

M4 Junctions 3 to 12 Smart Motorway – TR010019
The Planning Inspectorate,
Temple Quay House,
Temple Quay, Bristol, BS1 6PN

8th October 2015

The following notes are for the Examining Authority and express the concerns and wishes of the named occupiers at the following properties.

[REDACTED]

Re: Project - M4 Junctions 3-12: Smart Motorway

Dear Sirs,

I (Roger Denison) have attended both M4 Junctions 3-12: Smart Motorway Scheme Exhibitions held at the Winnersh Community Centre, New Road, Wokingham, RG41 5DU.

I have also spent some time reviewing the various documents available on the Highways Agency website appertaining to the above project.

Although some of the following questions were answered one of the Exhibitions and I have reviewed the most recent publications surrounding the project, in general we support the project, however we still have several areas that we wish to comment on. Locations and descriptions are based on the report entitled;-

'Preliminary Environmental Information Report - November 2014'

PROPERTY LOCATION

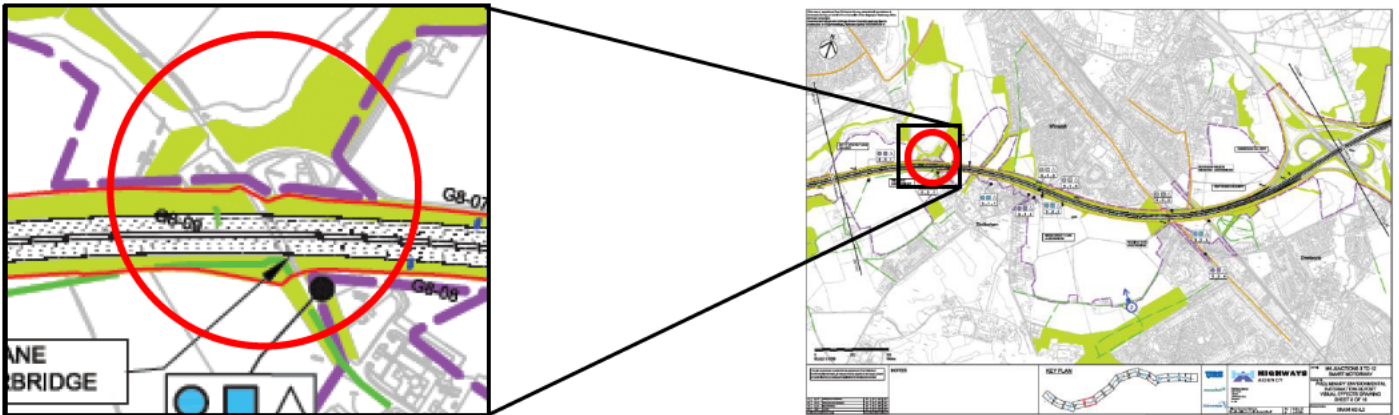
Our properties, Waterside & Hillside, are situated in Mill Lane, to the Northern side of the M4, on the west side of Mill Lane, between the Mill Lane Underbridge and the River Lodden Backwater. (Lat N 51°25'28.2, Lon W 000°53'39.5...Approximate - obtained using Phone GPS locator), the properties can be seen clearly marked on M4-PEIR_Drawing_09-2a_Habitats-J12-J89_Map-01-44.pdf, Map22 and on M4-PEIR_Drawing_04-1_Scheme-Plan_Sheet-01-19_J12-J10.pdf Sheet 16.



The properties are a pair of semi-detached, late Victorian cottages.

They are set at the base of the M4 embankment, with the motorway fence forming the boundary of Hillside (i.e. the house is within 15m of the hard shoulder barrier, so very close!).

In our opinion the ZVI (Zone of Visual Influence) line, indicated on M4-PEIR_Drawing_08-2_Visual-Effects_Key_Sheet-01-16.pdf Sheet 5, has been incorrectly drawn in the vicinity of our properties. The drawing shows the line coming back in line with the motorway boundary as it passes our properties. Although there are some trees on the motorway embankment, which provide some limited cover, they are deciduous and therefore provide next to no cover when not in full leaf, (6 months of the year). Even taking into account their spread in the future the view of our properties from the motorway will still be significant.



