

16 June 2011

Mr Nigel Butler
Bristol City Council Area Planning Co-ordinator
Development Management
City Development
Brunel House
St Georges Road
Bristol, BS1 5UY

Our ref CTR-AER-000

Your ref

Dear Mr Butler,

Application for Listed Building Consent in Relation to Prince Street Bridge, Bristol

I hereby enclose an application by Bristol City Council and North Somerset Council for listed building consent for adaption and strengthening works to the underside of Prince Street Bridge and alterations to the deck. This application comprises the following:

1. The application form;
2. This letter;
3. A joint Heritage, Design and Access Statement (A3);
4. Drawing No. CTR-ADU-0104-001: Prince Street Bridge Location Plan (A3);
5. Drawing No. CTR-ADU-1700-4960-01/A: Prince Street Bridge Chainage 4960m proposed Amendments (Subject to Change) (A1); and
6. Heritage, Design and Access Statement Appendix H: Prince Street Bridge Assessment and Strengthening – August 2010 (A4).

We include three copies of the above application documents and in accordance with Section 12 (3A) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 we ask that you forward them to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government for his determination.

Context

On 10 June 2010 Bristol City Council and North Somerset Council (hereafter referred to as “the promoters”) jointly submitted a Transport and Works Act Order (TWAO) application to the Secretary of State for Transport for an order under sections 1 and 3 of The Transport and Works Act 1992. The purpose of the order is to permit the promoters to construct and operate a rapid transit system between the Ashton Vale to Temple Meads and Bristol City Centre and to carry out associated works to Bristol Harbour Railway (“the Scheme”).

Background

A network of 'Rapid Transit' routes was identified in the Joint Local Transport Plan prepared by the four local authorities of Bath and North East Somerset Council, Bristol City Council (BCC), North Somerset Council (NSC) and South Gloucestershire Council, who together form the West of England Partnership (WEP). The Joint Local Transport Plan sets out the transport plans for the sub-region between 2006 and 2011, and the vision for the next 20 to 30 years. The Scheme is one part of this wider Rapid Transit (RT) network and has the following objectives:

- Extend choice of transport modes for all, in particular for private car drivers, to encourage a shift to public transport;
- Promote sustainable development by providing high quality public transport links;
- Improve access to public transport for areas that currently have poor provision;
- Improve integration of the public transport network;
- Promote social inclusion by improving access to employment, retail, community, leisure and educational facilities; and
- Improve safety along the corridors by reducing use of private cars.

The current national policy emphasis for transport is to develop a system that meets demands for economic growth whilst reducing transport's contribution to CO₂ emissions. The focus is on improving transport provision on existing routes into urban areas in order to tackle congestion and to provide a reliable alternative mode of transport to the private car for commuter travel.

Regional policy acknowledges that the Bristol area is of strategic economic importance to the South West region and that it is an area of predicted urban growth and expansion. The provision of sustainable transport is seen as strategically important to support the economic success of the area while alternatives to the car are promoted to combat the adverse environmental and economic effects of transport in particularly congestion and CO₂ emissions.

In the local policy context, the key issues identified centre around meeting the demands of population growth whilst tackling transport related problems such as congestion, CO₂ emissions and air pollution. The focus of transport policy is to promote alternatives to the car, particularly walking, cycling and public transport.

It is considered that the proposed Scheme accords with national transport policy and the transport policies contained within the regional, sub-regional and local spatial planning documents, and that the overall contribution of it towards the objectives of those policies is beneficial.

Listed Building Consent Application

Listed Building Consent is sought in relation to Prince Street Bridge as works are required to the bridge in consequence of proposals included in the TWAO application.

Description of the Site and the Listed Structure

Prince Street Bridge crosses the Floating Harbour and connects Wapping Road on the south bank with Prince Street on the north bank.

Prince Street Bridge, a swing bridge, was erected in 1809 by the Bristol Dock Company on the site of the ancient Gib ferry owned by the Dean and Chapter of Bristol Cathedral. It replaced a drawbridge in 1878 and is operated by water hydraulic power.

The bridge comprises two elements, the swing bridge and the adjacent engine house and accumulator tower.

The structure is a swing bridge with quay walls and an engine house. It comprises iron, pennant and rubble with limestone dressings and slate hipped roofs. Also riveted steel plates to the arched sides and deck with two carriageways, stone abutments, capstans and bollards.

