

U81

Proposal to Stop Up Public Right of Way



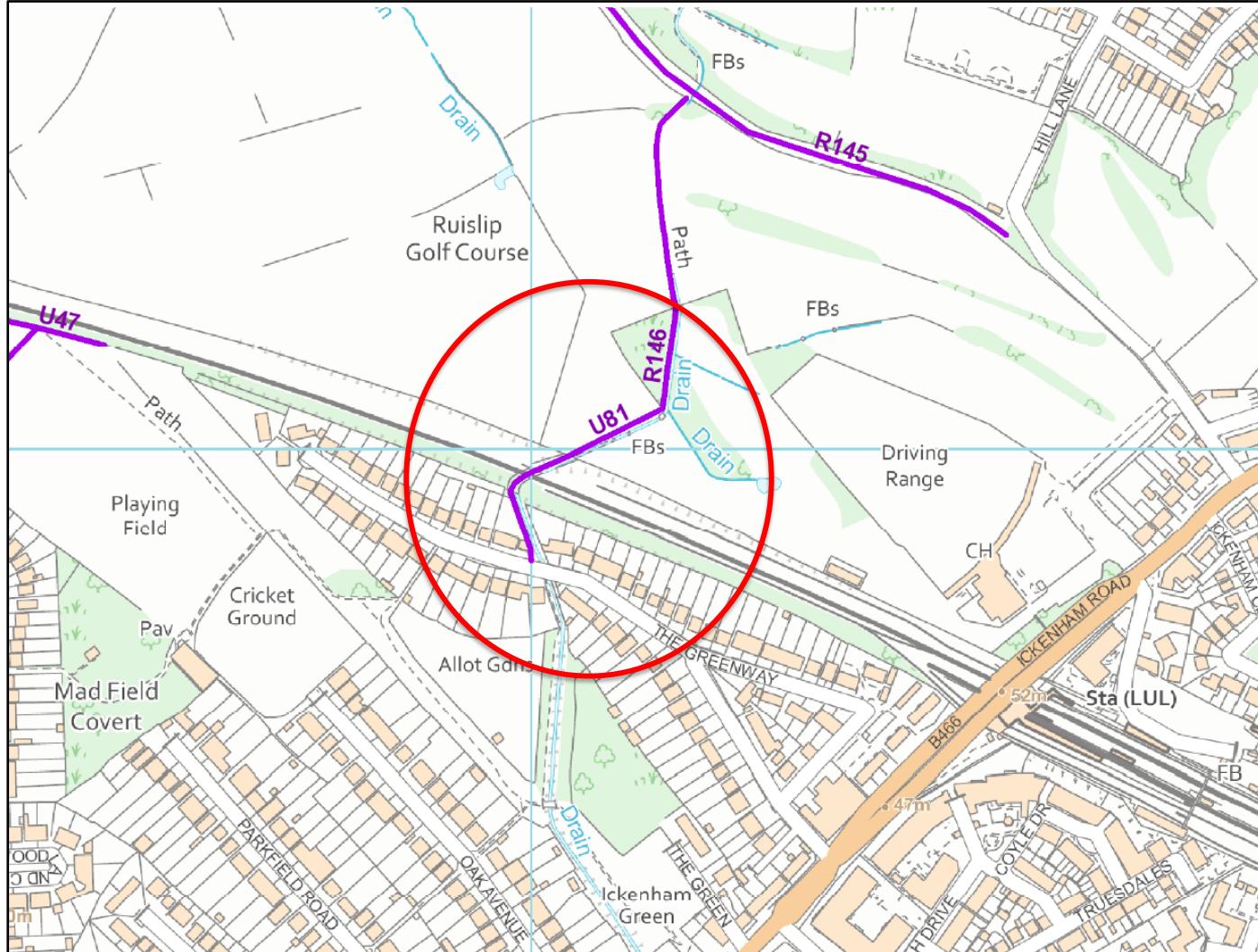
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Structure

