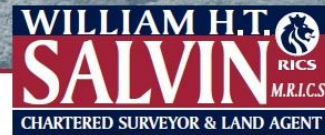




THE ESTATE OFFICE, EGGLESTONE ABBEY, BARNARD CASTLE, COUNTY DURHAM DL12 9TN  
TEL: 01833 690100 FAX: 01833 637004 e.mail: williamsalvin@whtsalvin.co.uk www.whtsalvin.co.uk



Mortham Estates  
A66 NTP Proposal  
Development Consent Order Application by National Highways  
Deadline Date 1 Submission  
To  
Planning Inspectorate  
IP Ref No 20032137.

1. Background

- 1.1 Mortham Estates own and manage the Grade II\* Registered Parkland and wider 3500 acre historic estate centred upon Rokeby Hall – a Grade I country house.
- 1.2 Southern Green were instructed by the owners to prepare an appraisal of the Rokeby junction options proposed by the Applicant at Statutory Consultation stage in Autumn 2021
- 1.3 They concluded:

**Section 2**  
**Executive Summary**

---

**Anticipated Landscape, Visual and Heritage Aspects (Black, Blue and Blue II Routes)**

In this section, a short summary comparison is made of the anticipated positive, neutral and negative effects brought about by the Black, Blue and Blue II Routes.

As can be seen below, the Blue II option is not only preferred by the landowner of Rokeby Park and surrounding farmland, but the analysis indicates fewer negative aspects and more positive aspects than either the NH preferred Black route or secondary Blue Route.

We anticipate that the Blue II option will bring about less than substantial residual harm on the Grade II\* Rokeby Registered Park and Garden, and will provide more advantages and fewer negative aspects when compared with the other options under consideration, as set out over the following pages.

- 1.4 At the Preliminary Hearings held on Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> November 2022 the Applicant conceded that neither option caused “substantial harm” as defined by the National Planning Policy Framework(NPPF)
- 1.5 The Black Option would create 53% greater traffic using the B6277 Moor House Lane through Startforth when compared to the owners preferred Blue Option.

## 2. Unresolved Issues

- 2.1 Mortham Estates believe that the Black Option is unsustainable for the following reasons:
1. Southern Greens assessment is that the Blue Option ***“will provide more advantages and fewer negative aspects when compared to the other options under consideration”***
  2. This view was formed prior to the insertion of a proposed mini roundabout immediately adjacent to the Grade II listed pillars and decorative iron railings at the junction of the C165 and existing A66 – the intended viewing point both from within the Park and from the highway.
  3. Southern Greens assessment takes no account of the 53% increase in traffic volumes using the B6277 to Startforth, particularly along the section known as the Sills where the road narrows and the adjacent footpath is squeezed with the resulting dangers and risks to road users and pedestrians.
- 2.2 Southern Green qualify their appraisal in their introduction stating that the report is not a landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) nor is it a Heritage Impact Assessment
- 2.3 The Applicant has supplied photo montages of the proposed underpass to the west of Rokeby Church taken from the public footpath looking north. This does not show the proposed junction. There are no additional photo montages of the proposed mini roundabout on the C165/A66 junction
- 2.4 Consequently, it is not possible to assess the degree of harm that will be caused by the Applicants proposal to the designated assets (listed buildings)
- 2.5 We believe that if the appropriate assessment was made with the benefit of a Heritage Impact Assessment and Statement of Significance, this would conclude that the impact of the proposed Black Route underpass on the Grade II\* St Marys Church and of the proposed mini roundabout on the C165/A66 junction would cause “Substantial Harm” to the designated assets and thus be incompatible with the NPPF requirements.
- 2.6 It is accepted by all parties that the Blue Option is compliant with the NPPF as this will not cause “Substantial Harm” and will not cause a 53% increase in traffic flows along the B6277 at the Sills in Startforth and is to be preferred.

## 3. Conclusion & Summary

- 3.1 For the reasons set out above, our opinion supported by specialist advice obtained from Chartered Landscape Architects (Southern Green) is that the Blue Route is compatible with the requirements of the NPPF and that the Black Route is not.
- 3.2 To determine this conclusively, the Applicant should be required to commission a Heritage Impact Assessment and Statement of Significance for the historic estate at Rokeby.