

OBJ/050/1

PROOF OF EVIDENCE

JAMES AND LUCY DE JONGE

**TRANSPORT AND WORKS ACT 1992 –
APPLICATION FOR THE PROPOSED
CHILTERN RAILWAYS (BICESTER TO
OXFORD IMPROVEMENTS) ORDER 6
JANUARY 2010**

OBJ/050/1

INTRODUCTION

We are Lucy and James de Jonge and live at Prospect House, Mill Street, Islip, OX5 2SY.

Our objection is to the pedestrian/equestrian overbridge comprised in Work No 16.

We support the closure of the Mill Lane Level Crossing (MLLC) and agree that a replacement pedestrian crossing is required.

However, we feel strongly that any such crossing should have as little impact as possible on the Green Belt and the Islip Conservation Area (ICA).

When we first wrote to object, in February 2010, we originally requested a pedestrian bridge as a replacement and suggested it be sited to the West of MLLC.

However, the proposed structure that Chiltern Railways / Ardent put forward as the West Bridge Option was equally out of scale / character with the local landscape, and the situation led some, including us, to question whether it would even be better to have no crossing at all, rather than either of these vast structures.

Following some discussion, we sought an alternative solution, in conjunction with other concerned Islip residents and Islip Parish Council (IPC) – namely an underpass which would allow pedestrian access, be DDA compliant and make less of an impact on the surrounding area.

Chiltern Railways / Ardent had previously made it apparent that they were not generally in favour of underpasses, but were persuaded to explore this avenue following a meeting with Islip residents on 22nd July 2010. Paul Clarke of Ardent subsequently informed us that instructions to prepare the mock-up of an underpass option had been sent out by Ardent on 22nd July 2010.

We contacted our MP, John Howell, and informed him of the situation. He offered to chair an open meeting between Chiltern / Ardent and Islip residents and he spoke to Chiltern / Ardent on Thursday 5th August 2010.

Chiltern / Ardent in due course prepared two underpass options, which they presented, along with their preferred East Bridge Solution, at a meeting in Islip Village Hall on 6th September 2010.

A vote was taken towards the end of this meeting, and an overwhelming majority of residents present voted in favour of the Underpass #2 Solution.

Chiltern / Ardent then stated at the meeting that they would be defending the East Bridge Solution at the Public Inquiry.

This position, to ignore the wishes of Islip residents, appears to conflict directly with an assurance given by Paul Clarke of Ardent in an e-mail of 31st August 2010 (copy included at Appendix A),

“As we have discussed, everyone's views will be fully taken into account - if they aren't we will have to continue the argument at the inquiry, which is in no ones interests. It is useful to have your views in writing as below, so that I can feed them into the final decision process.”

A survey, subsequently conducted by IPC between 23rd and 28th September, has indicated that over 90% of those Islip residents consulted are in favour of maintaining a crossing and would prefer an Underpass to a Bridge.

OBJECTIONS

1. Mass of Bridge

This is to be covered in some detail by IPC in its submissions.

As our views on this aspect are entirely in line with those of IPC we simply voice our support of these.

2. Impact of Land Take on Green Belt

This is to be covered in some detail by IPC in its submissions.

As our views on this aspect are entirely in line with those of IPC we simply voice our support of these.

3. Lack Of Consultation

This is to be covered in some detail by IPC in its submissions.

As our views on this aspect are entirely in line with those of IPC we voice our support of these, but as outlined in the Introduction above, we would question how genuine / meaningful Chiltern / Ardent's 'consultation' process with Islip residents and IPC ever was.

PREFERRED OPTION

Our preferred option as a replacement crossing is Subway Option #2.

The reasons we support this are consistent with those to be covered by IPC in its submissions, but we would like to highlight one point, namely the threat of anti-social behaviour.

Chiltern / Ardent, during their presentation on 6th September 2010, made much of both the “urban” appearance of underpasses and the threat of anti-social behaviour (which has been an issue of concern to some in the village, including ourselves) at such features.

If such behaviour were to occur, we would suggest that it would be more likely to do so on the much longer (24 metre?) high-sided East Bridge proposed by Chiltern / Ardent. This elevated structure, set at angles of more than 45 degrees to its ramped approaches, would offer anyone on the bridge itself cover from view while allowing them to dominate its lengthy approaches and the surrounding area.

The Underpass, on the other hand, whilst it would offer shelter from inclement weather, would only be, at its covered point at least, 6-8 metres long (a figure given by Chiltern / Ardent at their most recent presentation on 6th September 2010) and would be dominated by its approaches.

APPENDIX A

James deJonge

From: Paul Clarke [PaulClarke@ardent-management.com]
Sent: 31 August 2010 10:42
To: 'Ann Conibear'
Cc: david davies; James deJonge; Richard Venables; Johanna Stephenson; Ian Gilder; Peter Gibbard; Jon Neale; 'Stephen Barker'
Subject: RE: Islip Crossing

Ann

All photomontages will be on show at the meeting, including the views from the rear of your property. It is impractical to send them out in advance.

As we have discussed, everyone's views will be fully taken into account - if they aren't we will have to continue the argument at the inquiry, which is in no ones interests. It is useful to have your views in writing as below, so that I can feed them into the final decision process.

Regards,

Paul

Paul Clarke | Associate Director
Ardent Property Consultants
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-----Original Message-----

From: Ann Conibear [mailto:conibear@btinternet.com]
Sent: 27 August 2010 21:56
To: Paul Clarke
Cc: david davies; James deJonge; Richard Venables; Johanna Stephenson
Subject: Islip Crossing

Paul,

> The invitation to the meeting on September 6th arrived today. Jon and
> I are unable to attend.
>
> I am concerned that the consultation process has not been transparent
> and fair. The photomontage of the bridge from our property was not
> available at the previous village meeting when the bridge and subway
> options were discussed. At that meeting the bridge option to the west
> was dismissed on the basis of the photos on show and it was stated
> that the bridge to the east would have no impact on any properties.
> This is clearly not the case as shown by the photomontage which only
> Jon and i have seen to my knowledge. At the meeting therefore all
> discussion about the benefit of a bridge to the east or a possible
> underpass was made without full knowledge of the facts. To redress the
> inequality of this to some extent i would like you to send out a copy
> of the photomontage taken from our house to everyone you have invited
> to the meeting on September 6th with a covering letter asap so that
> everyone has the opportunity to reflect on the impact of the bridge
> and not turn up to the meeting with their minds already made up on
> misinformation.

Please read out the following statement at the meeting on September 6th:

Jon and Ann Conibear support the principle of a railway crossing but strongly oppose the bridge option application to the east for several reasons:

The visual impact of the bridge on our house and garden will be immense, as shown by the photomontages which were not presented with the other bridge options at the public meeting.

The bridge and its approach ramps are huge, bisecting two fields and are entirely out of keeping with the village environment.

There is a disproportionate cost to usage: we understand the cost of the bridge could be as high as £2.7 million.

We noted that there was almost unanimous support by show of hands for the subway option at the last open meeting attended by between 50 and 60 interested residents. This option would be no more or less subject to anti social use than the proposed bridge design, would be much more efficient to users, would presumably be very much lower cost and would not have the negative visual impact on the village. We support the subway option.

Regards, Ann

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