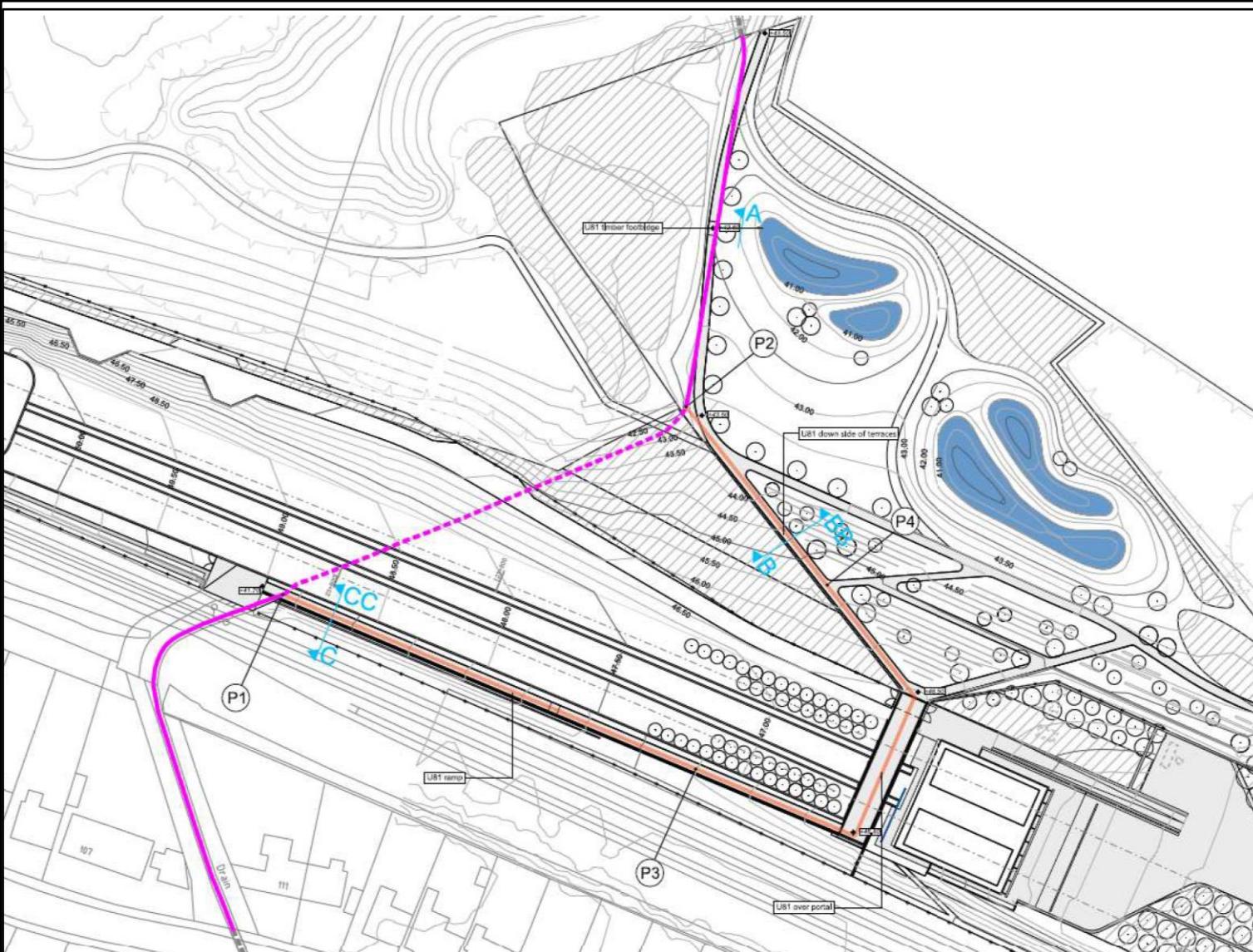
- Background
- Parliaments Position
- The problem of the current design
- Stopping up and wider proposals for betterment
 - Before HS2
 - After HS2