We have an unobstructed view of the motorway from the rear (also including from the side of Hillside) of our properties/bedroom windows/back door/gardens and the current hard shoulder lies approximately 2m (in elevation) above our rear bedroom windows. This means that any traffic using the hard shoulder (including trucks and vans in current lane 1) can easily see into our rear bedrooms etc., this issue has been highlighted recently due to the current roadwork scheme, which has been using the hard shoulder as a running lane.

Within the context of this proposed project we would be directly affected by;-

Loss of privacy - as explained above

Intrusion of noise - due to closer proximity of motorway traffic

Pollution from gaseous exhaust emissions - due to closer proximity of motorway traffic

Pollution from air born debris - particulates, tyre debris, dust & dirt thrown up by passing vehicles.

This response has been laid out to deal with the issues that we consider directly affect us, in the order in which they appear in the report. Report page numbers have been included as have Item identification numbers (in bold) and the relevant text (in italics), from the report to give context to the questions. Our questions have been highlighted in bold and additional comments added following the questions in plain text where we feel they are relevant (including items/mitigations that we feel need modifying to alleviate our fears).

Page 4-14

Improving a Traditional Motorway: Environmental Barriers

4.2.43 *Environmental barriers, in the form of fencing to mitigate noise and visual impacts, will be included within the Scheme where the EIA identifies that this form of environmental mitigation is required. This is addressed in greater detail in Chapters 8 and 12 of this PEI Report.*

& Page 4-29

Nearside and verge works

4.5.16 *Work in the central reserve and off side lanes in this section of the motorway is similar to the work proposed for the section from junction 12 to junction 11. Where necessary, the existing hard shoulder will be strengthened to enable it to carry motorway traffic. Other verge features included in the Scheme are: underground ducts to carry power and communication cables, steel safety barriers around hazards, drainage modifications, lighting (at junction slip roads only), environmental barriers and replacement planting.*

4.5.17 *Where the motorway passes over Mill Lane, to the northwest of Sindlesham, there will be 200m of new 2m high noise fence in the northern verge and 50m in the southern verge.*

Carriageway resurfacing

4.5.18 *On completion of central reserve and verge phases of construction the adjacent lanes, i.e. the nearside and offside lanes of each carriageway, will be resurfaced in TSCS (low-noise surfacing). In addition full width new TSCS will be provided as follows:*

a) 620m on each carriageway just east of junction 11 to reduce the noise impact to residential properties on Whitley Wood Lane and Babbington Road to the north and Brookers Hill to the south.

b) 1370m on the eastbound carriageway and 90m on the westbound carriageway as the M4 passes between Winnersh to the north and Sindlesham to the south.

&

Page 12-36

Operation

12.6.10 *Additional noise barriers have been incorporated into the Scheme, as follows:*

a) E/B carriageway, chainage 48950m to 49020m, height 2m

b) E/B carriageway, chainage 49020m to 49070m, height 2m (on bridge)

c) E/B carriageway, chainage 49070m to 49150m, height 2m

d) W/B carriageway, chainage 49020m to 49070m, height 2m (on bridge)

12.6.11 *Additional low-noise surfacing has been incorporated into the Scheme, as follows:*

a) E/B carriageway, chainage 47080m to 47510m

b) E/B carriageway, chainage 48040m to 4 8520m

c) E/B carriageway, chainage 48680m to 49140m

d) E/B carriageway, chainage 53650m to 54270m

e) W/B carriageway, chainage 46850m to 46940m

f) W/B carriageway, chainage 53650m to 54270m

I have estimated the position using drawing M4-PEIR_Drawing_04-1_Scheme-Plan_Sheet-01-19_J12-J10.pdf Sheet 16 and feel that it would mitigate the noise issue more effectively for us if the noise barriers were extended by a minimum 50m to the west on the E/B carriageway, from chainage 49150m to 49200m. In addition we feel the additional low-noise surfacing should also be extended by a minimum of 50m, again on the E/B carriageway from chainage 49140m to 49190m. – It is my understanding that it is now intended to lay low-noise surfacing throughout the scheme.

