

Calvert, Steeple Claydon, Twyford and Chetwode

CHETWODE HISTORIC LANDSCAPE

HS2 references: Area CFA13 - Unique ID: CAL127

Assessment:

The Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment Tables state that 'Although the proposed scheme will extend through the historic landscape component, it will follow the course of a disused railway line. The landscape will be coherent and intelligible and the key elements of the medieval buildings and earthworks will not be affected.'

The construction impact is described as medium adverse and the final operation impact as neutral.

Our Concern:

We do not understand these conclusions. The line of the HS2 track does not coincide with the old railway track, but runs from a distance of 250 metres to the north-west, diminishing to 50 metres and nearer to the village of Chetwode.

The old rail track was at the bottom of a cutting. The HS2 track, though designed to be in a cutting, will have a substantial bund (a protective earth bank) between the track and the village. Beyond the bund it is intended that there will be a series of temporary material stockpiles during the construction phase.

The old railway cutting is approximately 600 metres from Chetwode Priory Church. The edge of these proposed bunds is only 300 metres away from the Priory, and will stand above the level of the arable fields by several metres. We believe therefore that this will inevitably result in a substantial difference in visual impact, as well as noise impact (subject to mitigation by bunding).

Conclusion:

Because the stated evidence is incorrect, it follows that the ES Impact Assessment is also incorrect – and that engineering and mitigation plans based on that assessment are inadequate. The evidence at Chetwode should be re-examined, the HS2 Impact Assessment appropriately re-assessed, and engineering and mitigation plans altered to give this historic landscape greater protection.