we are, number 62, and those on the north side. Those living on the north side will have the legitimate ambition of being able to turn right out of their property and right into their property. Therefore, those residents on the south and the north side will be in competition for the use of that central reservation.

And finally on the safety issue, in that report there are references to meeting with residents groups, with our neighbour Professor Hendry and with Marie Curie Cancer, but no reference to meetings, discussions and correspondence between ourselves and Roads Service since May 2008 and that's something that I very much welcome to have the opportunity to rectify today.

Our second ground for challenging the access route is land use. And I'm going to refer you to a letter from Roads Service of the 10th of June 2009 which you will find at Tab 10 in your pack. It's the third paragraph:

"The access road is designed to minimise land take whilst ensuring that it meets all necessary standards and would be maintained by Roads Service".

Well, I think it patently fails to do that. Why do I say that? I say that because Roads Service have served a Vesting Order to take additional land at number 62 Knock Road to allow that scheme to happen. Why have they done that? Because they have decided that the best place to site direct access onto the Knock Road is where there is a maximum height differential between the level of the road and the level at which the houses are built. And it's quite a significant amount of land that they are looking for. It's

an additional 15 per cent of the site, 185 square metres. And if you care to look at the plan that accompanied that letter of the 10th of June, which is enclosed there, you will notice that there is little arrows between the site and the access road which I take to mean that there will be a difference of level between the site at 62 and the access road which could impose a further restriction on our use of the site.

I'd also like to echo a point made by Iris Nesbitt in terms of trees. If you look at the architect's representation of the house for 62 Knock Road at the front cover of your packs, you will see that there are represented there a number of trees with the swirly circles around them. You will see that a number of those trees will be felled as a result of that access road being built. And I'd also ask you, even if it's perhaps not wholly relevant to this inquiry, to note that the design will preserve all the mature deciduous trees that are currently on the site at 62 Knock Road.

There is a very positive alternative to coming out directly onto the Knock Road, and that is to exit via Shandon Park. And Roads Service, in the report, the appraisal report, have made very clear at table three that that option of accessing via Shandon Park provides the greatest improvement in safety of the main alignment. Now, I think that's a very important point that I want to draw the inquiry's attention to. Roads Service are saying that they believe that this is the safest option for the A55 Knock Road. And it achieves that aim by simply not allowing any access whatsoever to the Knock Road from the south side

between Kensington and Shandon. And it allows access onto Shandon Park by way of a signalized junction. But there are a number of other reasons why this is the right option to choose. There is no requirement for vesting of additional land whatsoever. The land is already owned and controlled by Roads Service. There is no additional cost for this option. And it removes that very serious concern about potential for conflict between residents of the south side of the Knock Road and the north side of the Knock Road in the central reservation. Clearly if that option was selected we would not be objecting to the stopping up order.

I feel that it's only appropriate to draw the inquiry's attention to some of the disadvantages of access via Shandon Park. There is a concern from Iris Nesbitt, and I know it's perhaps a more general concern for the residents association, about the increase in the number of vehicles on Shandon Park. And Roads Service has done some modelling of that, again it's in the appraisal report, if I can just refer you to the reference. It's paragraph 2.6. What that states is that they estimate by 2025 that the additional traffic coming in from the residents of the south side of the Knock Road will add two per cent to the vehicle saturation. And I think to indicate how negligible that is, in comparison they are saying that there will be an increase in the level of traffic of 25 per cent simply if the existing arrangements were maintained.

Much is made in the Roads Service report of the proximity of the junction onto Shandon Park for the residents coming from the Knock Road and the Knock Road junction. And that is a point which Douglas Black has

written about extensively in his report and he will cover in his presentation. But if I can be allowed to make a point as a lay person; frankly I think that it is only likely to be an issue for large lorries. Now, as anybody who knows Shandon Park well will tell you, and as Iris Nesbitt pointed out earlier today, there is a number of right angle turns. There are also traffic calming measures which mean that for any lorry that would not wish to access Shandon Park except for serving a regular resident.

Roads Service also make play as a disadvantage of this option that the development potential of the land owned by Roads Service at Shandon Park could not then be sold off and developed. And I hope that at least in part addresses some of the concerns that the residents association have about an increase in the volume of traffic coming from the south side of the Knock Road.

So in conclusion, in the words of Roads Service itself, access via Shandon Park is safer. There is clearly, therefore, no justification for the Vesting Order. There will be negligible increase in the number of vehicles on Shandon Park as a result. And the final point, gentlemen, that I would like to leave you with this morning, is in making your recommendations, or making your decision, whether you consider the development potential of Roads Service land to be more important than the safety of the residents of the south side of the Knock Road. And that's my wife, family, father, Professor Hendry, Mrs Georgina Law. Thank you very much indeed.

MR J ROBB; INSPECTOR: Thank you very much again very much for that. That's very clearly set out and helpful to us.

I propose to take a break for our stenographer to rest her fingers. It's approaching half past 11 and we will start again at quarter to 12. So get some refreshments, some water, some tea, some coffee. Thank you.

(Short adjournment).

(On resuming).

MR J ROBB; INSPECTOR: Ladies and gentlemen, it's quarter to 12, so will you please take your seats and we will continue with the next presentation.

So we have Mr Douglas Black.

MR DOUGLAS BLACK.

MR BLACK: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, and Mr Inspector. My name is Douglas Black and I am the director of Lisbane Consultants limited, who have been commissioned by Peter and Carey Thompson to give technical support in their objection to the A55.

I graduated from Queen's University Belfast in 1970 with a bachelor of science degree in civil engineering. I am a chartered engineer, a member of the Institution of Civil Engineers and also a member of the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation. As you know, I represent Peter and Carey Thompson. Peter owns number 62 Knock Road, sorry, Carey owns number 62 Knock Road and has out-lining planning approval for a dwelling on the site. The Thompsons are not objecting in principle to the scheme, but only to proposals to provide access to the property. Their architect is John Kennedy who is sitting at the back, and he is here today in case he needs to answer questions about the scheme.

A few words on the existing conditions. Knock Road is a very important route. It is a strategic and protected route. It has two traffic lanes in each direction, reducing to two at each side of the scheme. It is a healthy traffic route with a two-way flow of around 40,000 vehicles per day. In simple terms, at peak periods there would be 15 vehicles per minute in each of the four traffic lanes. There are also

several accesses to private property taken direct from the Knock Road.

Carey Thompson has planning permission for a dwelling on this site with access approved direct from the Knock Road.

Proposed Roads Service schemes: At a meeting in September of this year, the Roads Service consultant accepted that the site is not a green field site and as such there would have to be compromises to design standards to make the road improvements fit into an existing urban situation. Moving on.

The Roads Service have a preferred option which is option two. This is shown in option two, and if I can flash it up on the screen so you can have a look at it. Briefly this scheme, as you know, give two full traffic lanes in each direction, additional traffic lanes at the adjacent Shandon Park junction, separate pockets for right turns and service road for numbers 60 to 68 Knock Road, Kingsden Park and the potential development land. You will note that this option requires vesting of some of Thompson's land.

Now, there is an alternative option three which I will put up. Basically it is the same scheme as the Roads Service preferred option two except the access for 60 to 68 Knock Road and the development land at Kingsden park actually goes out onto Shandon Park, land directly onto the Knock Road. It does not require vesting of any of Thompson's land. That's option three.

A few words about the traffic generation from the site. Using the recognised data I forecast it to be around 86 daily trips. It is not a major access as defined by access

standards.

Moving on - preferred option two, this is the Roads Service preferred option. In our opinion it is against the protected routes policy. AMEY list advantages as access moved into Roads Service land; new access for Marie Curie reduce the number of access on the A55 from four to one; single access for all properties along the scheme; third party land owners can use the one access; there is no need for additional access, and it maximizes the potential of road service land.

I would like to say a few words about my first bullet point, it being against protected routes policy. I concede that the reduction in the number of accesses is in accordance with the protected routes policy. However, there will be intensification in use of the proposed access because it's being used to provide access for development land and this, in my opinion, is contrary to policy. I have been practicing as a traffic engineer for some time and I have had informal discussions with the Roads Service senior engineer in the development control section about planning applications in the area, particularly an extension to a Shandon filling station just to the west of the site. And these discussions show that Roads Service said to implement the protected use of policy [inaudible] in other words they wouldn't allow any intensification in use of existing accesses.

Now, AMEY, in the option two drawing lists a few disadvantages to this option. It requires 64 Knock Road to be demolished, there is a slight detour for Kingsden Park residents and visibility splay required at junction with A55

reduces the development land potential.

Now, I would like to make a few points about this option. Right turn manoeuvres across the dual carriageway is one of the most dangerous manoeuvres possible and should be avoided wherever possible. Given the traffic flows in Knock Road it would be difficult for vehicles to enter or exit a service road. This would lead to driver frustration and increase the potential for accidents. The right turn lane is designed to minimum standards. If there is any queuing in the pocket there could be, there is a potential for danger of rear ending, shunt collisions. The proposed central median is not of sufficient length to accommodate long vehicles such as refuse lorries, cars with trailers or caravans, delivery vans, etc.. there would be the risk of serious collisions between longer vehicles waiting in the central median and westbound traffic.

Now, Roads Service mentioned in the letter to Carey Thompson of the 19th of July 2009 that they considered motorists exiting from the Kingsden link have the option of doing a detour. We have carried out checks on this and can confirm Roads Service's assertion that there would be an additional three minute journey time, but this is during off peak periods. However, most of the journeys exited the site would be undertaken during the week day am peak period when the journey will take considerably longer, thus the residents would be disadvantaged.

Now, moving onto alternative option three, which AMEY had drawn up. They list the advantages as: It removes the accesses from main alignment, it improves safety along the A55, traffic joins at the signaled junction and it

provides, it still provides access to Roads Service land. This shows that option three is accepted as the safest for main line traffic.

Then we go onto the various disadvantages. The new access is too close to Shandon Park junction, a departure from standard would be required for this, it increases demand at the Shandon Park junction and it sterilizes Roads Service land. I will comment in this in the next few slides.

Our response to these comments is that the site may be accepted this isn't a green field site and compromises to design standards will be required. It is noted that a departure from standard is required for preferred option two.

