



IN PARLIAMENT  
HOUSE OF COMMONS  
SESSION 2005-6

CROSSRAIL BILL

PETITION

Against – on Merits – Praying to be heard by Counsel, &c.

To the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in Parliament assembled.

THE HUMBLE PETITION of BARBARA WHEELER and TONY WHEELER.

SHEWETH as follows:-

1. A Bill (hereinafter referred to as “the Bill”) has been introduced and is now pending in your honourable House entitled “A Bill to make provision for a railway transport system running from Maidenhead, in the County of Berkshire, and Heathrow Airport, in the London Borough of Hillingdon, through central London to Shenfield, in the County of Essex, and Abbey Wood, in the London Borough of Greenwich; and for connected purposes.”
2. The Bill is promoted by the Secretary of State for Transport (hereinafter called “the Promoter”).
3. Your Petitioners are the owners of a property at 1 Baldock Street, Bow, E3. The house lies directly above the proposed westbound tunnel of the Crossrail route. The tunnel traverses the house and garden from NNE corner to SSW corner at a depth of only 11 metres below ground level.
4. Your Petitioners and their rights, interests and property are injuriously affected by the Bill, to which your Petitioners object for reasons amongst others, hereinafter appearing.
5. The public consultation has been completely inadequate. The first notification your Petitioners had of being directly affected was a letter from the Promoter’s agents conducting land-referencing enquiries. This was received on 23/10/2004. The public consultation ended four days later on 27/10/2004, giving your Petitioners no time to find out how they would be affected, as this was not stated in the letter, or respond before the consultation deadline.
6. Requests for information from the Promoter have been either ignored or inadequately dealt with. Letters from your Petitioners asking specific questions have been answered with stock phrases, which have not addressed any of the questions, leaving your Petitioners to turn to their own research and Local Authority departments for information.
7. Public Information Day information was unsatisfactory. Staff representing the Promoter seemed only briefed to present a glossy image. There was little information of value to the

Petitioners' circumstances. Literature omitted important details. Petitioners were told they had come to the wrong information centre. The same was said at the alternative information centre.

8. Your Petitioners object to the Promoter authorising compulsory acquisition of the subsoil and undersurface of your Petitioners' property.
9. Your Petitioners consider the depth from ground level to the tunnel beneath your Petitioners' property to be too shallow. The foundations of the house, built 1897, are not substantial enough to withstand settlement or vibration from the excavation or operation of the railway. Settlement might also be exacerbated by planned sub-surface water extraction in the vicinity. The Promoters have admitted, "your property may potentially experience moderate damage which is above Crossrail's acceptable damage threshold". Your Petitioners regard this as proof that the plans were flawed from the design stage.
10. The Promoter's facts and figures are inconsistent. The Environmental Statement says the westbound tunnel will be constructed at a depth of approximately 19 metres below the Blackwall Tunnel Approach Road. The same tunnel will be approximately 11 metres below your Petitioners' property. The tunnel is at ground level at Pudding Mill Lane Portal and the Blackwall Tunnel Approach Road lies between the Portal and your Petitioners' house. The tunnel is therefore at an incline which makes it impossible for the tunnel to be deeper beneath the road than the house.
11. Your Petitioners worry that the shallow depth of the ground beneath your Petitioners' house exposes us to the risk of terrorism, explosions and fire. Tunnelling will be at an advanced stage when the London Olympic Games will turn the eyes of the world to our locality in 2012. An underground network of tunnels beneath the Olympic site and a major arterial road would be a prime target for terrorist attention. Your Petitioners have read nothing to reassure them that enough consideration has been given to construction or security in the event of such a possibility.
12. Your Petitioners believe that the Promoters, in carrying out pre-construction defect surveys, seek to protect their own interests rather than those of the people who are affected. The surveys, being commissioned by the Promoters, raise questions about their independence.
13. Your Petitioners object to having only 12 months to claim for defects to property after the tunnel begins operation. This is too short a time for defects to become apparent. If subsidence occurs after this time, your Petitioners may then have trouble getting house insurance to cover the costs of remedial work, along with associated extra costs, which would have to be borne by your Petitioners.
14. Your Petitioners and other property owners are adversely affected by the loss of property value as a result of the construction, or prospect of construction of Crossrail. Local houses are more difficult to sell and potential buyers use the Promoter's plans as a bargaining tool to reduce prices. Your Petitioners will have extreme difficulty in selling their property and face a proportionally greater loss of value with a tunnel running only 11 metres below the house.

