

The Cambridge re-signalling, re-lock and re-control project (or C3R for short) - Meldreth Road level crossing objection

To whom it may concern

I am writing to lodge my formal objection to the upgrade of the Meldreth road level crossing, which forms part of the Cambridge re-signalling, re-lock and re-control project.

My property at [REDACTED] directly adjoins the railway, and part of the project requires land within my boundary that is a long established garden. To date I have had no communication with the railway about resolving this, and am finding out about this largely through my own investigation.

My reasons for the objection are as follows;

1. Why? There is no reason that I can understand that the crossing needs to be expanded. As far as I am aware, there is almost no evidence of any accidents or dangerous occurrences at this crossing. The crossing performs perfectly well as it is, and although more regular activations of the barriers occur compared to the other crossing in the village, the downtime is short and traffic flows freely.
2. Safety - I am concerned that with the significantly increased downtimes of the upgraded crossing, people will rush to get through it and this is much more likely to cause an accident, particularly given the number of driveways in the vicinity. I also fear those caught at the lights potentially will look to turn around and head on an alternate route. This combined with a large number of cul-de-sacks and independent houses close to the railway will likely see an increase in people driving down the outside of the queue to get home quickly. This seems to be an obvious cause for concern, and needs much more investigation.
3. Barrier Down time – the notes in the Network rail proposal do not make sense. Currently the barrier is down on average of a minute or less for each train that goes through. If my understanding is correct, the upgraded crossing will be controlled from Foxton which mirrors that of the other crossing in Shepreth. This has a regular barrier downtime of well over 5 minutes. On this basis I strongly contest the data provided by Network Rail, and believe an independent review should be carried out
4. Due to the considerably longer barrier downtime, this will make access to my property and others along the road, considerably more challenging. Despite there being a “keep clear” box across my driveway now, I still regularly have to wait for other road users stopped at the crossing to move out of the way so I can enter or exit my property. Not only will I have this to contend with, I will also have to likely sit in a queue to get home more frequently and for longer periods when the barriers are down.

5. Traffic will be queuing along the road in both directions, creating environmental pollution where engines are idling whilst waiting.
6. Light pollution – at present there is minimal lighting at the crossing or indeed in this part of the village, except when the barriers are down. Within the new proposal, there are large flood lights which will likely fill the area, my garden and my bedrooms with unwanted light. As mentioned previously, if this is anything like the other crossing that was upgraded several years ago, it is very well lit. However, this crossing has minimal residential properties close by, and is directly next to the station which is also well lit, so the impact was far less
7. Service yard – Network rail already seem to have a large service yard at the other end of the village by the station. Why do they need another one by this crossing. There is already an amount of work that is carried out overnight, and I am concerned that with both a larger crossing and new service yard there will be a greater number of vehicles movements throughout the night,
8. Privacy – from looking at the plans, I believe the upgraded crossing would be remotely managed, and a CCTV system installed to aid this. I have major concerns about privacy and where these cameras will point.
9. Screening – at present, I have a number of well established trees between my property and the railway. If the proposal goes ahead as suggested, a large portion of these would need to be removed. Nothing is mentioned anywhere about how this maybe managed and what will be done to regenerate this screening.
10. Within the consultation, I objected for many of the same reasons as I have listed here. I can see no evidence anywhere that this has been considered or even mentioned within the application.
11. Land in contest – Using their submitted document NR10, the drawing on page 4 (attached for reference) that relates to the Meldreth road crossing and is labelled 003 / 004 on the plan is within my boundary – this land does not belong to Network rail. I have responded to 2 notices put on signs next to the crossing which appeared in October 2021 & July 2022, asking for people who may have an interest in this land to contact them, but aside from an acknowledgment of receipt of the 2nd message I sent, I have had no dialogue at all. I was contacted by Brown and Co. during the consultation and had several communications back and forth, but when complicated questions arose and it became clear this was not as straight forward as initially thought, they stopped communicating with me. Whilst this land issue is in some ways separate from the application, it shows again that corners have been cut and the facts are not fully clear as presented in their documentation.

In summary, I feel that Network rail have presented some inaccurate information to build a case for something that isn't necessary. If they get approval to proceed with these plans, it will have a significant negative impact on day to day lives of myself and others who live close to the crossing. I appreciate the need to upgrade old technology, but this doesn't warrant changing the whole setup. Is it not possible to just change like for like to give another 35 plus years reliability?

I would be happy to supply any further information required to aid in the review of this application.

Transport and Works Act 1992

The Network Rail (Cambridge Re-Signalling) Order

Cambridgeshire County Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council and Shepreth Parish Council

Land Plan

Sheet No. 1 of 9

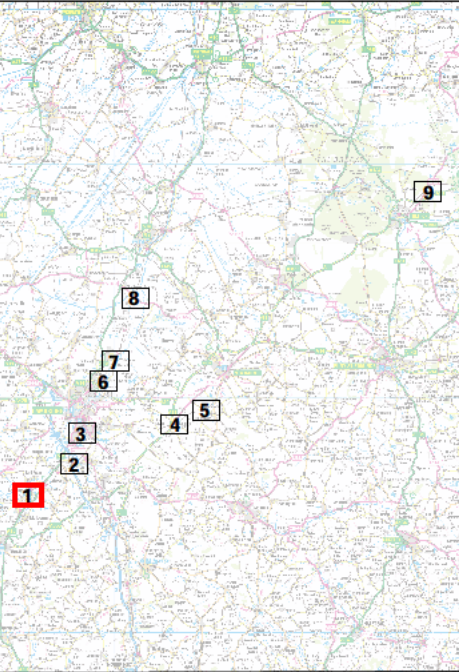
Key:

Land to be Permanently Acquired

Number on Plan
002, 003, 004, 005, 006, 007, 008, 009 and 010

Land required for Permanent Rights

Number on Plan
001



Drawing No: L10/Operate on/URS-1 2 NR Cambridge Inner & Outer Signalling/Product on/2 - CPO Schedule & Map/CPO Map/Cur art

Location: Meldreth
OS Grid Ref: TL 388 477

Version: 2.0 Date: 04/08/2022

Where applicable the plot boundaries show the general boundary of the registered land, it does not show the exact line of the boundaries. Measurements scaled from this plan may not match measurements between the same points on the ground.

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