

HS2 Design Refinement Consultation
Response by Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society

This response, consisting of two pages, is made on behalf of:
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The Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society, founded in 1847, is one of the oldest in the country and is the senior body in the county of Buckinghamshire in archaeology, architecture and local history. We have over 400 members representing the archaeological and historical community across the county. We are not anti-HS2 in principle but are concerned to protect Buckinghamshire's historic environment and wish to ensure that the full impact of HS2 is understood before the Proposed Scheme is given final Parliamentary approval. To this end we have an active project researching the likely impact of HS2 on various heritage sites and buildings in Buckinghamshire. Our reports on the following places have been deposited in the Historic Environment Record, supplied to HS2 Ltd's archaeologists and published on our website http://www.bucksas.org.uk/hbgprojects/2011_1.html

Twyford:

Chetwode

Potter Row, Great Missenden

Road Farm Barn, Wendover Dean

Doddershall

We have also published a pamphlet on **Stoke Mandeville's deserted village** which has been widely distributed, including to HS2 Limited and its archaeologists. Our report on **Doddershall Lodge**, due to be demolished as part of the Proposed Scheme, is in preparation.

We have had two "bilateral" meetings with HS2 Limited's archaeological consultants and have attended meetings of the various HS2 Community Forums for the county. We have responded to all the public consultations on HS2 including that on the Scoping and Methodology of the Environmental Statement.

Our response to this consultation is as follows:

Heathrow Junctions

We find the information given in the consultation document and accompanying maps unclear so are not sure what is proposed. We note that the mapping is inconsistent with one map referring to Durdent Court. The current name of that building is De Vere Venues Denham Grove. The hotel's website mentions its tranquil parkland. The proposed refinement will only exacerbate the harmful impact on this rural, area and historic Tilehouse Lane. Korda Lake has been mislabelled "Korda". The famous film producer/director Sir Alexander Korda lived at the Fisheries, a house in this area since demolished. This reflects the importance of the film industry to the history of this area, something of which HS2 Ltd appears to be unaware.

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Colne Valley viaduct

We welcome this design refinement insofar as it takes the viaduct a little farther away from the highly significant heritage assets at The Savay. However we believe the magnitude of the impact on their setting remains high and the heritage significance of assets at the Savay has not been fully understood.

Maintenance Loop near Stoke Mandeville

The January 2012 route refinements brought the line farther south so that it passes through the highly significant heritage assets associated with the deserted village at Stoke Mandeville. We have published a booklet on this site which has been supplied to HS2 Ltd and its archaeological contractors.

The destruction of the remains of the old church and its graveyard will require the exhumation of large numbers of human remains (we estimate that there may have been as many as 3,900 burials in the churchyard over the period of 650 years). Because of the high heritage significance of the site mitigation measures will include extensive, and expensive, archaeological investigations and, presumably, the reburial of human remains in an alternative burial ground.

Had there been a consultation on the January 2012 changes we would have objected strongly to them. The introduction of the maintenance loops as now proposed will clearly extend the area which will be permanently destroyed. It will introduce an industrial character to this tranquil rural spot and increase the harmful impact on the setting of the Grade II* listed Stoke House.

Quite apart from its heritage significance the site is a community asset; a nature reserve managed for the benefit of the community by the parish council and a popular walking route. There are bound to be local people whose ancestors' remains would have to be exhumed and we are not at all sure that HS2 Ltd has grasped the technical and cost implications arising from the archaeological challenges – with associated lengthy and expensive investigations – or the potential for impacts on the community.

Calvert Infrastructure Maintenance Depot

We lament the loss of a Grade II listed building as a result of the proposed change, especially since it was built as an estate farmhouse for the Verney family. It may already be “at risk” because of its proximity to the IMD. We expect HS2 Ltd to consider the feasibility of moving the building and a minimum of a comprehensive analytical record (English Heritage level 4) record to be made before any dismantling or demolition.