

Application for an Order granting Development Consent for the A303 Amesbury to Berwick Down

Written Representation on behalf of Mr C A Rowland, Ratfyn Farm, Amesbury, Salisbury, Wilts to comply with Deadline 2 imposed by the Examination Authority

I own the freehold of Watergate Farm, Amesbury which is operated within my business of P J Rowland & Sons and I am the tenant of the adjoining farm being Ratfyn Farm, Amesbury. The business will be making their own independent representation as their concerns are varied to my own.

Watergate Farm is situated directly to the east of the River Avon and extends to about 165 acres. In order to enhance my freehold property, I have invested large sums of money into the farm by creating coarse fishing lakes which are regularly stocked and have also let out the fishing rights on the River Avon. A very large proportion of the income generated at Watergate Farm is entirely dependent upon the quality of the water within the River Avon which would appear to be at risk of being permanently affected by the scheme proposed including the tunnelling and the proposed use of a temporary compound immediately adjacent to the River Avon on land not in my ownership which is east of the Countess Roundabout.

It is for others with more detailed experience in hydrology issues to contest the methodology and interpretation of the results published by Highways England but those compiling those reports are not those whose livelihoods are entirely dependent on the health of the river and what I have concerns about are the lack of analysis provided by Highways England as to the reasons for wanting to locate the contractor's compound adjacent to the River Avon. Moving it or proposing an alternative site away from the River would in my opinion be a far better environmental choice than opting for its present location. I cannot find any references in the application put forward by Highways England as to their reasons for choosing this particular site but the fact that it was used previously when the road was constructed including the new bridge across the Avon is irrelevant. The site chosen has to be not only fit for the scheme but also fit in and be operated within the environmental constraints imposed by the locality of the River Avon. Highways England do not appear to have considered alternative sites and at present there are no details about exactly what it is the appointed Contractor would wish to install at the compound however, this should not at this stage be outside the regulation of the Development Consent Order and having determined the area for the compound Highways England must have a clear idea as to how they envisage the appointed contractor would operate the compound. Of specific concerns to me at the Watergate Farm is the intended operating hours of the site which I understand is to be operational throughout the construction of the scheme and may well be used for material storage as well as the management of the scheme by the appointed contractor.

Noise levels emanating from the compound being within 400 metres from my home at Ratfyn Farmhouse is also a concern with the real probability of light intrusion over the construction period of six years. The increased noise levels will also affect the exercise of sporting rights across Watergate Farm and may lead to the abandonment of the ability to sell days for game shooting. At Appendix A is attached a plan showing the proximity of the River Avon to Ratfyn Farm including Ratfyn Farmhouse and at Appendix B there is a plan showing the proximity of the contractor's compound edged in red on the plan to Ratfyn Farmhouse edged green.

The matter of a potable water supply to the contractor's compound whilst in occupation and for the longer term needs post-construction has also not been addressed adequately but it is believed that Wessex Water will have to install either a new main that may pass through Watergate Farm or run a supply from an existing main and as the establishment of the contractor's compound would probably be one of the first items to be undertaken during the scheme and despite Highways England being asked for the details as to where this will be and when construction of this pipe could be required, there simply has been no response as Wessex Water have yet to fully respond to Highways England and Highways England should be examined about this.

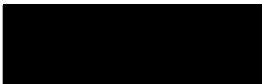
Part of my diversified income at Watergate Farm extends to income from horse livery with the ability offered to clients to exercise their horses at Watergate Farm however, I am concerned that the constant noise from the contractor's site whilst in use will seriously impact the viability of this operation and Highways England are already on notice that any losses attributable to the scheme as a result of the location of the compound being the detrimental factor will be expected to be compensated at full rates. Highways England should be examined about what noise reducing strategies are intended to be imposed on the contractors to limit noise pollution from the proposed contractor's compound.

With the compound at the Countess Roundabout proposed where it is and for the period of time it is likely to be occupied it is inevitable that there will be spillage or leakage of potential contaminants on to the ground surface which will leach through to the water course further contaminating the river which already suffers from increasing levels of pollutants including phosphates, a direct consequence of human activity in the area not assisted by the discharge of treated sewage to the river by Wessex Water at Ratfyn Farm. I cannot see where the applicant has made for provision for any major incident or contamination incident which could bring the compound to a complete shut-down which is why this compound I believe is potentially in the incorrect position which is an issue I believe the examining authority should be investigating further as to what safe guards are in place to protect the River Avon.