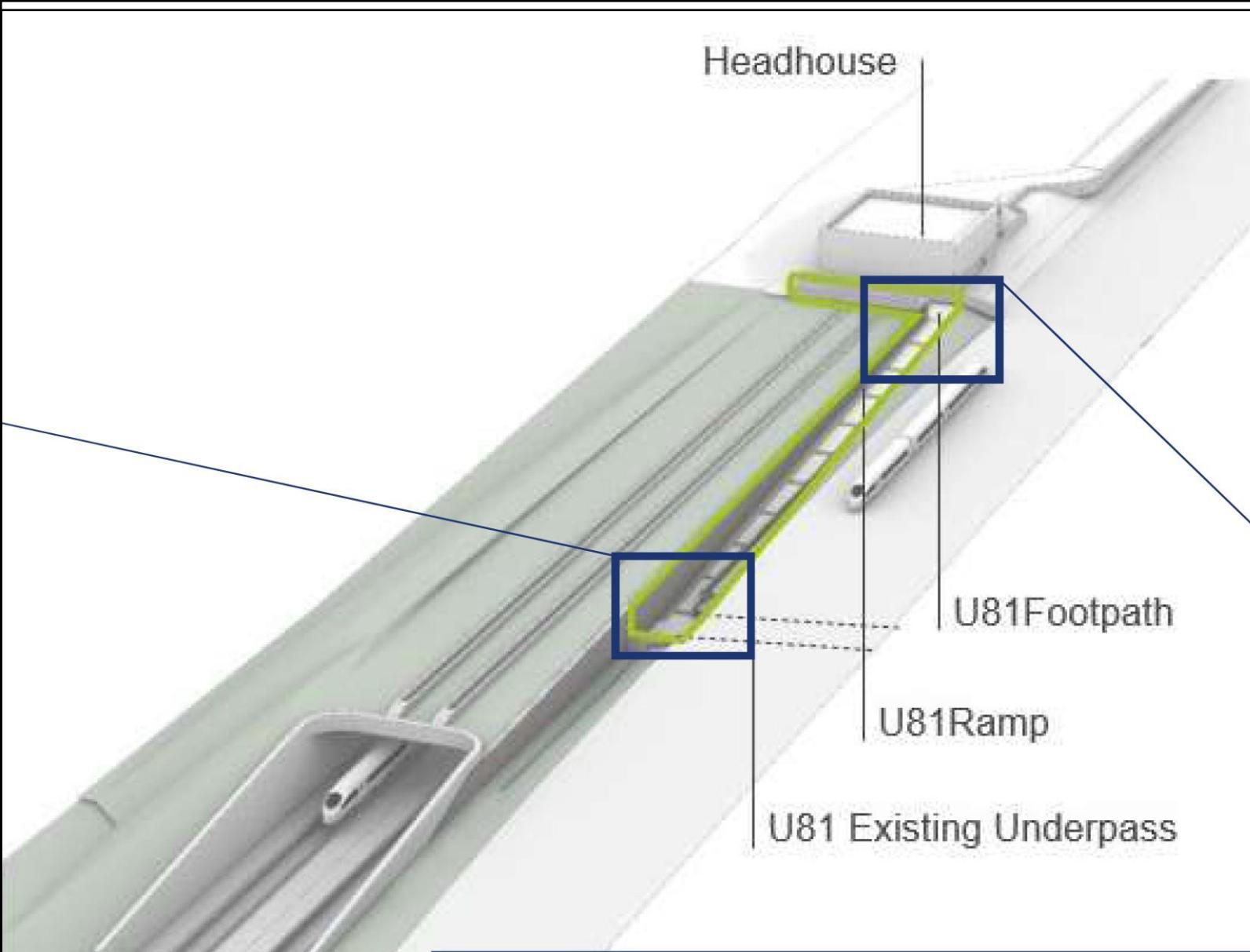
The current alignment of U81 provides a north/south pedestrian link that crosses the Chiltern Line Railway via a subway.

HS2 is routed alongside the Chiltern Line until midway between Harvil Road and Breakspear Road South. This means the new railway will dissect U81 requiring consideration of how to accommodate a new crossing of the public right of way.



The proposal for U81 to cross HS2 was agreed in principle by Parliament and is therefore part of the HS2 Act. However, during the Parliamentary discourse, there was a reliance on future design work to resolve issues raised by the Council, representatives from interested rambler groups, and the local residents.