Page 8-10

Visual Amenity

8.4.5 *Visual receptors, or those who may experience a change in view as a result of the Scheme, principally comprise occupants of residential properties (largely within the urban areas of Reading, Wokingham, Maidenhead, Slough, West Drayton, and Hayes), users of business and institutional properties (such as schools), users of Public Rights of Way ("PRoW")/recreational routes (including National Trails/National Cycle Routes) and recreational access land, and transport routes in the vicinity of the M4. The locations of visual receptors are shown on Drawing 8.2: Visual Effects Drawing ("VED"), Sheets 1 to 16, in Volume 2.*

8.4.6 *Visual sensitivity has been attributed to visual receptors within the study area in accordance with IAN 135/10. Occupants of residential properties and users of PRoW/other recreational routes/recreational access land are attributed high visual sensitivity. Institutional buildings (such as schools) are attributed moderate visual sensitivity. Users of business properties and transport routes are considered to have low sensitivity. The VES, Appendix 8.3 in Volume 3, sets out the sensitivity of the specific receptors identified.*

Question

Why do our properties not appear in Appendix 8.3 Volume 3, Visual Effects Schedule-Residential Properties?

This is, in our opinion a significant oversight, which could, if left unresolved, have an extensive impact on our enjoyment of our property.

Please refer to the beginning of this letter, which explains in detail our property location, proximity to the M4 and the comments around the ZVI line.

Page 8-18

Visual Amenity

8.6.4 *Visual receptors within the study area for this stretch of the Scheme include residential properties within areas of settlement including Whitley Wood, Shinfield, Lower Early, and Sindlesham, together with individual properties outlying Reading to the south (generally residential properties); users of recreational routes, and transport routes (including minor roads to the south of Reading). The locations of visual receptors are shown on Drawing 8.2 (Sheets 3 to 5) in Volume 2 and described within Appendix 8.3: VES in Volume 3. Viewpoint locations within the Study Area for this section of the Scheme are also shown on Drawing 8.2 and illustrated on Drawing 8.3 in Volume 2.*

&

Page 8-20

Visual Amenity

8.6.13 *The effects in relation to specific visual receptors are set out in the VES (Appendix 8.3) in Volume 3 and shown on Drawing 8.2 (Sheets 3 to 5) in Volume 2. As a result of the high level of vegetation within the vicinity of this section of the M4 corridor, views of the Scheme are limited and, where visible, the Scheme components will generally be seen where highway infrastructure is an established part of the view – particularly where on embankment near junction 10. The significance of visual effects range from neutral to moderate adverse, with the majority of individual scores falling within the slight adverse category. On balance, it*

is considered that the overall significance of visual effect will be **Slight Adverse**. In particular, moderate effects are anticipated to occur at properties in close proximity to gantry proposals, subject to the extent of vegetation clearance. These properties are located at Old Whitley Wood, in Whitley Wood, and off King Street Lane, Sindlesham - refer to Drawing 8.2 (Sheets 3 and 5) in Volume 2

Question

Will the Visual Amenity effects that impact our properties be re-investigated and mitigations re-assessed in light of the issues I have raised in the first part of this letter (namely issues around our properties not appearing in the Appendix 8.3 Volume 3, Visual Effects Schedule- Residential Properties and the incorrect placement of the ZVI line ?

We note that it is intended to install additional noise barriers (as mentioned above in ; - Page 4-14, Improving a Traditional Motorway: Environmental Barriers).

These will go a significant way to providing us with a reasonable degree of visual privacy from vehicle drivers & passengers using the motorway.

As previously mentioned we have an unobstructed view of the motorway from the rear, (as well as from the side of Hillside), of our properties/bedroom windows/back door/gardens and the current hard shoulder lies approximately 2m (in elevation) above our rear bedroom windows.

This means that any traffic using the hard shoulder (especially trucks and vans which have higher cabs/seating and others using the current lane 1) can easily see into our rear bedrooms etc., this issue has been highlighted recently due to the current roadwork repair scheme, which has been using the hard shoulder as a running lane.

A mitigation that we feel would prevent this would be to raise the Noise Barrier from the 2m height mentioned under item 12.6.10 (Page 12.36) to 2.4m in height to give us the visual privacy that we should enjoy in our properties reducing the likelihood of truck drivers/passengers being able to see into our properties .

I (and possibly Ms Dance, depending on work requirements) will be available for the inspections planned for November 2015 to point out, if required the areas mentioned above.

Yours Sincerely

R. Denison / Waterside & Ms T. Dance / Hillside

■ [Redacted]
■ [Redacted]
■ [Redacted]