

Balls Farmhouse, a Grade II listed building, is located 100 meters from TB143 and has direct views of the pylons from three of its four outlooks. In a previous consultation response, my clients requested a modest shift of the line to the northern boundary of the field to reduce the impact on Balls Farmhouse.

National Grid has stated that this adjustment was not accepted because it would move the line closer to a properties on Lark's Lane (██████████) and properties on Chelmsford Road rather than passing through at an equidistance between properties.

The suggested change proposed in figure 2 maintains a similar crossing point at Lark's Lane. This adjustment does not alter the overall impact on ██████████ to the west but significantly improves the situation for Balls Farmhouse. Additionally, ██████████ has substantial mature planting and screening along its eastern boundary, whereas Balls Farmhouse has little to no screening on its western boundary. Also, Balls Farmhouse is a Grade II listed building, whereas ██████████ is not. Listed Buildings are buildings of special architectural or historic interest with legal protection, the weight attributed to these properties should be greater than those that are not listed. Therefore, being equidistant between properties is not always justified or fair where heritage impacts are involved. If a minor shift closer to ██████████ is required for the angles, this is acceptable, as the overall impact on ██████████ would remain unchanged.

The proposal also maintains similar crossing position at Chelmsford Road, therefore not changing the impact on these properties. The suggested movement would shift TB140 slightly further south, but this is a minimal adjustment. The pylon would remain in the same field with no increased impact on residential properties or other features. The line would then continue a similar route to TB138/139 as originally proposed, ensuring no additional impact.

This minor realignment would reduce the impact on the listed Balls Farmhouse while not increasing any other harmful impact.

1. North-Western Route

Rerouting north and west of Great Waltham, through the largely open arable land between Great Waltham and Pleshey, is a more suitable option. This alignment moves the pylons away from the densely populated residential areas of Great and Little Waltham, the conservation area and numerous listed properties, including my client's properties Langleys (Grade I), Chatham Hall (Grade II), and Balls Farmhouse (Grade II).

The Design Development Report states that this route is not being pursued due to the presence of the Wilderness Foundation charity. However, it seems disproportionate that a charity, without security of tenure and the potential to relocate should take precedence over permanent heritage assets and residential receptors such as Langleys and the surrounding villages.

While this alternative route may be longer, the Holford Rules confirm that the additional cost is justified to mitigate significant impacts.

Misleading information

In the Targeted Consultation Booklet Essex 8, the map illustrating the new route contains a misleading blue information box. It states that pylons TB135 and TB142 are being repositioned, whereas, in reality, all pylons between TB135 and TB142 are being relocated.

The Design Development Report April 2024 initially proposed low pylons, however, when the 2024 plan was released in July, my clients were informed that only high pylons could be used. Now, low pylons are being implemented, contradicting previous statements that this was not an option. This misinformation significantly influenced my client's previous consultation responses. The provision of unclear and contradictory information has made it difficult for my clients and other stakeholders to fully understand the situation and engage meaningfully in the consultation process.

Furthermore, no feedback has been received from the responses submitted in July 2024. There has not been a two-way dialogue and, as such, cannot be considered a proper consultation. If National Grid has reasoning for rejecting suggested changes, landowners should be informed so they can consider and respond accordingly to the new proposals.

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National Grid has used historic England to defend the route proposed but Historic England has yet to respond. Not showing a fair representation to any property with historical interest especially grade 1 and 2 building and parkland.