

The Secretary of State for Transport
c/o Transport Infrastructure Planning Unit
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

Date: 21st July 2021
Our ref: Oxford University
Tel: 07923 212 505
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Sent by e mail & post

Dear Sirs,

**Re: The Transport and Works Act 1992
The Transport and Works (Applications and Objections Procedure) England and Wales) Rules 2006**

The Network Rail (Oxford Station Phase 2 Improvements (Land Only)) Order 2021

The Chancellor Masters and Scholars of The University of Oxford

We act for The University of Oxford (the University), the Freehold owner of the land contiguous to Oxford Railway Station which is included within the above Order together with other interests in land which form part of the Order.

We write to formally object to the Order on behalf of the University on the grounds that the information provided is insufficient and unclear and that the University's land ownership could be adversely affected by the scheme both temporarily and permanently. The University's objections are based on the following matters:

1) Network Rail propose to replace the existing foot and vehicular bridge known as Sheepwash Bridge and replace it with a new bridge of their design and construction. The University will have no involvement with the design and / or construction of the new bridge and therefore consider that this should be a Network Rail asset rather than a University asset. The new bridge will provide pedestrian access from the station to the Network Rail compound. Network Rail will also need to acquire the necessary air rights which do not appear to have been considered. The University cannot take on the ownership and maintenance for a new bridge from a third party of which they have been no part, and therefore object to the proposed order on this ground.

2) The University is concerned about the disruption to utilities both public and private within the existing bridge structure when it is demolished and throughout the local area, both in and outside of the University's land ownership. The University's main concern is the fibre network providing internet access throughout the University. This is a private network and may or may not be shown on public utility plans/records.

As far as the University is aware, Network Rail has not undertaken any surveys of the network or held any detailed discussions with the University to ensure the proposed works do not cause any disruption to the fibre network. The fibre network is considered to be critical infrastructure by the University and as Network Rail has not provided any information regarding the protection of this critical infrastructure the University objects to the proposed Order on this ground.

3) Network Rail propose to unilaterally transfer land to the University which is currently part of the Day Nursery (Co -Op Nursery Plot 16). The University have not been provided with any details regarding the current status of this land and until all the necessary detail is provided the University may or may not want to take ownership of this land and therefore objects the proposed Order on this ground.

4) Network Rail has proposals for a temporary access route should construction work require this. The proposed access land is part of a road to student accommodation (Castle Mill) and third party residential property. The access road is used by students for pedestrian and cycle access to and from the University and city centre. This closure would mean that all traffic to/from the Castle Mill accommodation, as well as the flats at Venneit Close and Thames Wharf to the south, would be temporarily diverted to the north towards Walton Well Road. The route between Walton Well Road and Roger Dudman Way does not currently support vehicular traffic. The access road is also used by emergency vehicles and service vehicles.

Network Rail has not provided the University, or consulted with it on any information such as a Traffic Management Plan to demonstrate and support the safe use of this temporary access route should it be required during the construction period and therefore the University objects to the proposed Order on this ground.

5)The University has access rights under a Demarcation Agreement for the southern part of Roger Dudman Way which is owned by Network Rail. These rights need to be varied to allow access via a new route, off Cripsey Road. The University has been requested to enter into the surrender and grant of new access rights which may affect the use of the access to the student accommodation. No details of these rights have been received by the University and until the details have been considered the University objects to the proposed Order on this ground.

6) Generally, the University also have concerns on matters such as the full scope of the works, the delivery date of the scheme / timings of the works and details of the proposed location and compound area required on University land. Therefore, the University objects to the Order on these grounds.

7) Finally, Network Rail provided draft Heads of Terms, which were scant in detail and provided no commercial or technical information to address the concerns of the University.

Therefore, Network Rail has not made any meaningful efforts to negotiate the land and rights required for the project by private treaty, and as such has not satisfied Government Guidance which states that "Acquiring authorities are expected to provide evidence that meaningful attempts at negotiation have been pursued or at least genuinely attempted, save for lands where land ownership is unknown or in question".

If you require any further information on the above objections, please do not hesitate to contact me.

We reserve the right to amend or extend this objection accordingly in due course.

Please confirm receipt of this objection and that our client is recorded as a Statutory Objector.

Yours faithfully,

Ian Miles

BSc (Hons) MRes MRICS
Technical Director
For Gateley Hamer