



**T.S. Renown**

**Rickmansworth, Watford and District Unit**

Registered Charity No.282817

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**Management:**

**Chairman Fabian Hiscock**

**Contact for Unit:**

**SubLt (SCC) Graeme Cawsey RNR**

## **CROXLEY RAIL LINK PUBLIC INQUIRY –**

### **STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE FROM RICKMANSWORTH & WATFORD DISTRICT SEA CADET UNIT**

#### **Background**

The Sea Cadet unit TS RENOWN is a youth-activities organisation for young people aged between 12 and 18, under the umbrella of the charity The Marine Society and Sea Cadets. The unit meets on Tuesday and Thursday evenings, and some weekends, through the year, and takes children from Rickmansworth, Watford, Croxley Green and further afield.

The building is owned by the Unit, and is on land leased from Three Rivers District Council. It is used during the school day by a tenant, the pre-school group Morris Minors. The location of the building is crucial to the pre-school, which serves West Watford and Croxley Green; and the revenue from its use is essential to the financial security of the Sea Cadet unit.

#### **The issue**

The Croxley Rail Link viaduct will pass within feet of the building. Its construction will take place, quite literally, on its doorstep and on its approach. It will have significant adverse impact, both on the environment and by interference with the operation, on all the users of the Sea Cadet Unit building, both Morris Minors during the day and the Sea Cadets in the evening.

We are much concerned that our premises will be so affected that parents will opt not to use it for their pre-school children, and that the cadets (and their parents) will find it too unpleasant to continue.

We have looked closely at the potential impact of the Link both during its construction and in operation, and have raised our concerns with Mouchel, the Project developers. While some of our concerns have been addressed, three in particular remain.

#### **1 – Construction Phase - Reduction in parking in the approach to the unit**

The parking area in the approach is used heavily at the times of arrival and departure of children attending both Morris Minors Pre School and the Sea Cadets. Traffic movements peak daily during school term at 0845, 1230, 1330 and 1530 for Morris Minors and at 1930 and 2130 on every Tuesday and Thursday throughout the year for the Cadets. Restriction in parking will cause congestion at the entrance to the construction site, with risk of accident between cars and construction plant and a tail- back of traffic on the main road.

We believe there is a need for segregated entrances for construction traffic and for user of the Sea Cadet Unit so that the risk of accident and injury can be minimised.

## 2 – Construction Phase - Loss of Amenity and Facilities due to Noise and Vibration

During the construction phase, noise levels will be very high, particularly during piling operations. Although piling will be conducted using an auger, relevant studies show that we can expect noise levels similar to those using percussive piling. Piling will take place only a few yards from the perimeter fence of the Unit, and will affect activity both inside and outside the building.

- It is close to the outdoor area used by Morris Minors for play and by the Cadets for boating and other activities. This environment will become unpleasant for all, and probably frightening for very young children to the extent that outside play/activities are untenable.
- Although the building will no doubt abate the noise to some extent, there will still be alarming intrusion inside it, which will affect both staff (for whom it is a workplace) and children.

We believe measures should be taken to:

- a. Schedule high noise operations to avoid times of outside activities
- b. Put in place physical measures to baffle the noise.

## 3 – Operational Phase - Erosion of Amenity

The Sea Cadet Unit, although close to the main A412 road, is in an oasis of calm, surrounded by trees, park land and a canal. Despite being in a suburban location it is very quiet, and its environment is a major factor in its attractiveness as a place for pre-school and cadet activities.

Removal of trees adjacent to the Unit, the construction of a large viaduct and frequent train noise very close to our building will adversely affect the long term amenity of the Unit and its suitability for both pre-school and Sea Cadet users. We are seriously concerned that parents, both current and potential, will take their children elsewhere, so undermining the financial viability of Morris Minors which will in turn render the Sea Cadet Unit vulnerable to closure through lack of funds.

We reluctantly accept that little that can be done to alleviate this problem, given the size and proximity of the viaduct. It will remain a major and lasting factor for both organisations. The Project should, however, endeavour to mitigate the problem through generous planting of trees and by maximising the landscaping of the neighbouring open ground to restore a verdant and quiet environment and give the pre-school and Unit the best chance of continuing.