We consider that the access location is combined with the document creating places. Furthermore, the access is not a major access and junction criteria should not apply, although in fact it complies with the environment of the development. With regard to increase in traffic on Shandon Park, this option would only add one traffic movement to the Shandon Park junction every five minutes during the day at peak hour. It would only be operated during difficulties at peak time and at all other times would operate satisfactorily:

There would be less traffic on Shandon Park and Knock Road and easier for vehicles to get out, shorter journey time and there would be no need for a diversion. Traffic speed would be less at Shandon Park and Knock Road, therefore, if accidents do occur they should be of less severity. Costs are shown in the AMEY document as being similar, but they are based on the land value of a million

pound per acre, which is totally unreal in today's market. Adoption of this option would eliminate the potential of right movements across the carriageway. AMEY's option and median appraise alleys report agrees that this option has the greatest improvement in safety of the main alignment.

My final slide, Mr Inspector, both options, that's the Roads Service preferred option and the alternative option three, have, in our opinion, advantages and disadvantages. We consider that preferred option two is contrary to the protected routes policy. We consider that the alternative option three is safer. There is no significant difference in cost and one point I didn't put in the slide is that it doesn't require any further land from Thompson's. Overall Shandon Park is considered to be the better option.

Thank you for your time.

MR J ROBB; INSPECTOR: Thank you again for your presentation. It is useful to have it illustrated with slides. Reactions from the department to this alternative proposal?

MR FRANCIS O'REILLY: Mr Black, at the moment there are four separate accesses, as it were, to the properties in question, isn't that right?

THE WITNESS: That is correct.

Q. And, therefore, vehicles coming from the Forestside have four, as it were, potential right hand turns to make depending which property they want to access?

A. That is right.

Q. And the proposal of Roads Service is to reduce those four to one?

A. That is correct.

Q. Now, respectfully could I suggest to you that is not

intensification. It may be the same number of vehicles, but in fact there's just the one access as opposed to four accesses.

A. That is correct, but there will be intensification in that there is potential development land there.

Q. Well, we haven't got to a development stage yet. Roads Service have no proposals, and those that may emanate are really replacement dwellings by your client and by Professor Hendry. So at the moment, and so far as we know for the foreseeable future, the number of properties being served won't increase, or hasn't increased.

A. That is correct, but on the other hand the land is shown on AMEY's drawings as potential development land.

Q. Of course. So what I am suggesting to you, there is no breach of the protected routes policy because there is no intensification of use.

A. As I said, I mean, there is no intensification of use at present, but, as I say, there is the potential for that. And our Shandon Park option removes that, that potential.

Q. Well, I think Roads Service agree with you, Mr Black, that ideally the safest needs of access is by Shandon Park. I don't think that's ever been disputed. But do you appreciate that if that was to happen you would have within close proximity to one another the junction of Shandon Park with the Knock Road, the proposed Ascot Park link with Shandon Park and then the access road, the Kingsden Link, also in Shandon Park, all within a distance of 55 metres of the junction of Shandon Park and the Knock Road?

A. I accept that, but, as I've said, it's not a green field site. AMEY admitted it's not a green field site. There has

to be some compromise to the standards. I feel there are advantages and disadvantages in both options, but I feel that the Shandon Park option is safer.

Q. Well, for example, Mr Black, if the Kingsden Link, is as you envisage it, was created thereby allowing vehicles to emerge from the junction, the new junction as it were in Shandon Park or to enter it, a vehicle intending to turn right towards the traffic lights at the Shandon Park, Knock Road, first of all, the driver has to be aware of traffic coming along Shandon Park from his left-hand side, has to be aware of potentially traffic coming down the Ascot Park link and has to be aware of traffic coming along the Knock Road with the intention of turning left. Would you agree with that?

A. I agree with that.

Q. And what I am really suggesting to you, that really involves sight lines of about 270 degrees, three quarters of a circle - left, straight ahead and round almost behind you.

A. I agree, but the left turn traffic out of Knock Road into Shandon Park is light. They would be coming through a second light junction. Shandon Park is either traffic calmed or it is proposed to traffic calm, so traffic speeds would be low. I still feel it is the safer option as in you previously turn right across the Knock Road, two lanes of traffic with 15 vehicles per minute in each lane at peak periods and, as Mr Thompson has said, the traffic speeds would be increasing, that's the purpose of the scheme, is to reduce journey times so the traffic speeds should be quicker.

MR CARY THOMPSON: If I can just interject at that point. I think it's a very important point that you have made, namely that

you are saying that Roads Service believes that access via Shandon Park is the safest option. So that's not simply a point being made by a resident of the south side of Knock Road, that's a point that's accepted by Roads Service and I just would like to draw the public inquiry's attention to that, because I feel that that is very significant. Because that, I think above all, should be the primary criterion which these decisions are based. So thank you for allowing that interjection.

MR FRANCIS O'REILLY: Well, you had already said it, Mr Thompson, with respect, it was not something that Roads Service have ever hidden from you and indeed was part of your presentation.

Mr Black, although it's right to say that if the proposed Roads Service access road from the Knock Road is made that it will mean those wishing to turn right from those properties will have to cross five lanes, but isn't it right to say that the median in the centre, which provides a right turning facility into the access road, also provides refuge for those making the right turn? In other words, a right turn can be made at two stages- into the portion of the median designed for it crossing two lanes, and then crossing a further two lanes where traffic from the left has eased or in fact it no longer presents a danger?

MR DOUGLAS BLACK: That's correct.

MR CARY THOMPSON: Well, I think perhaps just a caveat to Mr Black's comment, which is namely that if there are vehicles in the right turning pocket on the Knock Road seeking to turn right into and access the properties on the south side, then it would not be possible for somebody

coming out of the Knock Road wishing to turn right to make use of that central reservation. And I think as we had also talked about earlier in my presentation, we have to take account of the residents on the north side of the Knock Road also wishing to make use legitimately of the central reservation.

MR FRANCIS O'REILLY: Well, Mr Black, can we agree that the number of access and exits from the Roads Service proposed access road from the Knock Road is modest?

A. Sorry, I don't understand the point of the question.

Q. The number of people making right turns into the proposed access road, or the number of the persons making right turns out of the access road, is modest?

A. It is modest, but if the development potential of the land is utilised, that will increase it.

Q. And the possibilities of frequent encounters between a vehicle on the Knock Road making to wish, sorry, wishing to make a right turn into the access road and a vehicle in the access road wishing to make a right turn onto the Knock Road, highly unlikely? Thompson I think perhaps in a better position to answer that Mr Black, simply because of personal knowledge. Number 60 Knock Road, which is the Marie Curie centre for the charitable activities, operates as an office and, therefore, the staff there are operating on a nine to five basis. The other folk on the road are, the Knock Road, are residents. And, therefore, you will have at the peak times the people turning up for work at Marie Curie wishing to turn right off the Knock Road, same that the residents on the Knock Road are wishing to come out and turn right. And of course, the converse will apply at 5 o'clock. Again,

sorry for interjecting.

MR FRANCIS O'REILLY: Mr Thompson, that is right if all the staff employed at the Marie Curie office come from the Forestside and make right turns, whereas we don't know the details, and it's equally likely they all come from the Upper Newtownards Road side and make left turns in. And similarly, residents leaving the four or five properties are as likely to make a left turn out of the properties towards Forestside as they are to make a right turn towards the Upper Newtownards Road.

MR CARY THOMPSON: I have no disagreement with that statement.

MR FRANCIS O'REILLY: Mr Black, I don't want to get involved in technical matters with you, and engineering practices at this stage, but I'm not sure you were present when Mrs Nesbitt was giving her evidence earlier this morning. She lives at number 6 Shandon Park.

A. I'm afraid I wasn't.

Q. Well, do you mind if I now hand you over to Mr Pollock who will deal more with the practical problems emanating from a creation of an access onto Shandon Park.

MR STEPHEN POLLOCK: Thank you. Really just to point out as well, as Mr O'Reilly has just said, I mean Roads Service, and I need to clarify this, Roads Service does feel that if it's possible to provide, to remove all four accesses and bring them out onto the side road that is clearly a preferable option. But the reason that we haven't taken that as an option is because we don't think it can be achieved safely. So I don't think it, just as a point of clarification, we are not proposing to take it out onto Shandon Park because we don't think it can be achieved safely.

What I really want to ask is that Mr Black made the

point that, in terms of the standards that would apply to this junction onto Shandon Park and in relation to creating places, because we have done quite a considerable analysis of this through our consultants, we didn't think we would be able to achieve a safe arrangement. And my question is: Does Mr Black have any evidence to suggest that these arrangements can be made onto Shandon Park safely, and do they meet the relevant DMRB standards, that's the designed standard for roads and bridges. Because that's the crux of our argument. And as a sub entity of that, if I could ask, are there any other issues to do with sight lines that may require further land in the area? I think Mr Thompson mentioned earlier that all this could be achieved within land that's owned by Roads Service. There is a potential issue of sight lines in Shandon Park for this new access which might affect private property and I would seek some clarification on that.

A. Sorry, you couldn't start again? Sorry, yes. The situation is that you are applying DMRB standards to the access road come out purely onto a residential road. My contention would be that this should be governed by development, DCAN15 because it's coming out onto a residential road. And it's DCAN15.

MR STEPHEN POLLOCK: Can I pass it to Mr Livingstone?

MR GARY LIVINGSTONE: Just on that point, our understanding is basically that the access is road is controlled by DCAN15, but where it actually meets Shandon Park, especially the main line A55 does come under the jurisdiction of the DMRB and pointing directly to the right, left and stagger crosses and the left stagger crosses within the DMRB, which, if you

bring that Shandon Park out that proposed Shandon Park will be substandard, considerably substandard.

MR DOUGLAS BLACK: I mean, I take your point, but I say it should be governed by DCAN 15, creating places.

MR CARY THOMPSON: Could I just interject at this point.

Mr Pollock made the point that Roads Service would prefer to have the option of access for Knock Road residents onto Shandon Park, but there is a concern about safety and I appreciate in doing that he's doing his job. But I think that that is only looking at a small part of the issue.

There is a much bigger issue and I would ask Mr Pollock and his colleagues within the Roads Service to consider, which is overall what is safer, direct access onto the Knock Road or access onto Shandon Park, albeit with some imperfections and limitations? And, as the barrister for the inquiry has said already, it's clear it is safer to do it -- we are not in a perfect world here, we are dealing with the realities of the situation and one is safer than the other.

