

PROOF OF EVIDENCE

Felixstowe Branch Line and Ipswich Yard Improvement CROFT LANE CROSSING

A Right of way that has been established, which is the case of the crossing of the rail line known as the Croft Lane Crossing, cannot be extinguished if it is needed for public use. This crossing is used even though it is not too easily accessible and as such should not be considered for closure.

If this crossing is closed there are no suitable alternatives to walk an gain access to this part of the area. It would also mean that there is a blind footpath from Stratton Hall Drift finishing at the railway. The through route to the C375 across the A14, although it is acknowledged that access is not easy, is usable with care. The alternatives of walking to the railway crossing opposite Walk Farm and down to Stratton Hall Drift as marked on the attached map is far more dangerous with no footway anywhere at all. The narrow road across the railway crossing leading to Stratton Hall Drift and the right angle bend where the footpath emerges has no pedestrian refuges and a relatively high volume of traffic especially in summer. Nacton village and Levington Marina are accessed along this road. Walking up to the Morston Hall Crossing again offers no footway or immediate access to the area served by the Croft Lane Crossing.

The visibility on this crossing is excellent both ways.

The speed of trains is not fast on this section and I cannot see that the speed will be increased even with the dualling. Indeed if trains MAY occasionally wait on this section as acknowledged by Andrew Cann then this is unlikely to interrupt the passage of pedestrians for long. This would be acceptable unless it is known by the various bodies that there will be trains regularly waiting at this section. I accept that trains are likely to increase in length and the last few wagons could block Croft Foot Crossing. Personal responsibility is acceptable if this indeed did happen on the odd occasion. The argument that pedestrians are sometimes tempted to cross the railway line in such instances by passing a standing train, and possibly step into the path of an oncoming train, is not valid. In my view it is far more dangerous every time I cross anywhere on the A14 and yet there are numerous crossing points that I can use without prejudice.

I accept that more freight on the rail system is preferable to it being carried on the road.

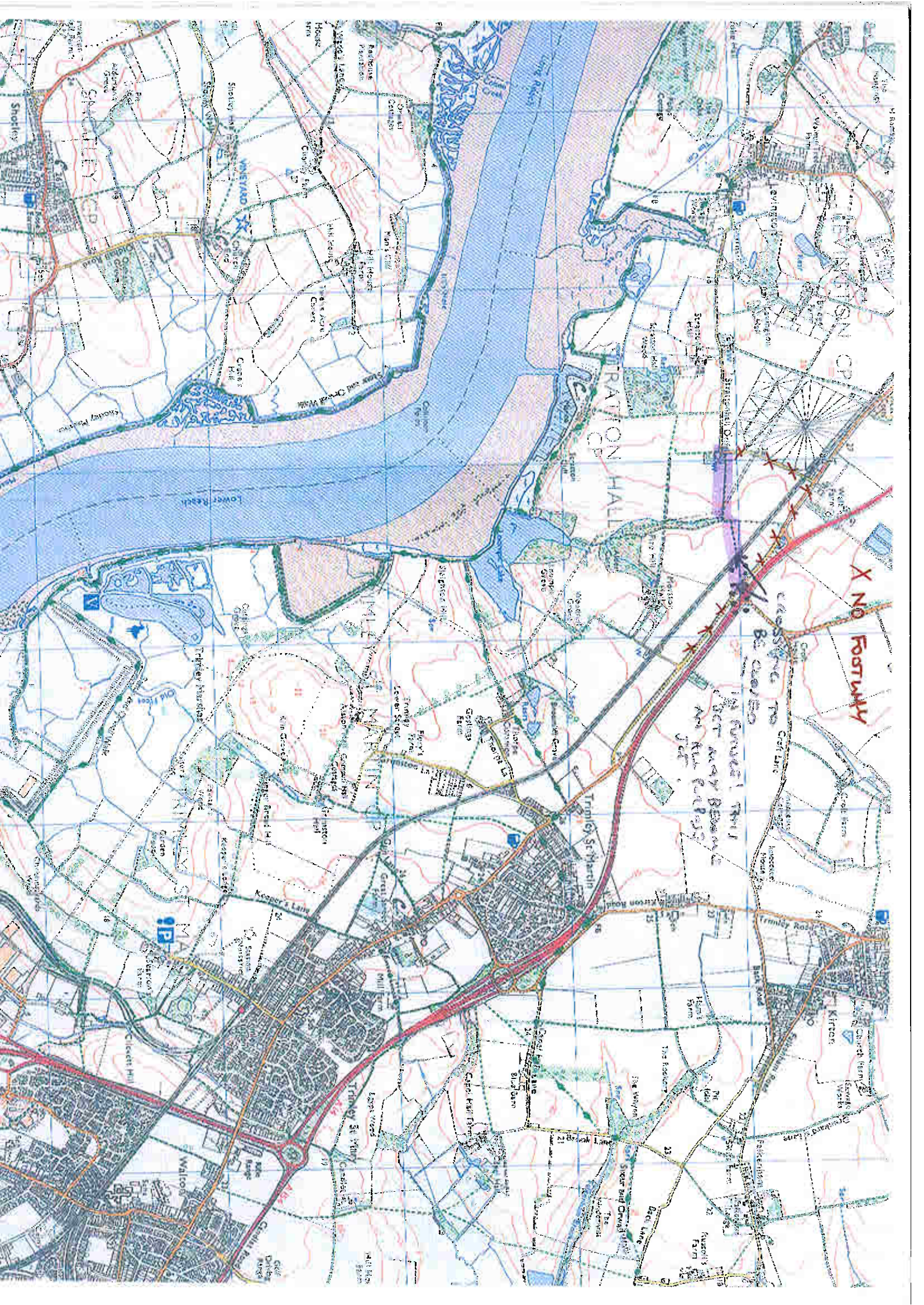
With current increases in container traffic it is entirely feasible that more traffic will be generated on the road even when dualling of the railway line is completed and as a consequence an increase in number and length of trains using the Felixstowe to Ipswich line.

