

Scheme Reference: TR010038
Unique Reference: 2002 8284

Purpose of representation:

Comments related to Deadline 9

1. Background

Many issues have been raised throughout the examination process, but a number have been reiterated in the closing submissions on behalf of A C Meynell Esq and the Trustees represented.

We would like to draw attention to a simple difference of opinion because an observer might reach the conclusion that as the Examination has been largely taken up with matters relating to Mr Meynell's preference to relocate the Wood Lane Junction northwards. Consequently, they might think that because of the weight of testimony, Mr Meynell's position has merit and perhaps the road and the junction should be moved northwards.

While every affected party has had the same opportunity to present to the Examination, the owners of the Easton Estate have resisted the temptation to try to relocate the road southwards as they would prefer.

The sheer bulk of documentation and hearing time means that it would be difficult not to presume that the arguments presented on behalf of Mr Meynell will be given more weight than the more modest commentary of other parties and we hope and trust this is not the case.

In Mr Meynell's closing submissions, several points are made which may benefit from some comment in case the Examining Authority considers that silence suggests approval.

2. Issues raised in the summary

At Paragraph C13b, Mr Meynell proposes the Wood Lane junction be adjusted northwards to *a more suitable location and which will avoid impact on the estate*.

D15a lists as a criticism or a *failure to locate the junction north of the existing A47* which gives rise amongst other things to *iii) "damage to the more sensitive landscape south of the existing A47 (including but not limited to the heritage landscape of the estate) will occur unnecessarily. The proposed mitigations do not adequately compensate"*.

15C refers to *less loss of sensitive landscape*.

Paragraph 22 refers to an alternative location of Construction Compound 2, suggesting it could have been *more conveniently located to the north, if the alternative proposals had been adopted, and even had they not been, that there was still less sensitive land to the north more convenient for it*.

Paragraph 30 indicates that the junction could have been better located when first designed *by a small adjustment northwards*.

Paragraph 48 refers to the *quality of the owners' estate as recognised by HMRC and the recommendation of Natural England*.

3. Observations

It is helpful to note from the applicant, and other responses that the Wood Lane junction layout and location is supported by Norfolk County Council, Breckland District Council, Broadland District Council and South Norfolk Council.

The scheme is not particularly welcomed by the owners of the Easton Estate, but they have accepted that if the road improvement scheme is to take place it will have an impact and that the impact has as far as reasonable to be borne not just by other people.

Mr Meynell indicates that the impact should not be on the [REDACTED]. The depositions suggest the impact should be borne by other people and in large part by the Easton Estate rather than the Berry Hall Estate, which he suggests is superior and therefore more worthy of protection.

We suggest that moving the Wood Lane junction northwards would not be to move it to a more suitable location, merely one that might avoid the impact on the Berry Hall Estate. At no point has the Easton Estate tried to improve its' position by moving the scheme further to the south and those representing Mr Meynell ought to know better than to assume their property is better and less suited to the road improvement scheme based on subjective opinion.

We suggest it is not a failing of the applicant to locate the junction north of the existing A47, nor that the landscape south of the existing A47 is necessarily more sensitive. It is true that the road will be closer to the principal house, but very little land is lost from the [REDACTED] in comparison to the Easton Estate.

To locate the Wood Lane junction further north would require far more additional land from the Easton Estate than it would omit from the [REDACTED].

Mr Meynell refers to a *small adjustment* and then indicates the applicant could have made an adjustment of between 50m-100m to the north to reduce the loss of sensitive landscape. We respectfully suggest that these representatives should adopt a more balanced approach and try to consider the impact of their suggestions and that 50m to 100m is no small adjustment.

Throughout the western section of the Easton Estate, between Wood Lane and the River Tud, the scheme extends approximately 150m into the estate. The impact is significant along approximately a 2km length of the southern section of the estate. It affects over 15 enclosures and to suggest moving the scheme between 50m-100m further north can only be observed as very damaging and in turn as perhaps a slightly selfish suggestion.

Following Deadline 3, the applicant considered the impact of the [REDACTED] proposed amendments to the Wood Lane junction. They indicated the proposals would require between 20-25 acres of extra land from the Easton Estate.

The owners of the Easton Estate would very much prefer not to be losing land at all, but they are. They are losing 72 acres permanently, 41 acres temporarily with permanent rights with a further area of 42 acres is being used temporarily for compounds and topsoil storage. They do not wish to lose more, especially when combined with the expected Norwich Western Link and the intended Orsted and Equinor cables, The Easton Estate is under assault from compulsory acquisition and the owners do not need the A47 scheme to become yet more damaging.

It is not entirely clear how relocating construction compound 2 further north could be more conveniently located and it is generally a poor suggestion.

4. Landscape & Heritage

Much has been made of the Inheritance Tax exemption granted to [REDACTED] which is important for the continuation of the estate no doubt. As far as we are aware there is no suggestion that this status will be lost as a result of the scheme, so the issue is being used as a measure of value which is only slightly reasonable.

Out of deference to a neighbour's position, the owners have not made the obvious point that only owners who request Heritage Asset Relief tend to be considered. The Easton estate advisers have some experience of Heritage Asset property having been through the early eligibility process for two properties successfully and having helped to manage another property with Heritage Asset status.

It is entirely possible that the Easton Estate would, when taken as a whole be considered of Heritage Asset value on landscape grounds but it has not been requested.

That the Easton estate does not have Heritage Asset relief status is not because it is necessarily less "good", it has not been requested so the quality cannot be judged on this criteria.

It would be inappropriate for a third party to suggest that any piece of land alongside the scheme is particularly more important or more sensitive than another.

5. Summary

The owners of the Easton Estate have been reserved in their criticism of the scheme and observations made about the estate.

They are losing a significant area of land and the impact will be significant along the whole southern section of the estate, extending to approximately 2km in length.

We very much wish it was not as damaging to the property as it will be and there is no chance that mitigation will go far enough or that compensation will be sufficient to counteract the intrusion.

The owners have been prepared to accommodate the scheme but they are not prepared to consider movement of the alignment to the north and the resultant increased impact on the estate.

We trust the Examining Authority will either approve or not approve the development consent order on its' merit but will not encourage realignment in a northerly direction.