MR STEPHEN POLLOCK: Just briefly in response to that. The fact is that we have come up with our current proposal as a result of quite considerable deliberation and consideration of the issues. And while we accept that it's finely balanced, we do believe that the proposed arrangements which bring four accesses down into one with right turn pockets, is quite a reasonable standard to provide on a main road. Bearing in mind that it is exactly the same sort of standard that we are providing into some of the adjacent public roads in the vicinity. And the location of this particular right turn pocket has been chosen to be what we consider to be the most appropriate and safest location. And it hasn't been

chosen to try to maximize any land development potential from Roads Service's point of view. So again I can only reiterate that there isn't any evidence provided to show that the access into Shandon Park can be achieved safely, and while I accept it might be finely balanced, we do not consider that there is anything to suggest that it can be.

One last point which I had mentioned was just to confirm whether Mr Black's assessment was whether any sight lines would be required for the access onto Shandon Park, that might require some property, or whether the sight lines can be achieved within existing footway widths.

MR DOUGLAS BLACK: I can't answer that just at the minute, but this is a Roads Service scheme. If they feel that this option should be taken forward they have the powers to obviously to vest land. And could I also point out that saying this is a junction which can be [inaudible] they have already conceded that it's not a green field site. We already accept that. You are trying to make a very good job of fitting a new road into an existing urban situation. You have done a good job on it. All we are interested in is sorting out these points for Mr Thompson.

MR STEPHEN POLLOCK: That's fine. I accept that Roads Service were to proceed with a scheme like this, we do have the powers to access land. But our view is that a sight line would be required to the left-hand side of the side road, coming out onto Shandon Park. That would involve some land from private properties in Shandon Park that we don't currently consider is necessary.

MR J ROBB; INSPECTOR: Are there any more questions? Have we exhausted the topic? I think we have given it a good airing,

which is the purpose of the inquiry, to provide a facility for that to happen. So if there's nothing more, thank you very much indeed.

(The witness withdrew)

MR J ROBB; INSPECTOR: We have Professor Hendry, I believe

PROFESSOR HENDRY

PROFESSOR HENDRY: My name is John Hendry. I feel rather awkward sitting with my back to the large part of the audience. I also apologise for croaking.

My role in this is that with my wife I own 64 Knock Road, I nearly said number 62, I own 64 Knock Road and I have occupied it with my wife and my family for 44 years. It's the last of the houses that's got to come down for the road widening purposes and while I have shed my tears for that I have come to the agreement with Roads Service that they wouldn't oppose the fact that I could rebuild a new dwelling or replacement dwelling to the rear of the property, it's a long, thin property, and that has been agreed. So we do have a future interest in access to that property.

Now, I've not prepared a presentation. I have not colluded with either of the Mr Thompsons, or with their representatives. I didn't know what they were going to say, and you may have noticed I have been rather revising what I have got to say on the basis of that, because I didn't want to cover the same sort of thing again. I've appeared this morning mainly because I don't see either of the Mr Thompsons very often. We bump into each other in Kings Square, because they don't live there, and we catch up with the news, and Peter Thompson felt that I should be

represented here, not just because I'm a resident, because I have a background in town and country planning. You stated your qualifications, I suppose I should do the same. My qualifications include a masters in civic design, which is a course on the layout and the design of urban areas. For forty years, until my retirement, I was an active member of the Royal Town Planning Institute. For the last 20 odd years I was Professor of town and country planning and head of the department of environmental planning in Queen's University. My experience over that period was very varied. I could list two that I think are relevant; I was personally appointed to the, what was it called now, the expert advisory committee, very pompous sounding name, to the regional plan, the regional strategy. And my department was appointed for both the regional strategy and Belfast urban area plan to carry out the public participation part of the exercise, to report on it, to publish it. So I'm saying this because although I have been retired ten years, and probably obviously suffer from senior citizen syndrome at times, I am aware of the background. I'm aware of the appeal procedures and I'm trying now to come at this from a different angle, as a planner, I'm not a road engineer. I've worked with them all my life and I know what they are like, and they know what planners are like, but we have got different mind sets. And so I'm going to come at it from, I've just made up my mind this minute, in a totally different way.

I'm not here to criticise in any way the general provisions of the proposals to the improved Knock Road. I think it's suffice to say that the Belfast urban area plan and the regional strategy both strongly supported this sort

of proposal. There was no dissenting voice that I am aware of in any of the teams that carried out those plans. I don't want this to sound like a criticism, but on the basis of my experience with running public participation exercises and seeing the response to them, we always recommended to the Planning Service that they took these things, the responses on the chin. We didn't even like the word objections. They were representations, they're proposals, they're suggestions. We coined a phrase, we said: Don't hide behind a technical fix. Don't quote standard so and so. Don't just rely on town planning issues. Look at where the person is coming from and try to learn from it. I must admit, in both the BUAP and the strategy, considerable changes were made because they did this and took it on board. I don't want it to be a criticism. It's an observation. But your response to objections is full of technical fixes. Very rarely it says, yes, you may have a different viewpoint, it varies from ours, let's get together and find if there's a solution. It's: No, the requirement is so and so. And to be honest, I think at times it shows a lack of acceptance of the reality of living on Knock Road, living on a major road. I'm ad libbing, because you have just been questioning this business about turns in and out of our properties. Can I just try to provide a reality update on the way that I respond to one specific comment. It's on page, it's on several pages actually, of the response. It's on page 41. It says:

"The safety for the turning right out of the side road is improved due to hatched refuge area".

That's the statement in 41. If I drive down my

driveway, which I share with Mrs Georgina Law next door and her neighbour again David Graham, I drive down there at 9 o'clock in the morning, I'm confronted with two lanes, and yesterday you were querying whether it was one lane or two lanes. We occur just where the one lane bit turns into two lanes. The whole thing at peak times is running at two lanes any way. I am confronted then with two lanes of traffic. It's either stopped for the lights or it's nose to tail going through, and it stretches back towards Kensington as far as I can see. You would agree with this. What good to me is that refuge in the middle of the road? There is nothing on God's earth that can get me to it. All I can do, in fact I'm very happy if some kind motorist stops and lets me in the stream to turn left and go through the rat run. So I'm forced into that. Now, that is the peak hours more than anything, it is actually more like a peak two hours, with flexi-time it's getting longer and longer, with the build up of traffic it's getting longer and longer. The remainder of the day, well, you are going to say well you can use the way through. I would like to ask you to bear with me for a minute, because I want to describe the situation in some detail. I come out at 10 o'clock in the morning, 2 o'clock in the afternoon, even, dare I say, quite a large amount of Saturdays and Sundays nowadays, and there is traffic that's going to be flowing from the Shandon Park junction as the traffic lights change. It comes through, can I use the word, a very technical term, a sausage of traffic as the lights change, it's like a string of sausages all nose to tail.

MR STEPHEN POLLOCK: Platoon.

PROFESSOR HENDRY: I hadn't heard that.

MR J ROBB; INSPECTOR: I think I'd heard that one.

PROFESSOR HENDRY: Sausage will do. As that goes past I can come out after it. Looking the other way, I've got a continuous, or continual dare I say, stream of traffic. Now, you are going to say: Well, why have you got it different in that direction? That's what I want to explain. The traffic lights change at Kings Road and through comes your platoon, my sausage. By the time that sausage reaches Kensington it's doing 45, sorry, it's doing forty miles an hour, 35, no, don't exaggerate, doing 35 miles an hour. I don't need to be a road engineer or a policeman with a camera to record that, I'm sitting in that sausage, or platoon, trying to slow it down because I know I've got to get my speed down to ten miles an hour to turn in. Now, if there's any other residents on Knock Road, they know this feeling, because you are looking in your mirror and the guys behind are saying: What's this devil doing? What's he up to? Why is he going so slow? Can I get round him? And I'm afraid I am afraid of creating a multiple shunt and I always breathe a sigh of relief when I get in that I have still got a back bumper. You can see this going on behind you. I am interfering with this flow of traffic, 35, you know, you flow with the traffic, you are doing 35. I'm going off the point now. When that sausage has finished coming through on that phase at Kings Road, the lights change and the traffic that's stacked back towards Kings Square comes through on a filter with a fairly clear road playing catch up to the back of the sausage. So you are getting a sausage with a tail. And that sausage with a tail goes past Kensington, or goes first past Cherryvalley, past Kensington and blocks them off, and those

people then catch up with the back of the tail. And by that time the next phase has come on and the traffic's stacked from the Tullycarnet, no, not Tullycarnet, Ballyhackamore side of Kings Road, that comes through to catch up with the tail. And I'm in the position that when the sausage from Shandon Park has gone past, I've got to cut through that tail in some way to do a right hand turn. Playing catch up often means going over 30 miles an hour and it's very difficult to tell, and I have been caught on this, I admit, that looking down the road, a car coming towards you in that tail is it doing 30? Is it doing 50? Has it seen the lights are green? Is it trying to get to the lights before they change? As I say, on a couple of occasions I have been, am I going too fast? I have been caught up with because I suddenly find it's a BMW doing 50 miles an hour, I mean, not 30 miles an hour. And now is the killer punch, I haven't finished yet, because those cars see the lights change to red at Shandon Park and they don't do 30, they don't do 25, they slow down to 15, to ten, and often avoiding eye contact with me sitting there, pull up in front of me. The really dangerous one is the good Samaritan who stops and says: Come on out, come on out, he's looking in his mirror, there's nothing coming, come on out. And I never do because 12 months ago I was nearly another road accident statistics taking my daughter and two children to the airport. And the guy was very insistent, you're all right, you're all right, come out. And I came forward and the guy, a fellow in the inside lane come outside and I have just never turned right there since in that way.

We sit there and we sit there for say three turns of

the lights, three changes of the lights. Is it a two minute cycle? You sit there six minutes probably before we have a chance to get through. As we sit there my wife I feel is her tension rising because she knows I'm going to make a break for it, you know, I'm going to get out somehow. And she will never turn, it's got to be Sunday afternoon with nobody coming in either direction before my wife will ever turn right. She would rather go through RACKS area. Have you ever tried driving down Kensington, 9 o'clock in the morning, against the flow of traffic with the cars parked on Kensington? It's not a pleasant experience. It takes 20 minutes to half an hour to get from my house round through the Gilnahirk, onto Gilnahirk Road, through onto Kings Road and then back to the Knock Road junction.

