

A303 Stonehenge Public Examination

TR010025

Written Representation Summary

The Stonehenge we see today is very much the result of modern restoration and reconstruction, but the circle was constructed about 4500 years ago and the wider site has been inhabited at least as long again.

There is considerable risk of damage to archaeology, both directly through the construction and indirectly through potential changes to the hydrogeology of the Chalk aquifer on which the Stonehenge site sits.

The geology of the Stonehenge Bottom area is complex and not fully understood. There is the potential for the proposed works to alter the hydrogeology of the aquifer and the hydrology of Blick Mead. If a tunnel cannot be satisfactorily constructed then the application should fail and alternatives sought.

At this stage there are not even any detailed plans on how a tunnel can be constructed, as the proposal is for the method of tunnelling to be determined by an as yet unknown contractor.

There is also the loss of fine views of Stonehenge from the A303, and loss of interconnectivity in the local Public Rights of Way network.

The main advantages would be to journey times for visitors to the south-west as well as increased revenues to the heritage industry and those companies awarded construction contracts.

The consultation and application documents are big on concepts such as opening a 'mile-a-minute' South-West Freeway, yet much more vague on concepts such as preservation of archaeology and cultural heritage.

Indeed, the views of Stonehenge from the A303 are part of our culture. Our understanding of the wider historical context of the site is still in infancy. It is probable that there is more to be discovered in future. The proposals look more likely to destroy archaeological evidence than preserve it.

The tunnel portals and approach roads would seriously impede on the wider setting of Stonehenge.

Too little consideration has been given to alternative routes outside the World Heritage Site.

Stonehenge and its wider setting can reasonably be regarded as the cradle of British civilisation. It is too important to be treated as an afterthought to a road improvement scheme.

Barry Garwood