

Public Inquiry into Appeal by Helioslough Ltd into a
proposed Strategic Rail Freight Interchange on land in and
around Former Aerodrome, North Orbital Road, Upper
Colne Valley, Hertfordshire

Proof of Evidence by Malcolm Mark on behalf of Napsbury
Park Residents Association

A LOCAL PERSPECTIVE



26 October 2009

PROOF OF EVIDENCE: OBJECTION TO THE STRATEGIC FREIGHT RAIL TERMINAL FROM NAPSBUURY PARK RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

ST ALBANS: PLANNING REFERENCE: 5/2009/0708
APPEAL REFERENCE: APP/B1930/A/09/2109433/NWF

1.0 Introduction

1.1 My name is Malcolm Mark. I am retired, I live in Napsbury Park and I am a member of the committee of the Napsbury Park Residents Association, and have been authorised to speak on their behalf.

1.2 The Napsbury Park Residents Association (NPRA) represents 27 roads/apartment blocks and 582 residential dwellings (Freehold, Leasehold & Housing Association) within Napsbury Park, located in London Colney, St Albans. On behalf of the residents of Napsbury Park, the NPRA strongly objects to the proposal to build the Strategic Rail Freight Terminal ("Terminal") on the following grounds:

2.0 Proximity.

2.1 Part of Napsbury Park is Grade 2 listed and is a conservation area surrounded by Green Belt and fields. This Terminal would not be in keeping with the conservation area and Napsbury Park would be seen as adjacent to an industrial estate. When the original Terminal plans were submitted Napsbury Park was a disused hospital site on all maps. The new plans are substantially the same as before and, though Napsbury Park is now reflected on the map, no consideration has been given to the fact that it is a fully occupied residential area with 582 properties.

2.2 The proposed Terminal is a 300 acre industrial site which would be located within approximately 500 metres from the properties within the Napsbury Park development. The noise of additional freight trains, running mostly at night and joining the slow track of the main line along a new spur on the eastern side of the current track (closer to Napsbury Park than the current line) would be hugely disruptive to the residents.

2.3 Additionally, many Napsbury Park properties are outward looking, not inward as Helioslough stated previously, and hence would look out at this development. Views from Napsbury Park are currently of open countryside and ploughed fields, these views would be hindered significantly by the proposed development.

3.0 Road Congestion.

3.1 The 3,000 lorries together with the over 3,300 workforce (mainly non local) would produce about 9,000 transport movements a day. The proposed development would



create unacceptable volumes of heavy traffic on the already congested local roads which are the only possible routes for Napsbury residents.

3.2 At peak times it already takes up to 40 minutes to travel the 2.9 miles between A414/Napsbury Park and M25 (junction 21A) roundabout due to traffic. This additional traffic would add significantly to residents' journeys each day.

3.3 The local school runs take about 30 minutes each way, and could also be significantly impacted. Additionally, as the A414 and M25 are already congested during peak times, Harper Lane is frequently used by residents of Napsbury Park and the surrounding area as an alternative route for school runs, local shops and access to the Motorways. As soon as there is an incident on the M25, M1, A1, or A414, which is a regular occurrence, Harper Lane becomes seriously congested. Any further increase in freight lorries will make this busy road an almost impossible alternative.

4.0 Rail Commuter Disruption.

4.1 There would be an adverse impact upon the commuter and leisure train services upon which a high proportion of residents rely. The tracks / infrastructure would be used much more intensively if the proposed development goes ahead, leading to greater likelihood of delays and disruptions. There would inevitably be disruption during construction as well as operation. The reduced reliability of the rail services may in itself lead to increased traffic on the roads as alternative modes of transport are sought.

5.0 Light and Noise Pollution.

5.1 Due to the close proximity of the proposed Terminal to Napsbury Park, the light pollution at night and the noise would be very intrusive. We fear much noise will impact on residents through the underpass opening in the embankment where the trains will enter and exit the site. We are particularly concerned about the lorry and forklift reversing "beepers".

6.0 Peaceful Location.

6.1 The proposed development would destroy a section of precious Green Belt area. Residents chose Napsbury Park to relocate / retire into this sustainable development due to its rural outlook and community way of life. They did not wish their children to be brought up on an industrial estate or in the city centre, they have sought a quieter and cleaner environment. The proposed development would reverse the benefit of having relocated.



7.0 Property Blight.

7.1 The proposed development would lead towards a merging of villages, industrialise the area and lower house prices. Many people would relocate out. The Napsbury Park area would become a much “poorer” place, in more ways than one.

Malcolm Mark
Residents Association Committee Member
Signed on behalf of the residents of Napsbury Park