

From: [REDACTED]
To: [West Midlands Interchange](#)
Subject: Cross Britain Way and West Midlands Interchange
Date: 09 July 2019 15:06:30

BACKGROUND

My name is Tim Brunton. I created Cross Britain Way which was opened in 2014. It is a Macmillan Way, of which there is an existing network across England, raising money for Macmillan Cancer Support. It is a 280mile long, coast to coast, long distance footpath, which runs across the application site.

I have only just found out about the proposed development in the last few days. I understand the developers only discovered the existence of Cross Britain Way in the last few weeks despite our waymarker stickers on Penk29. It has also been shown on OS online mapping since last year and sheet maps for the past few months. Perhaps that is the reason we were not consulted from the outset. The Mac Ways Assoc website also is shown on the waymarkers.

MY OBJECTIONS

I have not had the opportunity to go through the whole application. I have seen layout plan Dwg No 100 rev 05, dated March 2018. I assume this is still the current plan?

My objections are:

1 The impact of the development on either of the two currently possible routes for CBW through the site. The effect on Penk 29 is self evident. It is permanently removed, although I would point out that a Footpath Diversion Order will be required before this can go ahead. I will object to such an application on the grounds of the loss of an attractive field path that has been a public right of way probably for centuries.

The other route available is the canal/Gravelly Way, and thence out to the A449 and Crateford Lane westwards. I have serious concerns here in terms of visual amenity, with the whole environment and setting of the canal being severely and irreversibly damaged. At no point over the whole 280 mile length of CBW have I taken the path through an industrial estate or warehousing for fairly obvious reasons. What is proposed here is not 12m high warehouse buildings that stand some prospect of screening, at least in visual terms, from tree planting. These are up to 30m high as I understand. How tall would the bunding shown on the plan have to be built to screen 30m high buildings from the canal towpath? And if it achieved that objective it would have the appearance of a very substantial motorway embankment which would itself be an alien and incongruous feature in the landscape. The Staffordshire and Worcester Canal is designated as a canal conservation area and is probably the most important landscape feature on the whole site. Opened in 1772 it was built by maybe the foremost canal builder of the 18th century, James Brindley, who also built the Trent and Mersey, as part of his remarkable plan to link England's four main rivers - Trent, Mersey, Severn and Thames - into a coordinated transport network to serve the emerging industrial revolution. So the canal is of major historic interest and this development would have a severely detrimental impact on its setting for a substantial length, incapable of any effective or adequate mitigation.

2. The plan in any event shows no footpath link from the canal onto the new access road. The applicant has referred to the canal /Gravelly Way being a preferable route for CBW but the plan shows no link from the canal onto the new Gravelly Way, and no indication of how pedestrians would be routed down to the A449.

3. If access from the canal is proposed I am concerned about the route from there to Gravelly Way in terms of pedestrian safety, given the number of crossing points of busy internal access roads and the huge number of vehicle movements predicted, a high proportion of which would be HGVs.

4. Then there is the question of how it is proposed to get walkers across the A449. No

provision is shown on the layout plan for CBW walkers, or anyone else coming off the canal or from the footway alongside the A449.

CONCLUSIONS

For the above reasons I strongly object to the proposal. However, if the Minister decides, notwithstanding my and other objections, to grant permission, I would suggest conditions be attached to incorporate the following:

1. The community park be effectively extended to also incorporate the length of the canal across the site, for the canal corridor to be widened and buildings closest to it to be reduced in height, so that, in visual terms at least, users of the canal and its towpath will be unaware of the new development surrounding it, and to be screened more imaginatively than with the motorway embankment shown on the plan;
2. Bridge 78A, and the existing access from there off the canal, up onto the old railway bridge, and the current Gravelley Way, all be retained alongside and separate to the new road, as a dedicated footpath/cycleway from the canal as far as the A449; and
3. Provision, presumably in the form of pedestrian lights, be made to cross A449.

I would like an acknowledgement of these representations.

I would like to be informed of any further revised plans and given the chance to comment further.

I look forward to hearing further from you.

Regards

Tim Brunton (BSc, BTP)