

## **Transport and Works Act 1992 (TWA):**

### **Application for the proposed Chiltern Railways (Bicester to Oxford improvements) order**

Department for Transport Ref: TWA/10/APP/02/OBJ/245

Supplementary information for Objection Number 245

Further to my original objection letter dated 13<sup>th</sup> February 2010 which will form the basis of my statement of case I would like to add the following:

#### **Point 1 – The proposed increased rail traffic and its speed**

In the letter I received in response to my objection from Ardent Management dated 17<sup>th</sup> May 2010 extracts are cited from the Environmental Statement (ES) provided by Chiltern Railways in relation to the additional noise and vibration which will be present as a result of this scheme.

The letter references table 6.12 in ES vol 2 in which my street, Whimbrel Close, is listed as “receiving a substantial impact from phase 1, and a high impact from phase 2” in relation to noise.

Whilst I understand that noise barriers will be utilised one of the main rooms used for relaxation at my property is the conservatory which is at the rear of the house. This is of basic construction being glass walls on 3 sides with a standard Polycarbonate roof. It is therefore more exposed to the effects of noise than the rooms in the main house and is also closer to the railway line and I am concerned that although “statutory noise insulation in the form of secondary double glazing, or some other glazing method with the same performance characteristics” is mentioned, this may not extend to the conservatory which would greatly impact my quiet enjoyment of this part of my property.

It is frequently used during the hot summer months during which time it is necessary to have the large sliding door open since it heats up very quickly and although the letter states that: “Mechanical ventilation is also added, to prevent noise through windows.” I am unsure as to exactly what form this will take or its likely effectiveness in keeping this room comparatively cool. I am therefore concerned that I would end up in a position where I was unable to open the door for ventilation because of the noise, rendering it largely unusable.

The main bedroom of my property is also at the rear of the house and the ES states: “Whimbrel Close – The upper floors of the closest properties are likely to qualify for statutory noise insulation which will reduce the internal effect of the 16dB predicted impact.” Clearly my property is one of these however since the timetable is expected to provide a service late into the night I am very concerned that during the hot summer months I will not be able to adequately ventilate my room while trying to sleep by having the window open because of the additional noise this scheme will generate.

In respect of vibration, an extract from the ES vol 2 page 6-42 is given which states that “The estimated VDV levels of ground vibration are not expected to exceed the assessment criterion beyond approximately 10 m from the tracks. Receptors that are close to or within this distance from the tracks include [...] the closest properties to the railway on Whimbrel Close, Bicester.” Again, clearly my property is one of these. The extract goes on to say that “In these areas, specialist resilient track forms will be used, if practicable, so that vibration from the new track at the nearest

sensitive receptors will be no higher than the levels specified in BS 6472 for ‘a low probability of adverse comment’.”

I am very concerned that if, at the time of construction, the use of these specialist track forms is not “practicable” then the issue of vibration will not be adequately addressed.

### **Point 2 – Loss of privacy**

I am concerned that although the letter I received from Ardent Management states that noise barriers are “highly likely” to be implemented along the backs of properties this is not a cast iron guarantee. Furthermore, due to the upgrading from a single to a double track line I am very concerned that the tree which is at the rear of my garden and currently provides shelter and a habitat to wildlife as well as a degree of privacy at the rear of my property would be removed to be replaced with these barriers. The picture below shows the current view from my main bedroom window.



As well as being less aesthetically pleasing the letter states that “These noise barriers are approximately 2 meters high from the level of the track and should therefore minimise the view of your garden and house from the train.” I have taken my own measurements regarding the likely height of these barriers and the picture below shows my expectation of their height:



The red line in the picture above is approximately 2 meters in height from the level of the track. A passing freight train is shown for scale. While these barriers may be sufficient to protect privacy on the ground floor of my property I do not feel they will adequately protect my privacy in respect of my main bedroom from which this picture was taken and I believe that passengers will be able to clearly see into my property from the carriages, more so if the tree is removed.

### **Point 3 – The effects on the value and saleability of the property**

This is the area which causes me the greatest concern. Currently the single track line is only used on average a couple of times each day by freight trains.

If the scheme is approved and the line is upgraded to a double track with a full passenger timetable my property will be severely affected both in desirability and value should I wish to sell it in the future.

I have contacted the RICS as suggested in the letter I received from Ardent Management and they put me in touch with a local member at Savills state Agents in Summertown, Oxford for advice. After explaining the scheme and the proximity of my property to the track as well as the increased usage I have been advised that the overall value of my home could be reduced by a value in the region of 30%.

Clearly this would leave me materially affected and would make it very difficult for me to move in the future. I am also concerned that should approval be given and the line proved popular, there is a possibility that once the infrastructure was available the number and frequency of the trains would be increased.