

# Property Disposal – Specific Consent

Application by Network Rail Infrastructure Limited to dispose of land in accordance with the Land Disposal Condition of the Network Licence.

1. Disposal			
Type of disposal	Freehold disposal with grant of access rights over retained station car park.		
Rationale for disposal	<p>The land for disposal has been identified as suitable for mixed-use residential-led development that will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) release land for new homes</li> <li>b) create modern parking facilities for rail users close to the station and</li> <li>c) help generate additional revenue to reinvest in the railway network</li> </ul>		
2. Clearance	Type	Reference	Date
Clearance Details	Business/ Technical	CR/57125	05/07/23 25/07/23.
3. Site			
Description of property for disposal	<p>The land areas shown on the attached plan shaded blue form part of the station car park on the eastern side of the railway at Harpenden station. Plot one on the plan is about 0.28 acres and plot 2 some 0.40 acres. Both areas proposed for disposal are within the station lease area, leased to Govia Thameslink Railway. The proposed disposal areas include a total of 101 station car parking spaces.</p>		
Attached plans and photographs:	Disposal Area Drawing no.0330727-5		
Ordnance survey coordinates	X:513792 Y:214110		

4. Proposal	
Proposed party taking disposal	The Freehold transfer will be to Solum Regeneration (Epsom) LLP or any such other party associated with Solum Regeneration.
Proposed use / scheme	The disposal areas are proposed to be developed to provide about 90 residential units in two apartment blocks, together with a new station parking facility in the form of a single-decked car park (subject to obtaining planning permission). The existing access road into the east station car park will be upgraded to provide a dedicated pedestrian footpath and two-way road access to be shared between the new apartment blocks and station users. A new station forecourt with vehicular 'drop-off' area is also proposed.
Access arrangements to / from the disposal land	Access to the disposal areas will be shared with the station's eastern entrance which connects with the public highway on Station Road.
Replacement rail facilities (if appropriate)	Station car parking at surface level is to be replaced with a new single-decked car park, new station forecourt, drop-off area and improved access road. Cycle parking for station users will be relocated and consolidated in one area. Electric Vehicle charging points will be provided.
Anticipated rail benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A new parking facility in the form of a single-decked (2-level) car park.</li> <li>• A better and safer station access road achieved by increasing the width of the road to establish a standard, two-way vehicular access with fully separated pedestrian footpath. Currently the road width is below highway standards with a bollarded pedestrian walking route and narrow carriageway where cars cannot easily pass.</li> <li>• Provision of a formalised station plaza / forecourt / drop-off facility within the east-side station land</li> <li>• Potential additional rail users and fare revenue driven by residents of the new apartments using the station.</li> </ul>
Anticipated non-rail benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Release of land for development of new homes.</li> <li>• As the site sits within the built-up area boundary of Harpenden this will release pressure for development on less sustainable green-belt locations</li> </ul>

5. Timescales	
Comments on timescales	<p>Subject to obtaining planning permission and satisfactory completion of rail regulatory procedures it is proposed that the indicative timescales would be;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2024 - Planning permission and Station Change consent obtained</li> <li>• 2025 – Sale of land and start of construction</li> <li>• 2026 - Completion June 2026</li> </ul>
6. Railway Related Issues	
History of railway related use	The station was originally constructed in c.1860 by Midland Railway as an extension to St. Pancras.
When last used for railway related purposes	Harpenden station remains operational and continues to provide rail services.
Any railway proposals affecting the site since that last relative use	There are currently no railway proposals that affect the sites last relative use.
Impact on current railway related proposals	There are no impacts on current railway related proposals.
Potential for future railway related use	The future use of the site has been considered by Network Rail's System Operator team with reference to the long-term planning process and it is confirmed that the disposal areas have no future railway related use and business and technical clearances have been confirmed.
Any closure or station change or network change related issues	Station Change consent will need to be obtained for changes to the station lease area and station car park layout needed to enable the development.
Whether disposal affects any railway (including train operator) related access needs, and how these are to be addressed in future	The disposal will result in improvements to the access to the eastern station car park from Station Road bringing this to a condition which allows cars to pass under normal conditions, and creates a kerb-separated pedestrian route which accords with current highway standards for the benefit of station users and the proposed residential occupiers.

