

Inspectorate Meeting Notes

Wednesday 26th January 2022

(Revised 8 February 2022 following meeting with Highways England & ARUP representatives 4th February 2022)

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to re submit our information regarding our land to be taken by HE for the A417 Missing Link project.

The first thing we would like to make very clear is that we are no way in agreement to having our land taken from us for either the project or for the installation of a layby.

However, we do support the need for this development to go ahead. We have tried to be fair and reasonable during all talks and have tried to discuss alternatives with HE, all to no avail, so now we stand firm with our decision not to allow our land (Plot 1/3d) to be taken. We believe that the purpose of the land take is for 1 reason and only one reason which is to create a lay by. Other land is being acquired from us but its need for the Scheme is understood and reluctantly accepted.

Highways England/ARUP stated to us on our meeting dated 6th February 2020, that the proposed lay-by was not compulsory for the operation of the highway, but only advisory. We therefore request that Plot 1/3d is removed from the order. This has been confirmed by David A. J. Field in August 2021 representation of 'not compulsory' and also again by Converse Law on 19th August 2021 in correspondence as not compulsory.

Our home, [REDACTED] is not just bricks and mortar to us but so much more. [REDACTED] has been in the family since before my husband was born. It was then passed to him by his parents, and it is placed in trust to be passed to our children and grandchildren.

Plot 1/3d is on the Southeast side of our home and in line with where family members ashes are scattered. This area can be seen clearly from the windows of the house so there would be a visual impact to the land take. The original size of the layby has reduced during the consultations, but the land take mass has remained the same, but surely this should have reduced.

The purpose of the land take is so HE can site a layby. This is not acceptable to us, and the said layby is not compulsory but only suggested. Placing a layby on our land at the base of the hill serves no purpose. Drivers and lorries do not approach the hill and think they might break down, so stop there! As they pass the house on the South side, they accelerate to get the momentum up for the gradient of the hill. If they then discover a problem, they pull into Slad Lane layby which is halfway up the hill. If our land is taken, then fully loaded lorries would still not have the momentum and speed to leave the laybys and go up the hill in a safe manner entering live traffic lanes going at over 60 mph. I have had discussions with lorry drivers that delivery to the property to clarify that there would still be a problem

if loaded on the speed and acceleration to climb the hill. Therefore, the layby if needed should be located further up the road with a longer filter lane and not where it is currently planned on our land. The gradient will be less after the works so this issue will be reduced further.

If the boundary is moved this will cause problems for a long-term tenant who lives directly opposite the area HE wants to take. This will give rise to the following. Safety, noise, fly tipping, human waste etc. Who will clean and police it?. There are no Police.

HE states that they need the land for the layby, and they will place restrictions on the site to stop any bad behaviour and it will be controlled by the police. I'm sure we are all aware that there is already a shortage of police, and they certainly won't be making a layby on the A417 their priority, so this will not be the case. Inevitably we will be left with the problems again.

The size of the land take is also an issue as with previous dealings with HE on the first road expansion project over 30 years ago, they took far more land at that time than was agreed and it has never been addressed until this project came to light, so our apologies but our trust and reassurance in the amount of land suggested for take and the completion details we feel cannot be trusted.

As the tree planting is an aspect of the land take it has already been an issue for almost 30 years of no maintenance being done on the boundary of our property of the trees planted in the first road project in 1992 for this area of road. This has caused ongoing problems for us and our property. The trees have only been addressed along the North aspect since this project has started to take place, which cannot be a coincidence after fighting for 20 years to have this issue looked at, and even now the East and West aspect have been left and not addressed, therefore leaving us blocked in on all 3 sides by mass areas of unkept woodland.

Our home will already be affected with this development as they are intending on cutting across our land on the other side of the property, to place the pipework for drainage. So, we already have disruption to our home before this next proposed land take.

We feel there has been so much dishonesty dealing with HE and associated organisations over the years that have adversely affected our property and it leaves us very wary and unhappy about more land take.

If the provision of a layby is not compulsory, then the criteria are not met to include plot 1/3d in the Order. We understand that the guidelines for layby provision are that there should be laybys every 9 miles (stated at our meeting with HE). A new layby (eastbound – to complement the existing westbound layby) has been recently constructed only 3 miles away (between the Golden Valley and C&G roundabout, on the opposite side to the Wheatstone pub). There is also an eastbound layby between the Longford and Golden Valley roundabout. Therefore, the criteria have already been met for layby provision under the guidelines (which we assume to be DMRB). The size of the layby in the Order Plans is 375m x 10.8m. Removal of this feature would negate the requirement for Plot 1/3d and still allow planting and boundary treatment that we are currently investigating/agreeing with HE.

Justification for the land requirements and the layby (in a reduced format – see Transcript-CAH1-session4-A417missinglink-26012022, 59:24 onwards) are still awaited. In the absence of this justification, and in light of the fact that more than the required landscaping land has been acquired from us for the previous A417 improvement and that the layby provision appears to already have been met, we ask for the Order to be amended with the deletion of Plot 1/3d, with the boundary treatment discussed with HE to date provided for.

We find it intrinsically wrong to have to fight for what is already ours.

We thank you all for your time today.

David & Lisa Field

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