The design that has subsequently emerged retains the existing sub optimal arrangement with the Chiltern Line underpass and introduces a new convoluted pathway to navigate the HS2 route. After the underpass there is a 70 degree turn (P1 on map) on to a ramped section that runs c150m in between the railways (P3) to a 90 degree turn over the top of the tunnel portal before a 45 degree turn on a slope back down on to the golf course (P2).



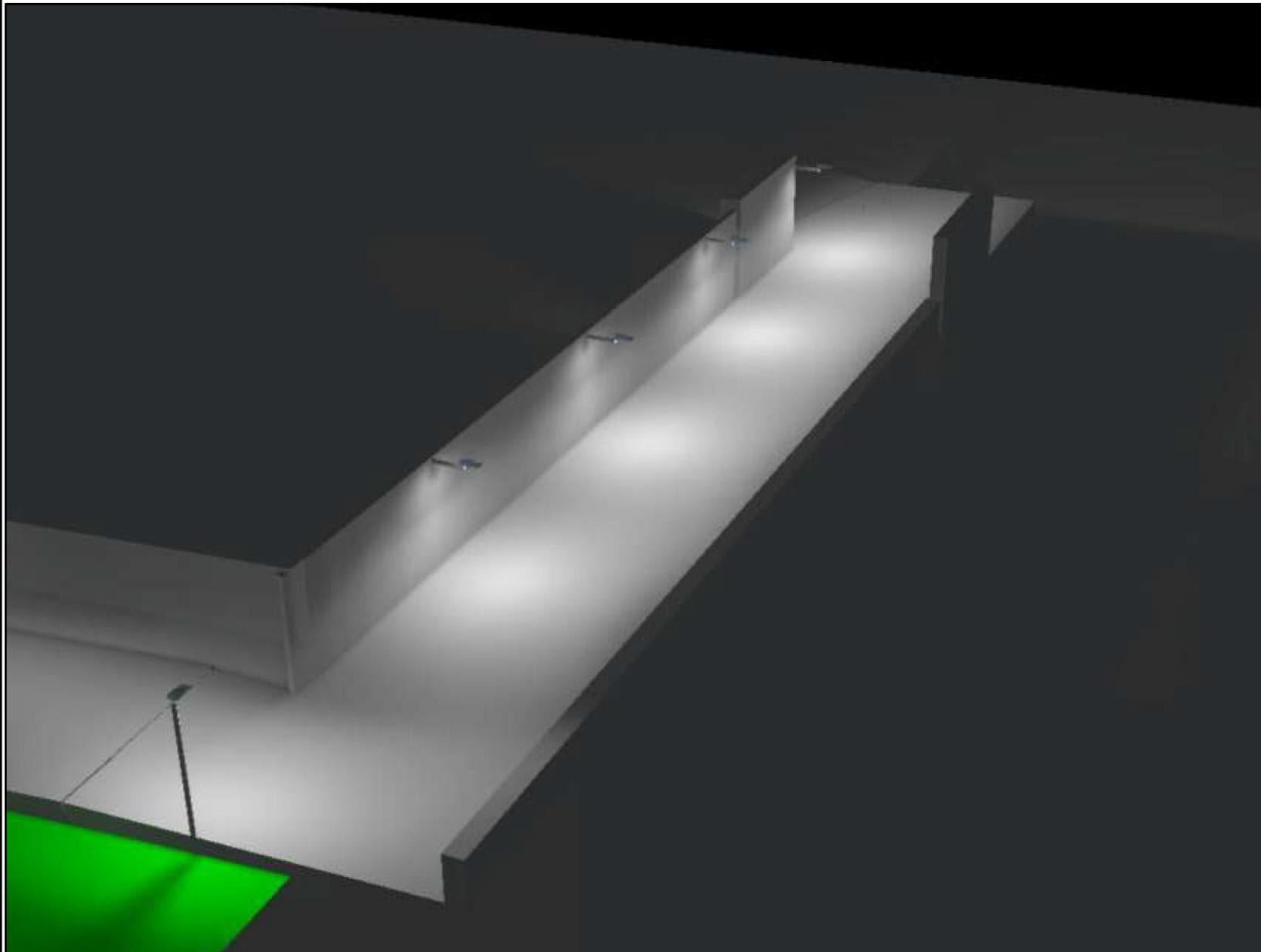
The image above shows the design in more detail. The principal walkway can be seen between the railways with the sharp angles connecting the existing underpass as well as the new route over the top of the portal.