Now, I'm sorry I have been going on, but that is the reality of the situation.

Now, I had a moment in reading these reports and reading various papers that have been published, I had a moment when I fell in love with Mr Livingstone. And the quote has already been made.

MR GARY LIVINGSTONE: Thank you very much.

PROFESSOR HENDRY: It was in paragraph 7.15 of your report:

"One of the key objectives of the A55 Knock Road widening scheme was to minimise the number of accesses onto the trunk road".

And can I put this next bit in italics:

"To enhance safety of access to properties of residents living on Knock Road".

And it literally it says:

"Between Shandon Park and Kensington Road".

Here was a man who was going to be my hero to do something for me. It didn't last long, Mr Livingstone, because I then read that both in your report and in response on page 41:

"The department is complying with AMP3 by reducing the number of direct accesses to the A55 from four to one".

I can see the points.

MR GARY LIVINGSTONE: What was the first clause?

MR FRANCIS O'REILLY: The first extract you read out.

PROFESSOR HENDRY: 7.15. I took it down off the internet, so I think it was 7.15 on the internet. Have I got it right?

MR GARY LIVINGSTONE: Yes.

PROFESSOR HENDRY: Yes, it had been that we are not going to have, we are not going to have any accesses, yes, you know, I'd have stayed in love. Looking at that I can't say that the access is going to be worse. Improved sight lines and things don't really come into this, because I'm stuck there. I can see the traffic coming both ways. Your proposal, I've goes to also cross a median. I've got to cross a cycle lane. I'm not sure whether I can use this refuge idea in the middle. I've come across this in Spain where you get a right turn and then you stay in the median and then turn on again. But you've got to use your mirrors to see what's coming down the other side. I'm not very happy with that. But the big frustration I think would be that instead of me coming out at 9 o'clock in the morning with seven properties involved, I may be sat behind Peter Thompson for six minutes while he gets through and then I've got to go, you know, it's going to be more frustrating I think. I'm just commenting on the reality of the situation.

Is it likely to change? I'm going to Mr Pollock now,
7.5 of Mr Pollock's comments:

"Knock Road currently carries an average of 39 thousand vehicles a day and is currently one of the busiest strategic roads within the BUAP".

It's that bad:

"With traffic levels continuing to grow it can be expected that congestion will increase and consequently that road safety may deteriorate".

So I'm going to still sit there at 9 o'clock in the morning with my refuge there and still have to turn left and go through RACKS. I mean, I'm just trying to get over what the position really is.

How did this idea come up to go through the Shandon Park? I can't remember. I met Peter Thompson one day, probably a couple of years back, and he was saying: Have you seen this? Have you heard that? And I think it was him who said: Why can't we go through into Shandon Park? And having this background of dealing with the BUAP and so forth, I remembered discussions when the proposals were being made on where apartment blocks should be permitted. And it was agreed they shouldn't be permitted with access directly to the trunk road system, but they ought to be close to the trunk road system and, therefore, created just off the trunk road system. And this rang a bell that this idea of discharging us into Shandon Park seemed to meet those sort of planning requirements. I don't know about road requirements, planning requirements. I then talked to Georgina Law, she's not here, she's 80 years old, she's a neighbour. She's lived there 48 years I believe. When I

went Peter Thompson was on one side, Georgina was on the other. I talked to David Graham who's been there, I don't know, 20 years. I also talked to a man from Kingsden one day who I bumped into. I don't think he's actually made a representation, but all seemed to say to me: Yeah, that's quite a good idea. Or in fact Mrs Law said: Well, I always thought that's what would happen any way, that's what she expected. She's not here to speak for herself, this is hearsay.

You have just had this discussion about the reality of a link. You say there are a number of options, I'm quoting here from page 42 of the response, plus a couple of other cases:

"There are a number of reasons why the option was discontinued".

I'm very quickly doing this, the first was conflict with the Ascot Link. I'm aware, as a planner, that there is a minimum distance, a minimum off set between two roads coming onto a third road in order to allow weaving distance to get from one to the other. That wouldn't apply here because nobody from Ascot Link in their right mind is going to come down to Kingsden Link or the Kingsden Link up into Ascot Park. You know, it isn't a movement that's going to happen. They are both very small flows of traffic, it's only seven households. There is no great demand, no sign of conflict. I immediately thought: Hey, that's the sort of thing I would have put in if I had been writing the report, but at the same time I've got this sniff of red herring in my nose with that one, I'm not being cheeky here, I just think there isn't much there. Also, would you allow for the

fact that there is opposition to Ascot Link, and it was suggested yesterday that the Ascot Park, not Ascot Link, Ascot Park, that that may go somewhere else? I don't know. But that was, RACKS was more against that than about our proposal which they hadn't heard about. So I don't feel that's an awfully important thing. The next one though, and I can join two here together, because these I do take seriously: Substandard visibility splays and drivers approaching a major, minor road priority junction, the visibility. I can joint comment on them together. I have looked at it several times, as a planner, not as a road engineer. I even on one occasion was driving past and they had been cutting the grass on that area in front of Shandon Park there, and they had left the gate open. And I actually stopped and backed my vehicle in, just to see what I could see. Now, this one you are concerned with, looking left, isn't usually such a huge problem because the traffic is coming on the other side of the road, it is a traffic calming area with, I think, you are aiming at 20 miles an hour down there. You are going to tell me there is a large red gate post in the way. I would rather see it got rid of or top taken off of it. I'm the man who's losing his house through this, so you can't expect me to shed tears for someone who's going to lose a gate post. But personally as a motorist I didn't feel particularly worried about that splay. I can take you round not only the Kensington area, I can take you round Gilnahirk or any old area of Belfast and show you similar situations that are not accident black spots. They may be not meeting requirements to the letter, but they are not accident black spots. Any way, you can come

back at me on that one. I'm not suggesting that that is perfect. Looking round to the right you'd have to take out a mature roadside tree which I think is going any way in the road improvement. And then I can see quite clearly traffic turning down on the right turn lane, the disputed right turn lane, down Knock Road. I can see traffic coming across, even though it's down a bit of a hill, traffic coming across Sandown Road up towards me and across. The one that gives me problem is the one of traffic coming up Knock Road from Kings Road and turning left into Shandon Park. Let's go to your figures for this. Page 80 of the response, you are nodding so you are saying, yes, you think this is a problem:

"The left turn turns counted in the traffic survey shows that the demand for such a turn is not high".

You then give me figures, and I hope I'm interpreting these right:

"In the morning peak hour, two vehicles. In the pm peak hour, ten vehicles. The inter peak hour two vehicles".

So at peak evening they are coming round every six minutes and I would suggest this is residents from Shandon Park returning from a hard day up at Stormont or something. The remaining time is one vehicle every half hour. Now, you have improved the radius of that curve to get people off the road coming round. I'm not sure whether it's controlled by the lights or not, or whether it's a slip road, don't ask me, I don't care. I think that that should not be made a -- I don't think it justifies having a curve of that sort. I think it should go up with a minimum radius and that the traffic should be stopped by the lights from coming into Shandon Park. I'm sure the RACKS people will be pleased to

have traffic coming in slower. If you do that I don't see any problems, and I can be taken to task on this, I'm not a road engineer, I don't see any problems with side. That's my comment on it, no more.

This is the third. There was the conflict with the link, Ascot Link, there was the substandard visibility limitations to visibility. The next one is: Increased costs of improving visibility. I'm going to say: Come off it. The old red herring is smelling again a bit. What possible, except it would require a bit of land or get someone to knock a gate post down, what costs are there? And remember, you are proposing at the other end to excavate from three to four metres, I don't know the figure, above the grade of the main road. You are going to excavate all that, you are going to take off the banking to provide visibility splays, you are going to put in retaining walls. I'm sorry, Mr Inspector, I'm talking directly to the DOE and not yourselves, excuse me.

MR J ROBB; INSPECTOR: That's okay.

PROFESSOR HENDRY: The cost of that compared to spending a little bit on improving that splay, I mean, I'm saying red herring time.

The last one, and I don't understand it, I don't understand enough about it to comment on it, the last one was the proximity of access to the, sorry, complicated signalized junction. I don't know how to respond to that, because I don't know what the distances are. Oh, sorry I've missed a point. Let me come back to it. I don't know what distances are. I don't know what standards you are applying. I haven't been shown what is possible and what is not

possible. I went back to basics actually. I've got the advantage overall of you that I lived through the period of the road building, the post war period, the sixties and 70s, where you've got the Buchanan report on traffic in towns and going right back, I went back last night to the design and layout of roads in urban areas, an HMS publication of 1948. And throughout all of those there are standard road sections shown. It was, you know, all of Manchester, Liverpool, Leicester, whatever you want, have got ring roads based on these standards. And where there's a frontage problem there's always an access road. And that access road is part of the actual road layout. It's an integral part of the whole thing, not just something like ours added on. I looked at the dimensions. Those publications I'm talking about, and I know they're out of date, they give optimum dimensions, and I think it's something like 32 feet between the carriageway, the main carriageway and the carriageway of the access road, which accommodates cycle ways, footpaths, planted median. They say you shouldn't have an access from the access way onto the main carriageway within 100 feet along from the junction, but they show that road going round that 32 metre radius into the junction. So I honestly, from coming back from basics, and if you accept that the access road is an integral part of the roads system, I'm arguing that the access, that the junction, the access road should be an integral part of the junction between the smaller road and the main road. Do you follow me there?

MR GARY LIVINGSTONE: Yes, I follow you.

PROFESSOR HENDRY: As long as you say yes, as long as somebody understands me. So I'm open on this. I'm just putting

forward the idea that I don't know what the standard is you are applying. It would seem that in the whole period of road building, all the new towns were based on this, I've got to put my hand up, I used to teach a course called traffic and transportation essentials, to first year planning students from 1966 to about 1980, so I know these sort of things. I don't know the current ones, I don't know what they are.

