

18/1372/CAP18

Application for Prior Approval under Part 18 for construction of new gated east side stairway from Mill Road to provide access to train drivers walkway, including alterations to arches 5 and 6 to facilitate new sidings, walkway and passive provision for Chisholm Trail.
Mill Road Bridge, Mill Road, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire

I OBJECT to this application on the following grounds.

- 1) The proposal for complete closure to all traffic throughout the period of the works.
- 2) The failure to provide a temporary foot/cycle bridge giving direct access from the Romsey ward to the east of the railway bridge to the Petersfield ward to the west.
- 3) The failure to make provision for bus services along Mill Road in the Romsey ward to the east of the railway bridge and in the Petersfield ward to the west.
- 4) The failure to include the need to widen the footway over the two arches to be modified.

I expand upon my objections below.

- 1) The proposal for complete closure to all traffic throughout the period of the works.

When, in the last millennium, the main span was replaced for installation of overhead electrified line equipment over the four main running lines, the work was undertaken in such a manner that the bridge remained open on either the north or the south side. Alternate flows of traffic, controlled by lights, enabled the bridge to remain open.

Closure to all vehicles would have a severe impact on deliveries to traders on either side of the bridge.

Closure will also disrupt an essential bus route – numbered citi2, operated by Stagecoach East – linking the Romsey ward to the east of the railway bridge to the city centre and beyond and linking the Petersfield ward to the west to Addenbrooke's hospital and the growing biomedical campus.

I submit that the application should be rejected unless either:

- i) alternate north and south closures are substituted for complete vehicular closure; or
- ii) a sound case on the grounds of engineering and public safety (not cost) is proven by the applicants to justify full closure to motor traffic.

In the latter case, please refer to my objections 2) and 3)

- 2) The failure to provide a temporary foot/cycle bridge giving direct access from Romsey ward to the east of the railway bridge to the Petersfield ward to the west.

In the case that 1) ii) above is proven, the applicants should be obliged to ensure direct pedestrian and cycle access at all times from the Romsey ward to the east of the railway bridge to the Petersfield ward to the west. Failure to do so would impact severely on the viability of the independent traders for which Mill Road, Cambridge, is justifiably famous, and of which the community is justifiably proud. The greatest volume of sales from Mill Road's shops is to customers who arrive on foot or by pedal-cycle.

A diversionary route for foot and pedal-cycle traffic via Devonshire Road, Carter Cycle Bridge, Rustat Road, Charles Street and onwards via Argyle Street, Stockwell Street or Cockburn Street would be completely unacceptable.

Such a lengthened route would have a particularly strong adverse impact on customers of Mill Road Butcher, and three specialist food stores: Cho Mee, al-Amin and Seoul Plaza in the Petersfield ward.

It would also impact adversely on a considerable number of independent restaurants, cafés and licensed public-houses in the Romsey ward to the east of the railway bridge and the Petersfield ward to the west, which would cease to be within easy walking distance of many or there customers.

I submit that the application should be rejected unless 1) i) above is agreed or 1) ii) above is proven and a temporary foot/cycle bridge, giving direct access from the Romsey ward to the east of the railway bridge to the Petersfield ward to the west, is provided for the duration of the proposed works.

3) The failure to make provision for bus services along Mill Road in the Romsey ward to the east of the railway bridge and the Petersfield ward to the west.

In the case that 1) ii) above is proven, the applicants should be obliged to make alternative provision for bus services in the Romsey ward to the east of the railway bridge and the Petersfield ward to the west.

An obligation should be imposed upon the applicants to arrange for the provision of direct substitute service from Mill Road Broadway in the Romsey ward, to the east of the railway, to Addenbrooke's hospital and the growing biomedical campus.

An obligation should also be imposed upon the applicants to arrange for the provision of a direct substitute service to the city centre and beyond from St Barnabas Road in the Petersfield ward to the west of the railway.

It should be a condition that any additional costs incurred by Stagecoach East, who operate the citi2 bus service, should be defrayed by the applicants.

I submit that the application should be rejected unless 1) i) above is agreed or 1) ii) above is proven and the applicants agree to make provision of acceptable alternative bus services for the duration of the proposed works.

4) The failure to include the need to widen the footway over the two arches to be modified.

When the main span was replaced for installation of overhead electrified line equipment over the four main running lines, the footway was widened by a little over 2m to allow for future changes on the approaches.

The footway width over the approach arches is only 1.5m, which is extremely substandard for such a busy foot route. Over a significant length under the ownership of Network Rail it would not be possible for two child-buggies to pass one another, nor to pass a wheelchair or mobility scooter user.

Given the extensive works, I submit that the application should be rejected unless it includes footway widening within the scope of the proposed works.