In future the C357 junction with the A14 is likely to become a major junction with a spur road to the south leading to the new developments proposed by Trinity estates at Trimley St Martin and Trimley St Mary. This could be easily extended to serve new port developments. In this case this footpath will be even more important than it is today.

Temporary closure of footpaths is acceptable.

It is cheaper to leave the footpath open than to close it.

From
Peter L. Ling
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X NO FOOTWAY

GET AWAY BEHIND AN RAIL CUTTING GET

CROSSING TO GOV LINE

BE COVERED

STATION HALL

MILL WAINING CP

LEVENSTON CP

SMALLEY CP

ANNEVARD

Lower Reservoir

9P

WALTON

Trinity St Martin

Trinity St Mary

Kirtton

Church Farm

Church Farm

Church Farm

Church Farm

Church Farm



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6 November 2006

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Dear Mr Ling

The Felixstowe Branch Line and Ipswich Yard Transport and Works Act Order

I am writing to address the issues raised in your letter to the Secretary of State for Transport of 30th July 2006.

I note that you object to the proposed closure of Croft Foot Crossing. HPUK understands that the closure of Croft Foot Crossing may have an impact on the amenity of footpath users. For this reason, it has been thought necessary to avoid the closure of foot crossings on the Branch Line. However, in two cases the closure of footways is necessary in the interests of safety. I set out below a detailed explanation of why this closure is necessary.

As a result of the scheme to dual the Branch Line, a new signalling scheme will need to be implemented. Network Rail has undertaken considerable work to examine how the Branch Line would operate. As you will note in the Environmental Statement, it is not expected that trains will need to stand i.e. wait for a signal on the Branch Line as dualled. However, it is obviously not feasible to eliminate the possibility of trains having to stand at all. The preliminary signalling design has placed signals as far as possible from residential properties so, should trains be required to stop at signals during a "perturbation", the impact on residents and homes would be minimised.

A new signal will be placed in the vicinity of Croft Foot Crossing as a result of the new signalling scheme. With the development of longer trains, were a train made to stand at this signal, the last few wagons would be likely to block Croft Foot Crossing. Pedestrians are sometimes tempted to cross the railway line in such instances by passing a standing train. As the line will be dualled, there is a real risk that if a pedestrian should attempt to cross the line, he or she could step out into the path of an oncoming train. Therefore, the closure of this crossing is a matter of public safety. It is certainly not as a result of a cost-cutting exercise.

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