I said I missed a point. When I was talking about the cost of all the, the cost of improving sight lines compared to the cost of digging out all of this, I came along a little sting in the tail, and it was just by chance. Page 82 response:

"The gradient of the site (this is the road going, that you are proposing down to the Knock Road) the gradient of the site is designed to the standards of the DMRB.... with the exception of the length of the dwell area immediately adjacent to Knock Road".

Your road is substandard, Sir. You say:

"A departure from standards has been applied for Roads Service HQ on this issue, awaiting decision".

If you can apply for a waiver on your junction, can I apply for a waiver on my junction for the sight line? Point taken.

(APPLAUSE)

PROFESSOR HENDRY: Oh, thank you. I better stop, hadn't I? I'm saying I've never seen what is possible. I'm not a road engineer, I'm not going to try to design you a junction, I don't know what's possible. I haven't liaised with the previous speaker who was obviously coming up with answers. I would again though quote Mr Livingstone, item 7.16 on your

presentation you say:

"As part of the ongoing design process, numerous options for the alternative access arrangements were considered, appraised and costed".

I would loved to have seen them. You do though say at 7.18:

"After further junction assessment (and this is the bit) and consultation with affected residents and land owners, an access road exiting directly onto Knock Road was put forward as a preferred option".

I was not part, and I don't believe Mr Thompson, they can speak for themselves, was part of any discussions about that. I was given a letter and may I just break in and say that my relationship with the DOE on this, the consultation that I have been involved with, with getting rid of my house and so forth, has been excellent. I'm not quibbling this at all. But in this case I was sent a letter on July 16th 2009 which said:

"It was not possible to achieve the required safety standards onto Shandon Park for an access road".

I mean, that was the amount of consultation that I got. I'm not putting that forward as a perfect solution. I'm putting it forward as a compromise solution.

And just in conclusion, can I put my reasons that I think it's a preferable solution? Number 1, it removes all access to Knock Road. Your primary concern, you said, was to do this; this does it. Secondly, it provides both left and right hand turns onto Knock Road through a controlled junction which means I would never have to be driven onto the RACKS area, they will be pleased to see this, because we

wouldn't be going through RACKS. Nobody in choice is going to go down to Kensington at 9 o'clock in the morning if they can turn left or right. It is just due to sheer lack of alternatives.

Thirdly, it is going to cost less. You would not have all of that excavation that you would have with your proposal. It's going to minimise traffic through RACKS. I think you would have to agree with that. And I'm going to add two more. It would contribute to the well being of residents. It would remove that area of daily stress. When we meet up I see Mrs Law on a Sunday morning take her papers and she says: Could you get out this morning? Oh, yes, I got out this morning, it's Sunday morning, 10 o'clock, I could get out. Oh, you should have seen this guy in the grey Nissan four wheel drive who cut me up last night coming in. It's a continuous source of irritation and frustration from all of the residents in our park. I am also going to put forward another, a fifth, or a sixth reason it's preferable - it offers great flexible. We are told at the moment that we have got financial stringency. There is no money to do this in the near future, and perhaps not even in the foreseeable future. With a very small amount of money, I saw a figure quoted yesterday that I hadn't seen before. I thought it was 135 thousand pounds that had been assigned to this, so with 135 thousand pounds, you could knock my house down and put this road in. You wouldn't have to build any new retaining walls. You wouldn't have to disturb with the flow of traffic, which everybody, every commuter would be very pleased to learn. But you would get rid of those four access points that are causing conflict at

the minute. So I'm suggesting that there's a flexibility in this that hasn't been addressed. I'm not putting forward a design. My purpose this morning was purely and simply to ask questions, hopefully to create further debate among yourselves, and to look at the optimum result as opposed to just defending what the situation that you propose. Thank you very much for your patience, Mr Inspector, for listening to me.

MR J ROBB; INSPECTOR: Thank you for your input. I think, firstly, there is absolutely no evidence of the fact that you have been retired for ten years, which you commented at the beginning of your presentation.

Secondly, I have a completely now different picture in my mind of sausages.

Thirdly, in my experience of running inquiries, and I have run a few, I have never had the experience of an objector falling in love with a consulting engineer as part of the process.

PROFESSOR HENDRY: It happens all the time.

MR GARY LIVINGSTONE: The feelings are mutual.

MR J ROBB; INSPECTOR: So that was very interesting to hear.

PROFESSOR HENDRY: I once told a student who produced an excellent scheme that I had immediately fallen in love with them and I have never lived it down.

MR J ROBB; INSPECTOR: Thank you very much for interjecting on a lighter tone. Please stay where you are. Can I have some reactions from the department, please?

MR STEPHEN POLLOCK: Well, clearly that was a very wide ranging and very thorough assessment of Professor Hendry's experiences on the Knock Road. Really just a number of

observations and not questions I want to ask per se. It's highlighted the difficulties that we have had in trying to achieve what we really consider is a balance on this road. On one hand this is, I mean quite clearly make this out to be a strategic road and there is a need to try to provide improvement for strategic traffic. The difficulty is that it is also a local road and it is providing facilities for people who live very close to or on the road itself. The difficulties that have been eluded, or have been quite clearly demonstrated in terms of travelling in and out of private accesses, is one we are fully aware of. We do feel that the provision of the right turn pockets and the 4.5 metre median will provide some improvement to the facilities at the moment. Different people will have different views on that in terms of whether they will use them or not. In terms of traffic that wants to turn right into private property, at the moment they have to sit effectively in the single lane, or one and a half lane section of the main road. They feel very vulnerable turning right in, and quite often our experience in Roads Service is that people make manoeuvres quicker than they would normally want to do and thereby have accidents. By providing a right turn pocket that should provide the facility for someone to sit and wait and find the gaps in the traffic to turn right into property that they feel is safe to do so. Turning right out of the property is a different proposition. We would accept, fully understand, the difficulties of turning right out there at the moment. We do feel that providing the median provides an opportunity for people to try to make the right hand manoeuvre in two steps, so to speak. And we fully accept

that the traffic signal junctions at Shandon Park and Kings Road, and indeed the pelican (should be toucan) crossing close to Brooklyn, do have the affect of controlling the platoons of traffic that come through and they provide opportunities, or some opportunities for traffic to turn right. At the moment people want to turn right out and are looking for breaks in the platoons. They have to deal with two lanes of traffic; one coming from either direction. With a central median we would hope that people would be able to negotiate the first platoon coming from the right hand direction, if you like, before dealing with the movements from the left.

Now, we are not pretending for one moment this is a persuasion, and that many residents may still feel that they prefer to turn left and left out of their properties. But certainly at certain times we feel that that would be a possible solution.

We accept as well that the platoons of traffic, the queuing traffic that forms, for example, on the approach to the Shandon Park junction, would block across somebody's access and prevent somebody from turning right out. We do, whether there are no proposals on the scheme, we certainly could consider things like yellow boxes which are used quite often for situations to insure that the queuing traffic doesn't block the exit or prevent somebody from turning right out and getting access onto the central median and, therefore by onto the other two lanes. It's not perfect but we feel it is a compromise that we feel is most applicable.

PROFESSOR HENDRY: Could I cut in there. If you accept a yellow box on a main road, would you accept a yellow box where a

road went in towards Shandon? That would seem to me the place to put a yellow box.

MR STEPHEN POLLOCK: I'm just going to come to that and I will try to deal with that as part of this. It is again a very general observation. But the issue about the potential for the link road to come out onto Shandon Park we have already explained our concerns. And you have gone to quite a lot of detail in terms of how you see that working. One of the main concerns that we have is the fact that the link road would be very, very close to the existing junction. And in conjunction with the Ascot Park link, which I think is some 40 or 50 metres --

MR GARY LIVINGSTONE: It's 28 metres between Ascot Park and the proposed link.

MR STEPHEN POLLOCK: Okay. Well, the two junctions come out onto Shandon Park were very close to the existing junction. Just as a point of clarification, the reason that they are staggered is not really to prevent any through traffic, in other words traffic that might want to travel from Ascot Park through to Kingsden Link, it's really to try to segregate out the movements, the right turn movements in and out of those two side roads. And one of the difficulties that we foresee is that Shandon Park is a relatively narrow two lane road. People who travel into Shandon Park and want access to Ascot Park, will have to turn right across traffic in Shandon Park. People who coming down Shandon Park, for example, and they want to turn right into Kingsden Link will be occupying, they want to turn right as well. And there are an awful lot of movements and complications in that junction and we think will be quite difficult to deal with. We fully

accept that the left turn from the Kings Road into Shandon Park is a relatively small movement. But don't forget that people who want to turn right into Kingsden Link from Shandon Park need to be able to see traffic that's approaching from Kings Road coming round the other direction. So it's not just the left turn traffic that's one of the issues, it's also for people who may want to turn right on the Kingsden Link need to be able to see the traffic coming from the other direction.

PROFESSOR HENDRY: Can I come back on two things, I don't want to get into a debate. I didn't suggest that these roads were staggered to prevent cross traffic. They are staggered because you couldn't get them opposite each other. The two houses being knocked down have to come out at that point and we have to come in at a different point. My point, I hoped I was making, is that in certain circumstances, don't quote me, there's situations where you come out of the road and you want to go up, continue on that road, but it's a staggered link. And that has to, the staggered has to be increased so that you have got that weaving distance, stacking distance and so forth. I'm saying that nobody would want to come from Ascot Park to the Kingsden Link and, therefore, I don't see where that is an issue. I also understood you to say that traffic coming into Shandon Park and wanting to get onto the Kingsden Link would have to turn right. It doesn't interrupt anybody, it turns left surely.

MR STEPHEN POLLOCK: Well, I was referring to traffic coming down Shandon Park might want to turn right into the new Kingsden Link.

PROFESSOR HENDRY: We are not going to be going down Shandon

Park.

MR STEPHEN POLLOCK: The point I was making, the traffic will be approaching from different directions.

PROFESSOR HENDRY: Okay.

MR STEPHEN POLLOCK: The main concern, as I said, that we have, is the myriad of movements that will be taking place with the proposed junction, for example, people turning right from the main road into Shandon Park and so forth, traffic coming across from Sandown Road. Then we have two effectively minor road junctions within about 45 metres of the existing junction. It's a very fine balanced argument and we just want to make sure that you, the Inspector, understand the issues.

If I could just pass you over for a moment to Gary, I think there may be one other small point that Gary might want to make in terms of observations which might help give a bit more clarification.