The design poses significant concerns around safety particular with regards to the sharp angled turns where a user of the new aligned U81 would not be able to see what's around the corner. This poses an actual and perceived threat, particular to vulnerable users.

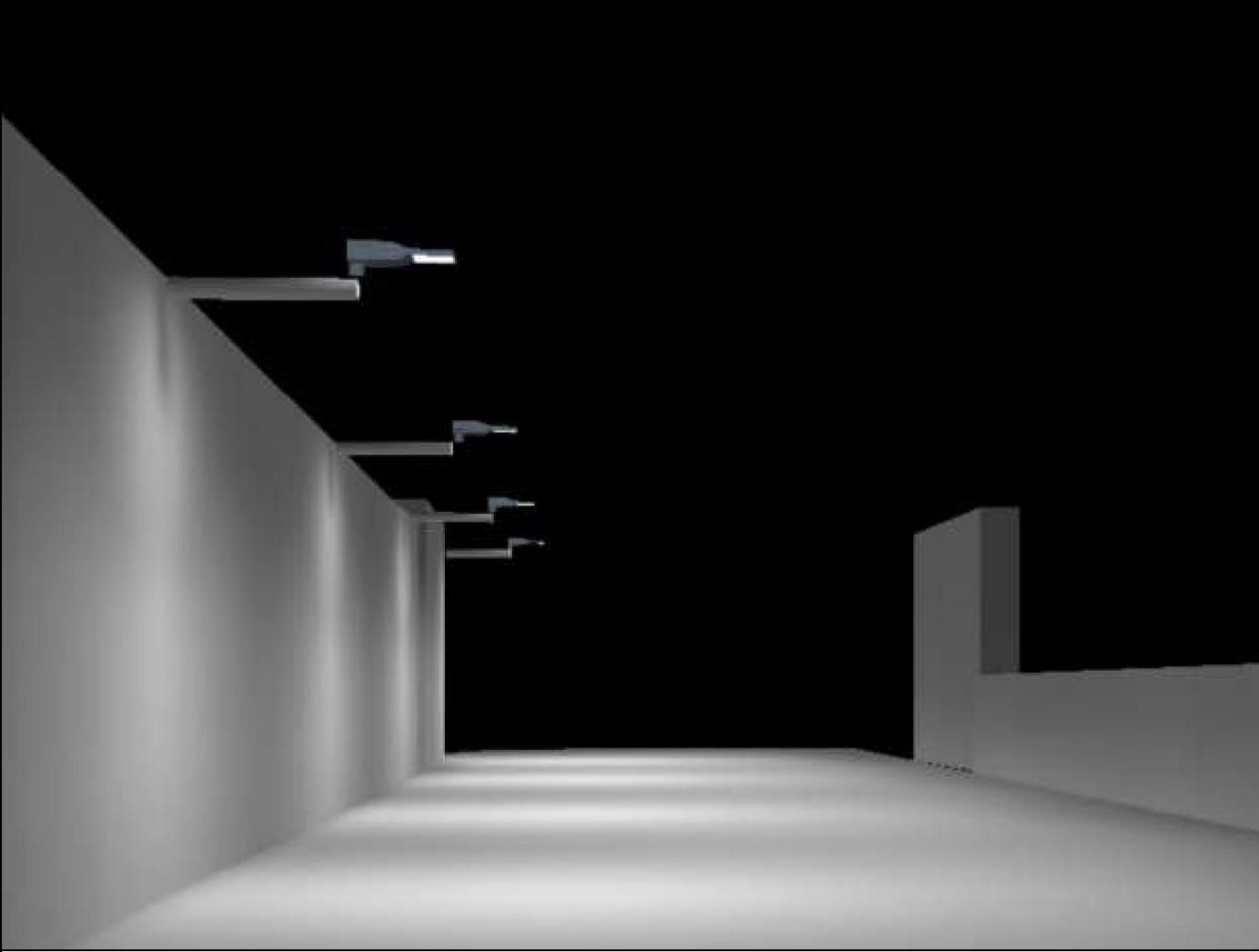


The images above provide a greater degree of understanding of the proposal. The image at the top left shows the 10m high retaining wall of HS2 and the 3m high wall of the Chiltern Line. A pedestrian would need to walk 150m along this route.

The image at the bottom right highlights the right-hand turn towards the top of the ramped section. The blind corner provides opportunities for criminal activity and illustrates the vulnerability to genuine users of U81.



The nighttime imagery provided by HS2 Ltd reveals more concerns relating to the heightened risk of criminal activity or antisocial behaviour. The image shows that even with lighting there is likely to be an oppressive environment which when coupled with the sharp angled turns provides a very unwelcome proposition. It must be noted that this all connects to the existing underpass which is already an undesirable space to navigate.



The above image shows the lengthy section of walkway culminating in the right hand turn over the top of the portal.

Whilst there are design alterations that could be made to improve the safety, it is considered these would not be sufficient to make for a safe navigable space.

View of the Designing out Crime Officer (Met Police)

- At the proposed point of exit of the tunnel, the design leaves the path in a valley with the Chiltern line about 4 meters higher than the path on one side and the HS2 train lines about 10 meters higher on the opposite side. This area will have no natural surveillance on it. The path then gently raises up to the height of the HS2 trains over approximately 150 meters, leaving users in a dangerous place for a sustained period of time. The design will also create large blank walls that large numbers of train users will see which will be extremely tempting to graffiti artists, which in turn will make the area feel less safe.
- At the end of the route the path finishes in the golf course – providing complete permeability to potential offenders/misusers.

Recommendation: It is strongly recommended that this route is not opened to the public, the route should continue to be blocked off in similar location to where it is at present between 109 and 111 The Greenway, and the land between the train lines where the path is proposed should be closed to the public.