The engine house and accumulator tower is squared coursed rubble with limestone dressings, slate hipped roof with weatherboarding to the tower. It is a single depth plan and single storey, one-window range. It has chamfered quoins and bracketed eaves, pediment lintels to a right-hand doorway and left-hand sash. It has a square section tower with timber brackets to the eaves and a shallow pyramidal roof.

The interior houses the original hydraulic pumping engine and gearing. The bridge, engine house and accumulator tower was made a Grade II listed structure on 8 August 1975 (ST5872).

Currently Prince Street Bridge is operated between the following times – 0830 to 2200 (summer) and 0930 and 1615 (winter) – and swings are normally limited to no more than one per hour. In special circumstances “out of hours” arrangement for swinging Prince Street Bridge may be made with the Harbour Master.

Records of the number of times that Prince Street Bridge swung in both 2008 and 2009 have been received from Bristol City Council and are summarised in the tables below:

Prince Street Bridge Swings – 2008		
Month	Number of Swings	Observations
January	7	
February	16	
March	21	
April	55	
May	104	
June	120	
July	127	
August	133	
September	111	
October	47	
November	15	
December	21	17 th and 18 th bridge out of service for maintenance

Prince Street Bridge Swings – 2009		
Month	Number of Swings	Observations
January	4	7 th until 21 st and 24 th until 26 th bridge out of service for repairs/works
February	8	25 th and 26 th bridge out of service for repairs/works
March	37	11 th and 12 th bridge out of service for repairs/works
April	71	
May	94	
June	96	3 rd and 4 th bridge out of service for repairs/works
July	138	
August	137	
September	90	
October	45	
November	22	
December	39	

It can be seen that Prince Street Bridge swings more often during spring and summer months which coincides with warmer weather and events held in the docks, such as the Harbour Festival.

Reason for the works to Prince Street Bridge

In order for the Ashton Vale to Temple Meads and Bristol city centre Rapid Transit (RT) vehicles to run across the eastern side of the bridge, it will be necessary to strengthen the underside of the bridge such that it can adequately accommodate the weight of a rapid transit vehicle. We are proposing that the bridge be swung to its open position and that strengthening works be undertaken in-situ with neither the appearance nor operation of the bridge, or the engine house and accumulator tower, being adversely affected. It will also be necessary to undertake adaptations to the decks of the structure to enable the rapid transit vehicles to cross.

For the duration of the works to Prince Street Bridge, we proposed to install a temporary structure alongside to accommodate pedestrians and cyclists. The structure will need to comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act. Vehicular traffic would be re-routed on the public highway to cross the floating Harbour at other bridges.

The temporary structure will also need to accommodate the numerous boats that are only able to pass through when Prince Street Bridge is open. The exact nature of the temporary structure will be decided after negotiations with the Harbour Master.

Pre-application consultation has been undertaken with English Heritage following the submission of a pre-application enquiry to Bristol City Council. They recognise that both the bridge and the engine house that sits alongside are significant heritage assets and that the impact of the scheme on the assets needs to be fully assessed.

English Heritage supports the principle of adapting the bridge to accommodate the Bus Rapid Transit system but only on the basis that the special qualities of it will not be jeopardised. Any alterations undertaken should allow the swing bridge to be fully operable after the works have been implemented. They note that some strengthening works will be undertaken to the bridge and ask that a broader look at the whole structure be encouraged so that appropriate repairs if required to the engine house are considered at the same time.

The rapid transit project team consider that the identified works to Prince Street Bridge satisfy the main legislative test set out in Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 in that the works preserve the structure and its setting and the features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Moreover, in our view, the proposals satisfy the Policies of Planning Policy Statement 5 (“PPS5”) and policy B13 of the Bristol Local Plan 1997.

Planning Policy

For the reasons set out in Chapter’s 6 and 8 of the Environmental Statement submitted with the application for the TWAO order, the proposed works accord with the objectives of relevant national, regional and local planning policy.