MR GARY LIVINGSTONE: Yes, it's just, although Mr Pollock here has covered most of them, it's just a couple of points that the Professor has actually brought up here, in relation to even Ascot Park as far as the suggestion that there could be actually away somewhere else, there could be a different -- that's well documented in the report and has some serious environmental issues as far as going through Shandon golf course as well and has extensive costs on that.

PROFESSOR HENDRY: It's been made clear that people think it's a dangerous hill and I don't know that, I've not walked the line, I don't know.

MR GARY LIVINGSTONE: Just the second one, because I think, as I say, he has covered the other one. What your last point was

that the amount to implement the access road is a small cost, 135 thousand pounds. That doesn't include any of the junction improvements that would be needed to facilitate that access road. So it's just a clarification point.

PROFESSOR HENDRY: I just picked that out from what was said yesterday, 250 thousand, 500 thousand, it's not 12 million.

MR GARY LIVINGSTONE: No.

PROFESSOR HENDRY: And you could do that and get rid of those four junctions, those four accesses and the public wouldn't be affected. That's one of the points I'm making, that the Knock Road would still function. You are not going to take Knock Road two lanes out of commission for six months to do it. So it was just an idea.

MR J ROBB; INSPECTOR: Any more comments, Professor Hendry?

PROFESSOR HENDRY: From me? No, I'm just pleased I've survived.

MR J ROBB; INSPECTOR: You've survived. Any way, thank you all very much for the useful information which we have obtained from that.

(The witness withdrew)

MR J ROBB; INSPECTOR: It's two minutes past one, just about perfect, so we will reconvene at 2 o'clock.

(ADJOURNED FOR LUNCH)

(On resuming).

MR J ROBB; INSPECTOR: Well, good afternoon, every one, ready for our afternoon session. I understand we have a Mr Ronald Bagwell who wants to talk to us about the transport issues. Perhaps you could give us your name, address and your interest in the matter in question.

MR RONALD BAGWELL

MR RONALD BAGWELL: Certainly. I'm Ron Bagwell, or Ronald Bagwell, some prefer maybe to call me Ron I'm happy with that. I am a resident of Kilhorne Gardens in the area affected by this plan. And I'm here really on a personal basis rather than representing a group, I make that clear at the beginning. I'm about to make statements that are connected with road safety, with access, bus stops, transportation suggestion in particular. I do request that this presentation be given careful consideration, I hope that it will, and that it's a statement from someone who is really interested in contributing something useful, even helpful perhaps, to the inquiry process.

I request brief written answers to the questions I shall ask, but once I have finished the presentation I am willing to discuss what I have related and to answer any questions that may arise. I shall supply a copy of my presentation by e-mail to anyone who is interested enough to ask for one.

So the basis for my statement really is pretty straight

forward: The proposal to widen the A55 Knock Road does not make any reference to public transport. In my opinion, public transport is an essential element of a holistic solution to better manage traffic volumes along this route. It is understood the decisions about the provision of public transport and the associated routes is a matter for Translink however, in my view, it is inappropriate to agree or finalize improvements to the road system in the absence of agreed provision for public transport. My statement includes questions related to public transport, as I've said, and my concerns about road safety and other matters. And I shall address these under three headings. The first of which relates to bus stops. At present there are two Translink bus stops for city bound passengers situated on the section of footpath between the Kensington Road and Shandon Park junctions. These bus stops provide convenient boarding points for local residents and visitors to the area. The map of the proposed widening scheme shows only one bus stop with a lay-by for city bound passengers. This is situated on the incline near the present exit from Ascot Park.

My first question is: Why are the current bus stops located between Kensington Road and Shandon Park not shown on the road widening plan? I don't require an answer right now. My second question is, why is it believed the proposed new bus stop is best positioned to conveniently serve the travelling public who live in or visit this area? If the existing city bound bus stops for Translink passengers are to be removed, this would cause great inconvenience. In particular, we shall all likely be much discouraged from

walking the greater distance to the proposed new bus stop, especially given bad weather in the wintertime.

My third question: Why does the A55 widening plan show no country bound bus stops between Sandown Road and Kensington Road junctions? There are currently two bus stops, one is close to the junction with Sandown Road and the second is opposite the Marie Curie centre. Both bus stops are essential to the area. In my opinion, all local bus stops would be made much safer if lay-bys could be incorporated as part of the A55 widening plan. This provision would also likely help maintain the traffic flow.

In recent times bus stops have been removed from the area, for example, from Kensington Road and Shandon Park. The possible removal of a further number of local bus stops is unwarranted and unwanted. It would likely be said that this is the responsibility of Translink, and they will determine the location of bus stops. It is understood that the public inquiry is not designed to resolve such matters. However, given the plan already shows the location of a new bus stop adjacent to Ascot Park, it would seem to make good sense to show the positions of all proposed bus stops on the road widening plan.

Question four: What provision is there in the A55 widening plan to enable pedestrians to safely cross the proposed five carriageways from the country bound bus stop opposite the Marie Curie centre? I appreciate that one of those carriageways is designated as a central area for cars crossing. I believe the provision of a pedestrian crossing close to this point in the road is an absolute duty. It is essential to the prevention of accidents involving

pedestrians at this very busy section of the A55. The pedestrian crossing controlled by lights situated opposite the PSNI headquarters is not a convenient option for those visiting the Marie Curie centre or, indeed, for residents of Kensington Road and Cherryvalley areas.

I'm going to make some brief points about access to the A55. Now, I appreciate this has been worked over by a number of people here. The reason I do this because I believe emphasis is necessary here and that the message is as strongly reinforced as possible. We all know there's going to be a right turn lane at the A55 junction with Shandon Park, that's the proposal. My question relating to this is: How would the volumes of traffic turning right from the A55 into Sandown Road, and traffic turning right from the A55 into Shandon Park, at peak times in mornings and evenings, be managed to prevent congestion and delays occurring in the other lanes travelling in either direction along the A55?

My second question on this point is: There are right hand turns provided into Kensington Road, but how will right hand turns from Kensington Road onto the A55 be executed conveniently and safely given the limited hatched area at the junction?

My third and final part of the presentation deals with park and ride provision. The widening of the A55 between the Kings Road and the dual carriageway section and other proposed provisions are aimed at improving traffic flows and removing traffic congestion in certain points along this section of the road and beyond. It is hard for me to understand how a significant impact may be made on managing traffic volumes and limiting congestions without

consideration being given to using public transport to better effect. There is current park and ride provision around the city in various locations, and there are others in the pipeline. There was a recent announcement about a park and ride facility at Cairnshill and I understand that there are already plans for similar facilities at Tillysburn and Fortwilliam.

Question seven: What consideration, if any, has been given to the provision of park and ride facilities to cater for traffic originating from the North Down and Newtownards area which is travelling through east Belfast towards the city centre along the numerous radial routes?

Question eight: What consideration has been given to the provision of bus only lanes along the A55 and around other sections of the Belfast outer ring road? We all know that the cost of the widening scheme is considerable. The cost of providing an additional designated bus only lane would likely cost significantly less than this. Now, I speak as a layman, having no professional or technical qualifications related to traffic management or road planning. However, to me it would seem possible to route buses along the city bound and country bound radial routes linked to commensurate journeys around the outer ring road. This could be accomplished by using dedicated bus only lanes. Significant benefits could accrue in terms of lower computer traffic volumes, reduced journey times, reduced levels of air pollution, fewer accidents and, as a bonus, no vehicle parking charges for those who would normally use their car.

I ask you to consider and respond to the following

suggestion following consultation with Translink of course: To provide a park and ride facility on land adjacent to the main traffic corridor serving vehicles from the North Down and Newtownards areas. Buses would proceed from the park and ride facility to the A55 ring road and as normal pick up additional passengers along the route. At morning peak time utilize a bus only inside lane on the A55 ring road with buses circulating in a clockwise direction around it. A principal traffic light control junctions with city bound radial routes, for example, the Castlereagh Road, to give buses priority right turn access into bus only lanes into the city. At evening peak time buses would circulate in an anti-clockwise direction around the ring road, using a bus only lane, with priority left hand turn access onto the ring road from country bound radial routes. This could be achieved by modifying traffic lights so that they may be controlled by bus drivers as they approach key ring road junctions. There is anecdotal evidence that this facility is already available to Translink.

The principle would be the same as applies to pedestrians, I hope this is not too simplistic, who press a button at a crossing point in order to stop traffic to permit them to cross the road. Pedestrians may only cross on the green man. There would be a nominal delay to allow traffic to come to a stop safely before a bus would be permitted to continue on its journey.

Now, that completes the suggestion that I am making for consideration by road transport, by Roads Service and Translink, and it also concludes the presentation that I had to make. Thank you very much for listening. Do you have any

questions?

MR J ROBB; INSPECTOR: Thank you very much indeed for that. I think there are a number of issues there which would fall rather outside my brief and the scope of this inquiry. Let me pass you across to the department to answer those particular points, some of those particular points which do impact on.

MR STEPHEN POLLOCK: Yes, thanks very much. There are quite a few issues there and I can go through them one at a time. There are about nine questions there. Incidentally, as well as being involved in this inquiry I'm also responsible as network development manager for eastern division for bus priority measures in Belfast and for the development of park and ride sites, so I do have a background knowledge of the proposal.

MR RONALD BAGWELL: Very helpful.

MR STEPHEN POLLOCK: So I will bring some insight or some explanation --

MR J ROBB; INSPECTOR: Maybe you shouldn't have said that.