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The Met Police Designing out Crime Officer (DOCO) has been engaged on the proposed designs and has shared a recommendation as set out above. Whilst the design is deliverable in engineering terms, the Council, supported by the Met Police, believes that the risk should not be taken whilst there is an opportunity to avoid it. In addition to risks of personal safety, there are further considerations of the resource implications for managing the space. It is likely to become a hotspot for graffiti and other anti-social behaviour which will put a further burden on various services to investigate and respond to.

The Council is therefore supportive of the DOCO recommendation and is now seeking to stop up U81.

Before and After Maps (separate documents)

[Separate Document – Before and After HS2 maps]

As can be seen from the ‘before’ map, the Borough is already well served by rights of way and the loss of the U81 connection would need to be put into that context.

However, the ‘after’ map shows a series of new connections that provide for a much improved pedestrian experience in the borough. There are new connections through Ruislip Golf course leading directly from Ickenham High Road; the ‘dog-leg’ across Breakspear Road South has been removed so there is a much safer direct crossing point; and, there is a new link to south of the Chiltern Line between Breakspear Road South and Harvil Road which connects with the new footpath provided as part of the latter’s realignment. There is also a new link south of Dews Lane to the east of the HOAC Lake which provides for an enhanced connectivity north to south.

There is a proposed new route connecting New Years Green Lane to Harvil Road that provides for a new east/west connection and linking the wider Colne Valley Park network of routes. In addition, there will be permissive footpath provision to the top of the new spoil dumping sites known as the ‘northern sustainable placement areas’.

In summary, the Council considers that the proposed new U81 route is not appropriate and is proposing to stop it up as a consequence. It is considered that the proposed new additional routes will ultimately result in a much better footpath experience for users which offset any negative impacts of U81.

The Council is therefore seeking to submit a formal planning application to stop up U81 and will undertake a full consultation as part of that proposal through July and August.