

Farleaze Farm, Pig Lane and the Personal Impact of Lime Down

My name is Jonathan Seymour-Williams. I live at [REDACTED] Farleaze is a listed farmhouse with listed buildings within its curtilage. It has been my home, my principal asset and centre of business for 30 years, and is now the centre of my retirement planning.

This statement concerns the specific effect of Lime Down on Farleaze and on me personally.

Farleaze lies at the centre of a special landscape. It is not simply a house within some field. It sits within a distinctive rural and equestrian setting, close to Badminton, adjoining the Fosse Way, and within a landscape whose value lies in its openness, history, tranquillity, farming pattern, routes, drainage and sporting character. insert photo

The holding lies in an area of about 70 acres within the wider triangle formed by the Fosse Way, the railway and Piglane. That area is clearly visible on the Lime Down plans. It is a natural meeting point of landscape, transport, drainage and land-use issues. It is therefore not peripheral to the scheme. It is one of the places where the practical consequences of the scheme are most sharply felt.

Before Lime Down arrived in March 2024, my farming assistant and I were working on a plan to reposition Farleaze for the next stage of my life. My [REDACTED] was about to be married from home and we were actively planning continuity of a wedding venue specific to a lighter weight Cotswold farmhouse and the three churches, Foxley, Alderton and Norton associated with this area. The plan was to move away from intensive farming and towards lower-impact rural, heritage, equestrian, recreational and retreat uses. That was the logical future for a listed farm in this setting. It would also have allowed me to reinvest capital, create a sustainable role for the next generation of management, and plan sensibly for retirement and inheritance.

Lime Down has stopped that plan.

The difficulty is not only whether the scheme is ultimately approved. The difficulty is the uncertainty created now. I cannot sell Farleaze with confidence. I cannot invest in it with confidence. I cannot commit funding to the listed buildings, drainage, woodland, screening, access or alternative rural uses while the future of the surrounding landscape remains unresolved.

At my stage of life, that uncertainty has a particular impact. Retirement planning requires certainty. A person cannot wait indefinitely while a principal asset is placed under the shadow of a major infrastructure scheme. I need to know now whether Farleaze is affected, not after the Examination, not after detailed design, and not after other landowners have arranged their own outcomes.

There is also an unfair divergence between landowners. Some neighbouring landowners may be able to use their fields for solar or associated agreements and may be compensated or otherwise accommodated. Other farming families and tenant farmers have had to reorganise their lives around the scheme, and in some cases their position has been addressed. I have not had that clarity. I remain in the middle, affected by the consequences of plans made around me, without knowing whether Farleaze is to be protected, compensated, bypassed or blighted.

That has a real economic cost. A listed house and farm cannot be separated from its setting. If that setting is industrialised, disrupted or left uncertain, the value and future use of the property are affected. The loss is not only physical occupation of land. It is loss of confidence, loss of opportunity, loss of marketability and loss of the ability to plan. This has a personal cost. Since March 2024 I have had to live with the possibility that the retirement plan I had formed for Farleaze may no longer be possible. My two children have been adversely impacted and their interest in the future frustrated. That affects resources, judgement, health and mental wellbeing. It is not reasonable to treat that as a minor or temporary inconvenience. For someone at [REDACTED], two years of uncertainty is itself a serious burden.

Farleaze should therefore be considered specifically. It is a listed home, a farm, a retirement asset, and a central holding within a sensitive rural and equestrian landscape. It should not be treated as an incidental neighbour or an edge case.

My request is simple.

If Farleaze and Pig lane are not to be affected by Lime Down, that should be stated clearly and secured now.

If Farleaze or Pig lane may be affected, that should also be stated clearly now, and the impact on the listed building, its setting, drainage, access, future use, marketability, retirement planning and mental health should be assessed properly before any powers are granted.

The arrival of Lime Down in March 2024 has already destroyed the certainty on which my plan for Farleaze depended.

That loss should be recognised as part of the real human and economic cost of the scheme.