MR STEPHEN POLLOCK: Two edged sword. The first thing to do with the bus stops on the existing road. We accept that the plans don't indicate where the existing bus stops are, whether they are intended to be retained. Yes, there is a layby indicated on the Forestside side of the existing Sandown Road junction, but the intention is, I can confirm that the intention is to retain the existing bus stops. There are two bus stops for eastbound traffic and there are two bus stops for westbound traffic, buses, sorry, and they are intended to be retained. The one, there is one currently, as I understand it, roughly in the vicinity of Kingsden Park,

quite close to the Shandon Park junction, and our plans propose to remove that to the other side of the junction, to the Forestside side of the junction, and put it into a lay-by. Just before the inquiry we have been in discussions with Translink and they do not favour the removal of that bus stop to the other side of Shandon Park, because they feel that the lay-by, exiting the lay-by on the hill would be too difficult for their buses to make safely. In other words, the buses would have to pull out into perhaps relatively fast moving traffic coming from behind, the two lanes from the Stormont direction. So we are quite happy to consider not providing that lay-by and to retain the bus stop close to its existing position at Kingsden Park. One of the main reasons for us moving that, or proposing to move it, was that it provided an opportunity to provide a lay-by. And the other point you made was that all bus stops should be included in laybys, where possible. And while that is true on most of the outer ring road where we have dual carriageway standards, we have an operational, if you like, practice with Translink that whenever the roads are more akin to a single carriageway, in other words not a dual carriageway, it is more appropriate for the buses to stop on line, not into lay-bys. And the reason they, well, the reason they support that is that whenever the traffic is 30 miles an hour as opposed to forty or 50 which you traditionally get on a dual carriageway, it is much easier for the buses to remain on line, in other words to move off when they need to, rather than have the difficulty of moving out from a layby. We always have this difficulty that, well, yes, the buses when they stop can cause congestion to the

traffic travelling behind, but on balance that's our operational practice on single carriageway roads. So the lay-by that was proposed here was on the approach to the dual carriageway section and we thought it would be appropriate to put in there. But I'm happy to indicate that we would be willing to, not provide that lay-by and to relocate the bus stop in its existing location outside and opposite Kingsden Park.

MR RONALD BAGWELL: Can I clarify what you have just said there? Have you said it was still the intention to retain that lay-by on the slope there at Kingsden Park?

MR STEPHEN POLLOCK: No, it is currently part of our proposals, so that's what's before the inquiry at the moment, that's our formal proposal. But since we have published our proposals, our discussions with Translink are such that we would be happy to amend our proposals so as not to put it there, in other words keep it in its existing position.

Just a point of clarification, the issue about the determination of the location of bus stops isn't just a matter for Translink, it's actually a matter for the department. And what would normally happen is Roads Service, in conjunction with Translink, but we would agree with PSNI to the location of bus stops from a traffic safety point of view. That's just a point of clarification. So we work closely with Translink, but if they like a bus stop, if we feel it's not appropriate for safety reasons or otherwise, we ultimately have the decision to include it or not.

MR RONALD BAGWELL: Right.

MR STEPHEN POLLOCK: Fourth question, I'm jumping around here a little bit, I'll pick them up as I go through, the fourth

question related to the pedestrian facilities in the vicinity of Marie Curie. And you pointed out the difficulty of the existing pelican facility close to Brooklyn not being convenient for people wanting to cross the road to get to the Marie Curie site. While it's not indicated on our drawings, we are quite happy to consider a pedestrian island within the median in the vicinity of the junction at Kensington Road. We feel that it would be both appropriate and safe to include something there which would make it much easier for pedestrians to cross the road in two hops effectively to the island, which is shown at the junction of Kensington Road. So that's not shown on our proposals, but we will certainly be willing to --

MR RONALD BAGWELL: Now, can I question what you have just said there? You are talking about an island where the traffic will still continue, to be waiting for a break in the traffic in order to cross from that island?

MR STEPHEN POLLOCK: That's right, it wouldn't be a controlled crossing.

MR RONALD BAGWELL: If we have a controlled crossing at Brooklyn what's the argument for not having the same at the Kensington Road junction opposite Marie Curie?

MR STEPHEN POLLOCK: Well, the controlled crossings, there's quite specific criteria that we would apply before we would put in, for example, a pelican crossing. And it's to do with the demand for the pedestrian movement and also takes into account the volume of traffic. While we haven't done any calculations there, I suspect that the desire or the demand for pedestrians to cross close to Marie Curie might be relatively small and wouldn't justify a pelican crossing per

se. But quite often on roads like this we would put in a number of pedestrian islands which does allow pedestrians to cross one half of the road before they have to cross the other half of the road.

MR RONALD BAGWELL: What you are saying is that there is no apparent demand, but given that there is an accessible crossing is there likely to be any chance of people trying to cross?

MR STEPHEN POLLOCK: Well, I'm not familiar with the actual demand at that point, but I understand it's relatively low. We certainly would be quite happy to check what the demand is, but I suspect realistically that the demand would be, would not be high enough to justify a controlled crossing.

There was a couple of questions that came on there just to do with the right turning traffic out of Kensington Road and if you don't mind I'll ask Mr Livingstone just to deal with those and I'll come back to the last few questions.

MR GARY LIVINGSTONE: Just to confirm the couple of questions you asked about the right turning traffic from the A55 going into Shandon Park and how that will be managed. I think there was some discussion over the last couple of days, but just to reiterate this for your benefit as well, is that returning traffic going right into Shandon Park will be managed by a dedicated right turn lane. And that's going to be managed by a phasing in the lights, which is going to have seven second cycles. The strategy behind that is to insure that we allow for residents to actually use that right turn lane into Shandon Park by actually limiting to the amount of cycles that will encourage strategic traffic to use the two straight through lanes and use the A55 going

through. So that's the strategy behind that.

On the case of the Kensington Road, you asked about the right turning coming out of Kensington Road. The access is coming out of that, Kensington Road, Cherryvalley, is the reason we have provided for a central hatched area of 4.5 metre hatched area, it gives you the opportunity, unlike today, to actually make that movement right turn in two phases and use that central island as a bit of a refuge to get into mainstream traffic. I hope that answers that question.

MR RONALD BAGWELL: Can I comment on your secondary reply. First of all, really what was behind that question is that traffic that wishes to turn into Kensington Road, in the absence of any traffic wishing to exit from Kensington Road, I see no difficulty with that. However, if there are conflicting traffic flows wishing each to turn right, one onto the road and one off of the road, then that's the concern I'm really drawing attention to.

MR GARY LIVINGSTONE: There is, as I said, a potential conflict there. If there happens to be an occasion where the, where there's a car wanting to turn right into Kensington Road and one turning right, then there has to be some queuing on that road, and that's the existing situation as well. I would turn round and say people coming out of Kensington Road wanting to turn right, and if there is a couple of cars there queuing, they would have to wait for that break to actually then turn into the traffic, yes.

MR RONALD BAGWELL: I see that being particularly difficult at peak times to be candid:

MR GARY LIVINGSTONE: Yes, as I say, the junction arrangement we

have, and that's part of providing a central median and the hatched area, and also the queuing bay from the right turn into Kensington Road. I take your point.

MR STEPHEN POLLOCK: Just very briefly to add to that, the purpose of the right turn pocket is to insure that right turning vehicles don't feel vulnerable as they do at the moment sitting on effectively a single lane with the relatively fast moving traffic coming up behind them. What we have found is that people in that situation quite often make manoeuvres sooner than they would like to. They go through gaps in the traffic, in the on coming traffic, that maybe aren't there. So by providing the right turn pocket at least for right turners into Kensington, and in the other side road or even private properties, at least they shouldn't feel as vulnerable and they will be able to wait until they feel comfortable to make the right turn movements. That should remove a number of the conflicts for that movement. The right turn out, as Gary has said, is still going to be a difficult one and we wouldn't pretend it is going to be particularly easy. But the fact that the median is there, where there's nothing at the moment, should provide another opportunity for people to go out hopefully in two hops.

MR RONALD BAGWELL: Could you bear with me, one last point on this, I appreciate you want to move on, we all want to move on, the provision at the moment permits right hand turning into Kensington and left hand turning coming out and also left hand turns into Kensington Road going towards the Forestside direction, if I can use that as a point.

MR GARY LIVINGSTONE: Yes.

MR RONALD BAGWELL: However, presently right hand turning is executed following that route, which is the normal left hand introduction into Kensington Road. If you were turning from Forestside, where I sometimes do my shopping, and I turn right into Kensington Road, I don't approach it in the way that it is designed in the new plan. I do a kind of a circular movement and join what is the left hand turn into Kensington Road. Now, that's been changed on the plan.

MR GARY LIVINGSTONE: Yes.

MR RONALD BAGWELL: From what I can tell. And to that extent it's devoted, that turning, that left hand turning is solely for left hand turners into Kensington Road.

MR GARY LIVINGSTONE: Yes.

MR RONALD BAGWELL: I'm just wondering, I'm not nit-picking here, but why change that?

MR STEPHEN POLLOCK: Well, I think that's a valid point. That's an area of detail we would be happy to look at in terms of the detailed design. I understand what you are saying, effectively you have the right hand turning traffic coming into the road and a potential left Turner both trying to access into Kensington Road and there is potential conflict there. I think we were really just making use of the existing space that was available there. That's something that would be teased out through our detailed design and safety audit process. We would have a process we go through which would look at all aspects of the design and if there are recommendations to improve that or provide something quite different that would be picked up through that process.

MR GARY LIVINGSTONE: Just to pick up on that as well, from my

understanding as you said, you are making a circular movement almost.

MR RONALD BAGWELL: Kind of do an arc to come back around that.

MR GARY LIVINGSTONE: Yes, I think the idea behind that is that almost an extra bit of travel distance to make that turning in. The idea behind the design, and again as Stephen says we can actually have a look, really look at that design, but the idea behind that is squares up to the junction and squares up the right hand movement so that circular arc doesn't have to be made. It's just to clear that up.

MR RONALD BAGWELL: I'll leave it at that, okay.

MR STEPHEN POLLOCK: Just a few other questions which related to public transport provision, in particular park and ride facilities. Clearly there are no proposals for park and ride as part of this scheme, but certainly in terms of the bigger picture, you may be aware there's a Belfast transport plan.

MR RONALD BAGWELL: Yes.

