

High Speed 2 and the Historic Environment of Buckinghamshire: An Initial Appraisal of Optimised Preferred Route 3

Introduction

This report provides a brief summary of the possible effects of the HS2 Optimised Route 3 (published December 2010) on the historic environment of Buckinghamshire; including the public enjoyment of the county's heritage. It is intended to draw attention to historic sites which may be affected by HS2, and issues of particular concern. The report has been prepared from information held on the Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Record and the results of a local historic environment workshop held on 24th November 2010.

Note: This is only an interim appraisal not a definitive statement of Buckinghamshire County Council's views on historic environment impacts.

The Historic Environment in National Planning Policy

A 'heritage asset' is defined in national planning policy (PPS5) as: 'A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape positively identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions'. A heritage asset may be of archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic interest. PPS5 says that the effect of development on any heritage asset, or its setting, is a material planning consideration. Destruction or substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset should be 'exceptional'; or 'wholly exceptional' for scheduled monuments or grade I or II* buildings or landscapes.

Historic features and landscape also make a significant contribution to the special character of the Chiltern Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which is protected through national Planning Policy Statement 7 (Sustainable Development in Rural Areas).

The environmental impact of a major development such as HS2 must be assessed by the scheme's promoter (HS2 Ltd) by means of an Environmental Impact Assessment. The effects of the scheme on cultural heritage must be considered alongside landscape, the natural environment and other environmental factors. As part of the EIA process, a comprehensive survey would be expected to provide sufficient information on known sites and to identify previously unrecognised historic sites and features – this is particularly significant for buried archaeological remains for which experience suggests that such 'evaluation' will discover a large number of previously unknown sites.

Effects of HS2 on the Historic Environment

A wide range of historic environment impacts can be anticipated, for example:




- direct physical destruction/harm to historic buildings, landscapes and sites during the construction phase (including temporary construction compounds, ancillary works and landscaping schemes etc);
- harmful noise or visual intrusion on the setting (surroundings) of heritage assets permanently affecting the experience of place;
- Loss of historic character through severance of historic landscape patterns (e.g. historic parks or farms) or linear features such as ancient lanes or extensive new landscaping and;
- indirect physical harm from factors such as vibration to nearby historic buildings or alteration of the water table affecting historic water features, trees or some archaeological sites.

Numbers of Heritage Assets recorded in the HS2 Corridor in Buckinghamshire

		On HS2 line (within 50m of the centre-line)	Total within 1km of HS2 centre-line
Designated heritage assets	Scheduled monuments	1 (Grim's Ditch)	8
	Listed buildings (grade I or II*)	0	37
	Listed buildings (grade II)	7 (Barns & Outhouses at Hyde Farm; Glebe House, Hartwell; 5 others under tunnels)	553
	Registered historic parks	2 (Hartwell & Shardloes)	6
	Conservation areas	1 (Hartwell)	15
Undesignated heritage assets	Archaeological notification sites (denote areas of known interest)	25	141
	Unlisted historic buildings	Not known	Not known
	Significant historic landscape types	Ancient woodland – 7 Orchard - 3 Historic meadow – 12 Historic settlement – 8 Historic parkland – 2 Pre-18 th century fields – 53 18 th /19 th century fields - 43	Not quantified
	All Historic Environment Records	118	2568

Examples of Heritage Impacts in Buckinghamshire

Rapid appraisal of the preferred route has identified many potentially significant impacts:

South → North	<p><u>Turweston</u>: HS2 in cutting 200m+ from village conservation area and listed buildings.</p>	IMAGES to ADD
	<p><u>Chetwode</u>: HS2 in cutting 75m from grade II listed house and 300m from grade I medieval church. Setting of conservation area, medieval moats and site of priory affected.</p>	
	<p><u>Twyford</u>: HS2 on embankment c 125m north of the grade I listed St.Mary's medieval parish church and 80m from the grade II medieval vicarage would affect the setting of these buildings through noise and visual intrusion. Adjacent archaeological remains of the village and ridge and furrow cultivation at risk.</p>	
	<p><u>Upper Bernwood</u>: a remote and locally distinctive landscape south of Claydon House, formerly part of medieval Bernwood Forest. Ancient woodland, historic field patterns, lanes and a decoy pond reflect this past land use. The woodlands are cut through by rides focused on Claydon House to the north. HS2 follows the existing railway but noise and visual intrusion may be significant.</p>	IMAGE to ADD
	<p><u>Waddesdon</u>: HS2 on embankment 350m+ from registered park. Would affect views from the village conservation area, park and grade I listed country house. Waddesdon House is a National Trust property which received 348,000 visitors in 2009-10.</p>	IMAGES to ADD
	<p><u>Fleet Marston</u>: HS2 cuts through Roman Akeman Street beside the largest Roman settlement in the modern county. Area of high archaeological potential.</p>	
	<p><u>Hartwell</u>: major loss and severance of historic parkland where HS2 cuts through Hartwell grade II* historic park, 370m from Hartwell House (grade I). Significant visual impact likely from embankment and noise intrusion likely. Hartwell House is early 17th century in origin and set within an 18th century landscape park which replaced an earlier formal garden. Today Hartwell House is owned by the National Trust and run as a high-class hotel. Parts of the outer park are used as a golf course. Medieval archaeological remains</p>	IMAGES to ADD

	<p>preserved within the park may be destroyed.</p> <p>The grade II listed 19th century Glebe House just south of the park would lie within 20m of the cutting. Iron Age and Roman finds from this area too.</p>	
	<p><u>Old Stoke Mandeville:</u> HS2 would pass on a viaduct within 40m of the ruined medieval church of St. Mary having a significant impact on its setting and probably affecting associated archaeological remains of the deserted village</p>	IMAGES to ADD
	<p><u>Grims Ditch, The Lea:</u> HS2 would destroy a 90m long section of Grims Ditch, a scheduled prehistoric boundary bank.</p>	IMAGES to ADD
	<p><u>East of Great Missenden:</u> HS2 would pass in cutting through the historic landscape of the Chilterns AONB severing field patterns, ancient woodland and lanes. The setting of scheduled monuments, listed buildings and Great Missenden Park could be harmed</p>	IMAGES to ADD
	<p><u>Hyde End:</u> HS2 cuts through the grade II listed Hyde Farm and barns. Hyde Farm is a 16th century timber-framed house, the barns of 18th/19th century date. The barns would be destroyed by the cutting and the farmhouse left within 25m of the cutting edge – a major impact on its setting and viability.</p> <p>Nearby prehistoric and medieval pottery and flint scatters indicate earlier settlement.</p>	IMAGES to ADD
	<p><u>Shardloes Park:</u> HS2 propose a 1.3 km long and up to 110m wide cutting through the northern part of this grade II* historic park to the north of the A413. Shardloes in an 18th century landscape park set around a grade I listed 18th century country house.</p>	IMAGES to ADD
	<p><u>Old Amersham:</u> cutting and tunnel entrance 300m north of the town could affect the setting of the town's conservation area, particularly noise.</p> <p>Archaeological remains associated with a Roman villa in the valley between Old Amersham and Shardloes may also be affected.</p>	IMAGES to ADD
	<p><u>Denham, Savay Farm:</u> HS2 viaduct 260m from grade I listed medieval manor house.</p>	

Further Information

An Illustrated History of Early Buckinghamshire (Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society, 2010) – recent popular summary of the county's medieval and earlier archaeology can be purchased from the society
<http://www.bucksas.org.uk/publications.html>

Baseline Environment Assessment for High Speed Rail 2: 'Preferred route' 3 through Buckinghamshire (BCC, 2010)
http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/assets/content/bcc/docs/transport/HS2_Route_3.pdf

Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Historic Landscape Characterisation (BCC, 2006)
http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/bcc/archaeology/Buckinghamshires_Historic_Landscape_Characterisation.page?

The Buildings of England. Buckinghamshire. (Pevsner and Williamson, 1994)

The Making of the Chilterns Landscape. Chilterns Historic Landscape Characterisation Project. (BCC, Chiltern Conservation Board and English Heritage, 2010) – available from the Chiltern Conservation Board.

Unlocking Buckinghamshire's Past – Buckinghamshire County Council's online Historic Environment Record.
<https://ubp.buckscc.gov.uk/>