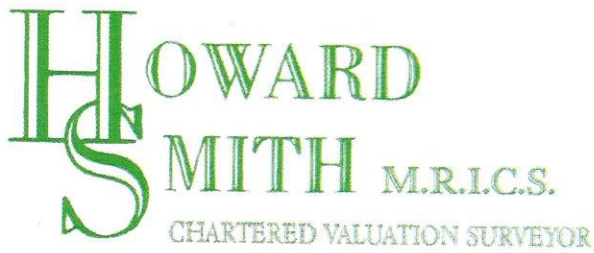
As a result of the scheme generally Highways England appear to be confident that existing water levels within the River Avon will be unaffected by the tunnelling exercise due to the fact that the tunnelling is taking place below the level of the aquifers however, without all the monitoring details available not only at Blick Mead and at other sites along the proposed route because Highways England have not yet undertaken all of the testing required Highways England should be asked to qualify their statement that the water table will be unaffected.

Changes which result in either a lowering or raising of the water levels within the River Avon will have serious consequences on my coarse fishing enterprises and for which compensation would be expected.

Apart from my concerns concerning the potential for ground water issues affecting my freehold property and the future profitability of my business, I am in favour of the overall scheme and its intentions to remove the substantial queueing of traffic at the Countess Roundabout despite the inevitable local disruption that will occur during construction.