MR STEPHEN POLLOCK: Well, obviously this road proposal is taken from the strategic road improvement side of it. But there are a whole bunch of improvements proposed on the public transport side. In fact, over half of the money which was identified in the plan for spending up to 2015 was for public, for non-car type improvements and by that I mean public transport in terms of better rail services, better bus services, park and ride, walking and cycling. That was a fundamental change to what had gone on in the past in terms of transport plans. But certainly in terms of park and ride, on this corridor there are a number of things proposed. You are probably aware of the rapid transit E-way proposal. On this corridor park and ride has been identified out at

Millmount, which is out in the Dundonald area. And it is intended to be served by the new rapid transit facility which, in the transport plan indicated it would come down the old Comber railway line, would actually cross the A55 very close to Brooklyn police headquarters and on down to Hollywood Arches and into the city centre. While Road Services isn't taking that forward, the department is taking forward plans for rapid transit. There is a separate team deals with that. At the moment I understand they are in the process of employing consultants to do their outline business case. There is a whole process they have to go through to justify the investment which is something of the order of over 100 million pounds, which I think was identified in the transport plan. So in terms of this corridor, the park and ride is envisaged on this is, as I say, at Dundonald, Millmount, it's intended to serve that E-way. There is also a park and ride scheme on the Bangor corridor out at Tillysburn which is intended to be served by a bus based system. That's a little bit further away. And there really isn't anything else on this side of the city until you get right across to the Saintfield Road at the Cairnshill site, which is really only up and running in the last couple of weeks. That's the park and ride situation.

MR RONALD BAGWELL: Can I respond to that? You talk about an E-way, I have made no reference to an E-way at all, none, and deliberately so, because an area I think that some people regard as, well, it's not outstanding beauty, but it's an area of recreation and some people want to preserve. What I am referring to is provision of a facility which perhaps is not being considered as yet, where buses would

actually travel along the A55 into radial routes into the city. And the reason for that being, this plan that's been put forward, the widening of the A55, is about helping to relieve traffic congestion, it's about helping to improve air quality and to reduce noise pollution, to improve safety. The point I'm making is that provision of such arrangement would help to achieve those objectives. And rapid transport via the E-way is not really coping with this transportation plan.

MR STEPHEN POLLOCK: Well, E-way is part of the transportation plan one way or the other, but I think, I mean, the A55 widening scheme isn't pretending to do anything in terms of attracting people out of private car into public transport. It's intending to deal with a specific strategic road issue. However, there are a whole raft of other elements which are intending to try to address the issue of encouraging people to use their private car less. We have mentioned park and ride, and as I say there are a series of park and ride schemes all the way around Belfast proposed to be served by bus and the railway. But also there are other very important elements. There is a whole quality bus corridor programme which is maybe alluding to the sort of proposals that you are suggesting here. The quality bus corridors are intended to be introduced, and we have started introducing them, on all the main arterial routes. The public transport system is based on trying to move people in and out of the city centre on a radial system as opposed to an orbital system. That's what the plan proposes. And, for example, on the Saintfield Road recently we have introduced more intensive bus priority measures which is starting to swing in favour of public

transport as opposed to private car. The specific issues you mentioned in terms of bus lanes on the A55 is something which is further down the line. The transport plan does recognise that because of the public transport system being currently based on a radial route system, there is a need to provide new services to provide cross city movements, particularly for people who don't want to go to the city centre. And it envisages in the longer term that these services should be identified and follow routes. Now, until those routes are identified we don't know which roads will need to have bus priority measures. And it's quite conceivable that the A55 may indeed be a route which is chosen for those reasons. But there's no work has been done at present to look at that in any detail. There certainly aren't any proposals to put in bus priority measures on the A55 or this section of the road. There are very few bus services as I understand it actually using it at the moment and there is an issue about demand and really it's Translink, they react to market forces and they decide where the best bus routeings are. And as it is at the moment, I don't think there are any intentions to put in any bus services or additional bus services on that route. But if there were and they were extensive we would consider appropriate bus priority measures at peak times.

MR RONALD BAGWELL: Let me make one final point because I appreciate the chairman will want to move on and hear other speakers. I think it's a question of which comes first here, the chicken or the egg really. Because you could argue that there is insufficient demand to warrant the kind of situation I had suggested. However, you go into the centre

of the city and you try to get parked in the morning, more and more people are arriving more early, or earlier and earlier every morning to try and get parked somewhere. Those sort of people would be very grateful if something was done to alleviate that situation and we're building more and more car parks in town, the level of pollution must be rising, accidents must be increasing, frustration must be increasing. And yet we say there is no demand for such a service. I think it might be interesting to find out what the motorists think about this and whether they would be willing, given especially the reaction that's already been heard from the Cairnshill route where people have declared that it's a very good idea, saving money on car parking and so forth. If that is not evidence to suggest that it should be pursued with a little bit more vigour than it is at the moment, I don't know what is.

MR STEPHEN POLLOCK: Well, I mean, the point is well made and I fully support that. I think we are making progress towards that. One other element in the transport plan is the management of central parking. And we have been working very closely, for example, with our colleagues in Planning Service to try to restrict the amount of illegal car parking that springs up all around the city centre. We are doing that with limited success. We also want to introduce pricing tariffs in our own car parks to try to discourage people from parking all day. In other words, we are trying to accommodate short stay shopper type parking. So without getting into the whole debate and so forth on that, if you care to look at the details of the plan, or even if you want to speak to me outside, I would be quite happy to give you

more details on what we are trying to do in terms of controlling parking.

MR RONALD BAGWELL: I enjoyed this exchange, and I think some of the points I have made are not lost on you, I think you have accepted some of them as far as I can tell. Thank you very much for your response, I appreciate it.

MR J ROBB; INSPECTOR: Thank you very much indeed. Some of those do clearly go quite outside the scope of this inquiry.

MR RONALD BAGWELL: I said that.

MR J ROBB; INSPECTOR: But it's an interesting topic so I am quite happy to let it run. So nothing more to add to that? Okay.

(The witness withdrew)

MR J ROBB; INSPECTOR: We should at this stage be taking a break, but I understand, Stewart, you want to --

MR STEWART BEATTIE: We were scheduled for our, the Marie Curie who I appear for in this matter, the Marie Curie centre, to commence our section of the inquiry at 3 o'clock today. There have been ongoing discussions throughout yesterday. Now, I'm aware that Mr O'Reilly and his Roads Service team have been ensconced in the inquiry room, but they have facilitated discussions both with noise consultants and others and they have been, I think it's fair for me to characterise them at this stage, as helpful.

MR J ROBB; INSPECTOR: Excellent.

MR STEWART BEATTIE: Whether they reach a final conclusion I don't know, but certainly we have narrowed down a number of issues and they are issues upon which Roads Service are taking instructions outwith the inquiry. It had occurred that I had suggested that if we were required, as it were,

to start now, there are issues that have not been clarified, that would leave me asking questions that might be perceived as confrontational or unhelpful when they may be unnecessary. And subject to the view that the inquiry take, we would suggest an adjournment until tomorrow. We had suggested, there are some suggestions, some indication clarification may not be received until Thursday. I am still looking about time tabling about Thursday, but I am perfectly content to come here at any time in the course of the day's proceedings and take whatever slot is available. I'm aware that there are members of the public who have their own lives to run and I will take the graveyard shift if that is the only one that is available to make myself available to deal with the issues. And if we can get clarification overnight or in the course of tomorrow morning so much the better. But I'm formally now asking that we do not proceed today and I believe that's with consent from Mr O'Reilly and his team.

MR FRANCIS O'REILLY: Well, it is to the extent that we don't otherwise jeopardise the timetable that's already been set. But it did seem to me that there may well be opportunities tomorrow and possibly Thursday as well. It's obviously a delicate issue, Mr Chairman, and obviously if any objectors; concerned can be accommodated out with a recommendation from you, then that may well be the best way to go forward. So I am certainly prepared to meet Mr Beattie and his experts with the team that's here and see if anything can be resolved.

MR J ROBB; INSPECTOR: Well, as I said at the very outset, timetables and programmes have got to be pretty flexible,

just by the very nature of what we are doing here. And I'm certainly very happy to accommodate that. Just perhaps as a point of explanation for those of you who are attending as observers or objectors here, in the past sometimes this situation has developed and people are saying: Well, what's going on here? What are these discussions that are going on? The only reason that we have an inquiry is because there are unresolved objections. Now, if through a process of discussion outside the inquiry, you know, in the bar or in a private room, those gaps between the objector and the department can be narrowed, or even eliminated, that's absolutely fine, because it means that accommodations are being reached. So in every instance we want to encourage that process. And certainly I wouldn't be saying that we would want to be forcing you to speak this afternoon given that these other discussions are still ongoing which might produce a very satisfactory outcome, or perhaps the number of issues that would be left for your discussion later on would be greatly reduced.

MR STEWART BEATTIE: Yes, and indeed for the avoidance of doubt, we will clarify for the public inquiry representing the Marie Curie centre, we have a responsibility, much as the Roads Service have perhaps beyond merely the interests of our client to make sure that people know what we are doing and why we are doing it. And to that extent, Sir, we will clarify the issues upon which we have sought further clarification or discussion when we come to our session, Sir. I wouldn't leave anyone under any illusions that we wouldn't be prepared to do that. But there are certainly areas where we have made progress in clarifying our

understanding of what's being done and we do think that that will, at the very least, shorten proceedings and focus matters in. Mr O'Reilly has, if I may say, very fairly, made clear that there is a concern as far as is possible to adhere to the timetable, which is why I'm trying to make sure that I have cleared my timetable to deal with it in the most efficient way. It may be that it will have to be in the course of tomorrow. But that being the case it may be better to do it after the close of normal business to allow the maximum time for instructions or advices to be taken.

MR J ROBB; INSPECTOR: Well, I'll not include in the timetable that this is new territory here, so I will let him discuss the detail of that with you and I'm sure we can reach an accommodation.

MR STEWART BEATTIE: Thank you very much.

MR J ROBB; INSPECTOR: I would be anxious that we could fit it in before Thursday evening. As it looks at the moment, it would certainly appear that we will be able to get finished on Thursday evening. We are not sitting on Friday and I would be anxious to avoid running into next week if we possibly can. So as long as we all understand the situation here and that this is indeed a worthy cause that you are embarked upon at the moment to try to resolve the issues and we will do everything that we can to facilitate that.

MR STEWART BEATTIE: Thank you, chairman, I don't get that said to me very often.

MR J ROBB; INSPECTOR: Okay. Well, we were to take a break here but now since we are not having the input on the Marie Curie issues, that would indicate that that finishes us for the day. So we will adjourn now and we'll meet again tomorrow

being Wednesday for our slightly later session. So we will be meeting at 2.00 pm, 2 o'clock tomorrow afternoon, and we will be running through until the early part of the evening. So thank you all for your input today, for your objections and for your responses. That I think was a very positive day and I think we have amassed a tremendous amount of useful information. Thank you for that.

(Inquiry adjourned)