15. The Promoters' Policy for the Purchase of Property in Cases of Hardship is unfair. The owners of blighted property are expected, amongst other constraints, to accept an offer of at least 15% less than the market value of their property.
16. Your Petitioners are concerned about the prospect of having to live with approximately 32 dBLA max,s of noise within our home when the railway is running. A Technical Report states that noise levels "may cause some complaints". Your Petitioners already live with 77dB of noise from the adjoining A12 Blackwall Tunnel Approach Road, and resent having to endure noise inside as well as outside our home.
17. Your Petitioners have been told that we should not be able to feel vibration from the operation of the railway, yet a Technical Report states we may be "between the BS6472 categories "low probability of adverse comment" and "adverse comment possible", i.e. there is not likely to be a total absence of adverse comment".
18. Your Petitioners object to the working hours of construction, the length, size and number of carriages, the frequency of the trains and the speeds at which they travel. All will have an impact on settlement, noise and vibration.
19. Your Petitioners object to the lengthy hours of operation of the railway. With passenger services and the movement of trains in the early hours of the morning to reach stabling facilities, the tracks will be in use from 5am to 1.15am. This gives the ground, house-structure and us respite from noise, vibration and electromagnetic activity for less than 4 hours a day.
20. Other elements in the Promoters' scheme will affect the Petitioners' quality of life. There are substantial enabling works including sewer diversions and a receptor shaft for a Tunnel Boring Machine at the Wick Lane worksite and widening of the existing Great Eastern Railway viaduct, all of which occur very close to your Petitioners' property.
21. The Wick Lane worksite has works scheduled to take up to 16 months. Daytime and night time work is planned and pumps for dewatering will operate continuously, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. A Technical Report states, "works would give rise to significant daytime impacts" for nearby properties. These works will take lorry access and egress directly from the A12. Your Petitioners are concerned that this may mean the creation of a new slip road very close to your Petitioners' property.
22. Your Petitioners doubt that noise mitigation planned for residential properties close to worksites at Wick Lane and Baldock Street will be effective, from previous experience of inadequate sound proofing when test bores were carried out in November and December 2004.
23. Your Petitioners would object to the creation of newly created crossovers on the A12 for lorry movements to and from the Baldock Street worksite if it necessitated the removal of mature conifer trees. Your Petitioners hope that the area's conservation status would prevent this.
24. Your Petitioners do not feel adequately protected against the dust, dirt and pollution from the demolition and excavations at the large Pudding Mill Lane Portal works area and from

the dust generated from local worksites. Added to this would be dust from the works for the 2012 Olympic site.

25. Your Petitioners are not satisfied by reassurances that "whilst several "lost" rivers and sub-surface watercourses have been identified, none are likely to be present in the immediate vicinity of your property". In view of the ground collapse after tunnelling at Lavender Street, Stratford, in 2003, we feel particularly vulnerable with a tunnel so close to the surface, running the entire length of the house.

#### Conclusion

26. Your Petitioners believe that most of the aforementioned impacts could be minimised if the tunnel portal was at Stratford. Pudding Mill Lane station could then be underground and the tunnels would lie much deeper beneath residential properties and small businesses, thus avoiding such personal disadvantage. The Promoter's budget priorities lead us and our local community to feel the casualties of a cheap option.
27. Whilst your Petitioners do not disagree that the Promoter's scheme will benefit London and beyond, we who are adversely affected do not derive benefit. Your Petitioners and neighbourhood will continue to use our existing local London Underground and DLR stations after the opening of Crossrail as no Crossrail station will be within walking distance.
28. The only discernable compensation appears to be for provisional and time-limited cases of settlement or conditional house purchase for those people put into "hardship" by the Promoter. No compensation is available for the very real stress and disruption caused to the lives of people caught up in this scheme. Nothing can compensate for the time, effort and expense your Petitioners have been forced into by having to read, research, visit libraries, information centres, local authority offices, make phone calls, photocopies, write letters, arrange meetings, and be deprived of leisure time in order to have to protect our own interests because we do not have confidence in the Promoter's intention to protect it for us.

YOUR PETITIONERS therefore humbly pray your Honourable House that the Bill may not be allowed to pass into law as it now stands and that they may be heard by their Counsel, Agents and witnesses in support of the allegations of this Petition against so much of the Bill as affects the property rights and interests of your Petitioners and in support of such other clauses and provisions as may be necessary or expedient for their protection, or that such other relief may be given to your Petitioner in the premises as your Honourable House shall deem meet.