Signed 
Howard Smith MRICS Chartered Surveyor
RICS Valuer

Dated 

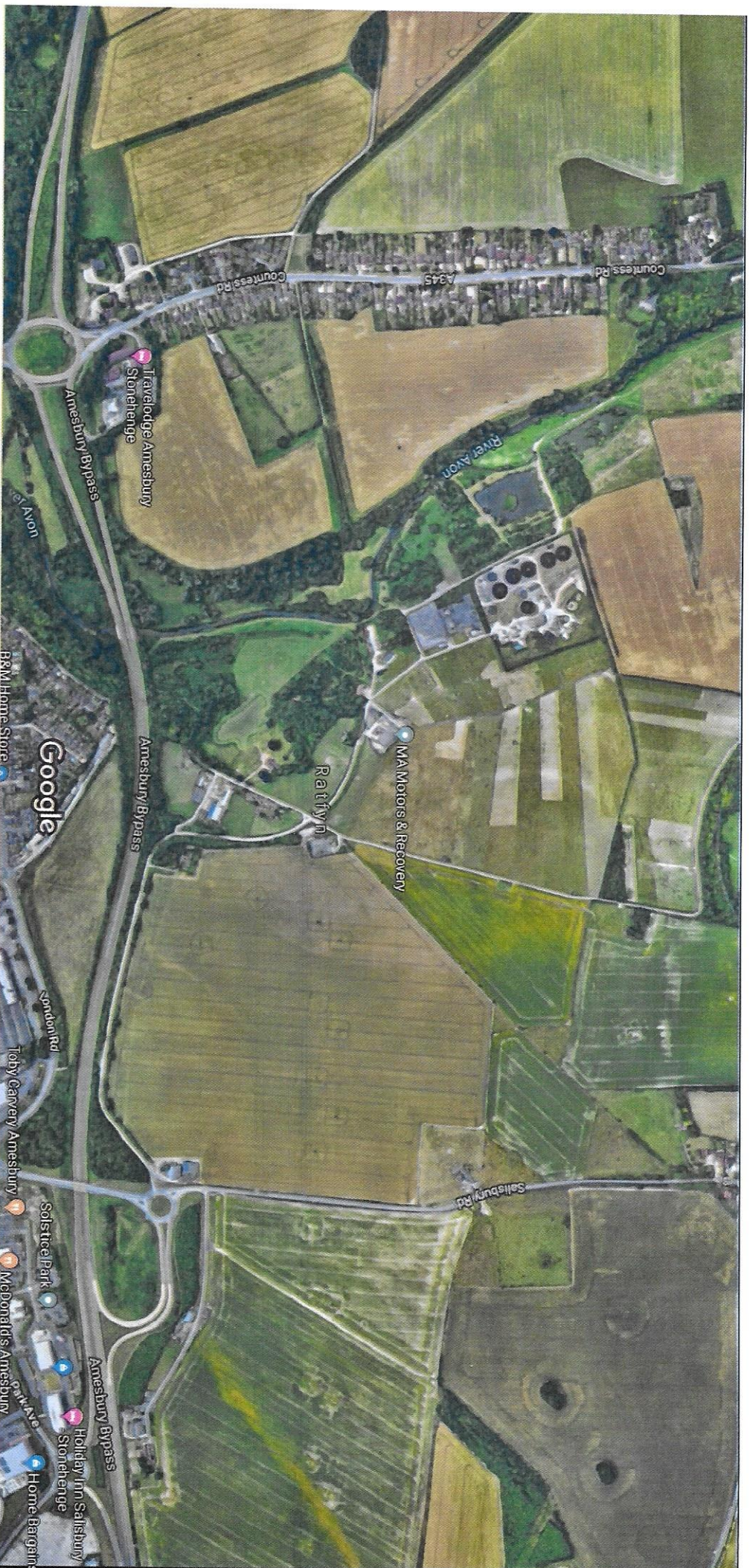


ANNEX 1

Plan of the Location of Watergate Farm being adjacent to the River Avon

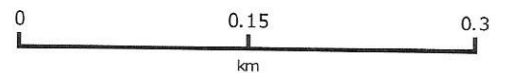
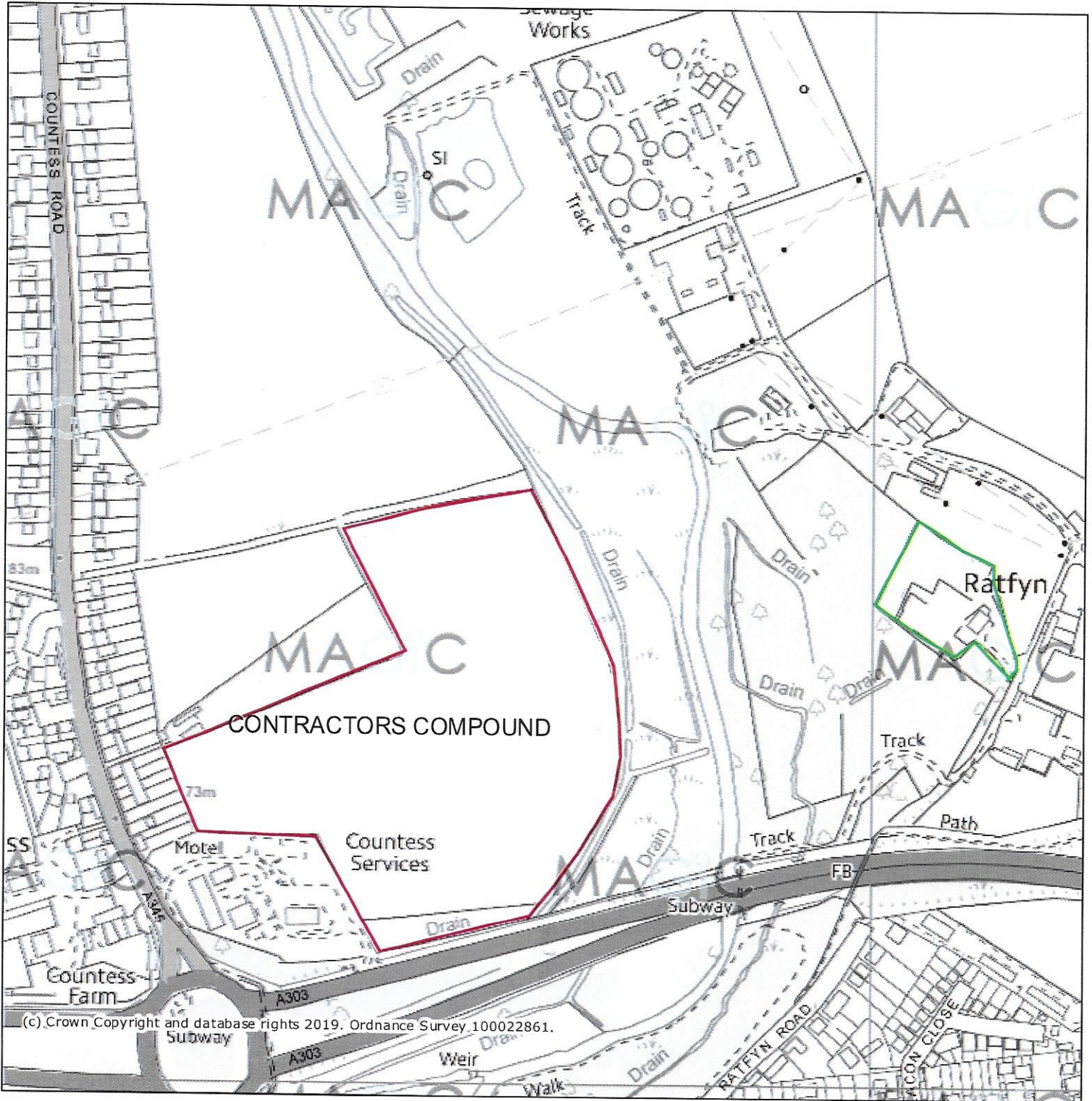


Plan showing proximity of River Avon to Ratfyn Farm including Ratfyn farmhouse



Imagery ©2019 Google, Map data ©2019 Google

200 m



Projection = OSGB36

xmin = 414700

ymin = 142000

xmax = 416700

ymax = 143000

Map produced by MAGIC on 1 May, 2019.

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