<p>Position as regards safety / operational issues on severance of land from railway</p>	<p>The disposal is on a basis under which Network Rail has had due regard (where applicable) to impact of the disposal on lineside works, including railway troughing, signalling and their maintenance. The disposal is without prejudice to Network Rail's safety obligations, with which Network Rail will continue to comply. Network Rail's network licence requires compliance with Railway Group Standards. These set out requirements for – amongst other things – fencing, access and signal sighting. In addition, the Railways and Other Guided Transport Systems (Safety) Regulations 2006 require Network Rail to have a safety management system and safety authorisation in respect of its mainline railway system and its railway infrastructure. These, in turn, require Network Rail to comply with Railway Group Standards as well as its own internal standards; and also continually to monitor changes to the risks arising from its operations and to introduce new control measures as appropriate.</p>
<p>Safety issues identified</p>	<p>The disposal includes a requirement to enter into an Asset Protection Agreement in the Network Rail templated form as applicable at the time of the disposal and subject to such reasonable modification as appropriate to the disposal site and its intended use. The technical clearance sets out specific minimum distances against which any new buildings should be off set from OLE, and the Network Rail Boundary fence. Road vehicle incursion risk and appropriate mitigation should be considered through the ASPRO process.</p>
<p><b>7. Planning History and Land Contamination</b></p>	
<p>Planning permissions / Local Plan allocation (if applicable)</p>	<p>Planning permission will be required as part of any development proposals. The Station land is not subject to any specific allocation in the local plan.</p>
<p>Contamination / Environmental Issues (if applicable)</p>	<p>The party acquiring the land will be responsible for any necessary environmental remediation works required to make the site suitable for redevelopment.</p>
<p><b>8. Internal Consultation</b></p>	
<p>Internal consultation</p>	<p>The future use of the site has been considered internally through the formal Clearance process. The disposal is subject to a number of standard conditions contained within the business and technical clearance certificates.</p>

9. Local Authorities	
Names & Email Addresses:	St Albans City & District Council Team lead:
Local Transport Authorities:	Hertfordshire County Council  DM Group Manager   Highways Environment and Transport   Hertfordshire County Council
Other Relevant Local Authorities:	None.
10. Internal approval to consult	
Recommendation:	By proceeding to consult I am: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• recommending that Network Rail consults on the terms of disposal</li> <li>• confirming that I have read and understood Network Rail's Code of Business Ethics and policy on Interests in Transactions</li> <li>• confirming that I have secured internal written approval to consult in accordance with Network Rail's policy on Authorising Application Forms.</li> </ul>
11. External Consultation	
Summary of position as regards external consultations	29 stakeholders were consulted, and 25 replies were received. The 4 non-responders were Grand Central Railway Company, Transport for East Midlands, DB Cargo UK Limited and East West Rail Company. Given the nature and location of the site and the Consultees involved the lack of response is not considered to be material.

<p>Summary of position as regards external consultations (continued)</p>	<p>The majority of responses were either No Objection or No Comment.</p> <p>5 stakeholders included comments within their replies. These are as follows:</p> <p><u>British Transport Police</u> (Consultee 25) raised no objection and included some comments considered to have no material effect on the disposal and these are recorded in the Consultation Report.</p> <p><u>St Albans and District Council</u> (Consultee 29) and <u>Hertfordshire Council</u> (Consultee 28) were inadvertently omitted from the original consultee list, but both ultimately responded with no objections and comments recorded in the Consultation Report. These comments are likewise considered to have no material effect on the disposal. Hertfordshire Council initially registered a holding objection based on the perceived need for scheme design changes. Following the supply of further information and explanations that non-objection to the proposed disposal would not negate the need for appropriate planning and highways consent to be obtained, the objection was withdrawn.</p> <p><u>Transport Focus</u> (Consultee 27) requested information regarding car park peak occupancy, which was provided and on this basis was content to accept the proposed change.</p> <p><u>Govia Thameslink Railway</u> (GTR) (Consultee 7) initially objected due to a perceived lack of consultation, design details and a desire for Station Change to be progressed first. Following further consultation and discussions Network Rail offered a commitment that the scheme would only progress if it was acceptable to both the station lessee and Network Rail, and an acknowledgement this did not affect the requirement to satisfy all necessary regulatory consents (including Station Change). GTR now formally supports the proposal.</p> <p>Some of the earlier consultation responses are slightly older than 6 months, largely as a result of the outstanding discussions with a number of material consultees. These discussions were successfully concluded recently, as summarised above and detailed in the attached consultation report.</p>
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<p>Analysis of any unresolved objections together with recommendation by Network Rail as regards a way forward</p>	<p>There are no unresolved objections.</p>
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**12. Internal approval to dispose**

<p>Recommendation:</p>	<p>Based on the above, I recommend that Network Rail proceeds with the disposal.</p>
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<p>Declaration:</p>	<p>I have read and understood Network Rail’s code of Business Ethics and Policy on Interests in Transactions</p>
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<p>Proposed by (name):</p>	<p>Authoriser’s job title: Development Manager (Solum JV)</p>
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<p>Signed</p>	<p>Date 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2024</p>
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<p>Authorised by (name):</p>	<p>Authoriser’s job title: Development Director</p>
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<p>Signed</p>	<p>Date 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2024</p>
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