The national planning policies of key relevance to this listed building application are those contained in PPS5, as follows:

1. Policy HE6.1 of PPS5 Planning for the Historic Environment sets out the information requirements for applications affecting heritage assets. These requirements are summarised below:

- Local planning authorities should require an applicant to provide a description of the significance of the heritage assets affected and the contribution of their setting to that significance;
- This information together with an assessment of the impact of the proposal should be set out in the application (within the design and access statement when this is required) as part of the explanation of the design concept. It should detail the sources that have been considered and the expertise that has been consulted; and
- Local planning authorities should not validate applications where the extent of the impact of the proposal on the significance of any heritage assets affected cannot adequately be understood from the application and supporting documents.

2. Policy HE7.1, which states:

“In decision-making local planning authorities should seek to identify and assess the particular significance of any element of the historic environment that may be affected by the relevant proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of:

- i. evidence provided with the application;*
- ii. any designation records;*
- iii. the historic environment record and similar sources of information;*
- iv. the heritage assets themselves;*
- v. the outcome of the usual consultations with interested parties; and*
- vi. where appropriate and when the need to understand the significance of the heritage asset demands it, expert advice (from in-house experts, experts available through agreement with other authorities, or consultants, and complemented as appropriate by advice from heritage amenity societies).”*

3. Policy HE7.2, which states:

“In considering the impact of a proposal on any heritage asset, local planning authorities should take into account the particular nature of the significance of the heritage asset and the value that it holds for this and future generations. This understanding should be used by the local planning authority to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposals”.

4. Policy HE7.4, which states:

“Local planning authorities should take into account:

- *the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and of utilising their positive role in place-shaping; and*
- *the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets and the historic environment generally can make to the establishment and maintenance of sustainable communities and economic vitality by virtue of the factors set out in HE3.1”.*

5. Policy HE7.5, which states:

“Local planning authorities should take into account the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to the character and local distinctiveness of the historic environment. The consideration of design should include scale, height, massing, alignment, materials and use”.

6. Policy HE7.7, which states:

“Where loss of significance is justified on the merits of new development, local planning authorities should not permit the new development without taking all reasonable steps to ensure the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred by imposing appropriate planning conditions or securing obligations by agreement”.

The local planning policies of key relevance to this listed building application are:

1. Those contained in BCC’s LDF Core Strategy, which was recently submitted to the SoS. BCC’s emerging policy on Conservation and the Historic Environment is set out in Policy BCS22 of this document, which says as follows:

“Development proposals will safeguard or enhance heritage assets and the character and setting of areas of acknowledged importance including:

- *Scheduled ancient monuments;*
- *Historic buildings both nationally and locally listed;*
- *Historic parks and gardens both nationally and locally listed;*
- *Conservation areas; and*
- *Archaeological remains.”*

2. BCC’s “saved” planning policies are those set out in the *Bristol Local Plan (December 1997)* Policy B13 is relevant to this listed building consent application and states that:

“Development should preserve Listed Buildings, their features and settings, and preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the City’s designated Conservation areas, as defined on the Proposals Map. Development which conflicts with these objectives will not be permitted.”

3. The Bristol Local Plan policy on safeguarding routes for rapid transit is set out in Policy M13 which advises that:

“The following corridors as defined on the Proposals Map are safeguarded for rapid transit routes:-

(i) That part of the rapid transit route between Wapping Wharf and Portishead, which falls within the city.”

Prince Street Bridge falls within the city of Bristol and is located adjacent to Wapping Wharf and the city boundary. It is one of very few transport links across the Floating Harbour and represents the only opportunity for the rapid transit system to cross the harbour.

In accordance with Section 12(3A) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, applications for listed building consent and conservation area consent must be referred to the Secretary of State instead of being dealt with by the local planning authority *“in any case where the consent is required in consequence of proposals included in an application for an order under Section 1 or 3 of the Transport and Works Act 1992.”* **We therefore request that this application be referred to the Secretary of State for Transport for his determination.** We will advise the TWA Orders Unit in the Department for Transport that this application has been submitted and provide them with a copy of the same.

We hope that the information we have provided, both electronically and in hard copy, allows the Secretary of State to determine the application. For the reasons set out in this letter and in the enclosed documents we ask that listed building consent be granted. In accordance with Regulation 5(1) of The Transport and Works Applications (Listed Building, Conservation Areas and Ancient Monuments Procedure) Regulations 1992, if the Secretary of State causes an inquiry to be held into this application for listed building consent, we trust that the inquiry will be held concurrently with the related TWAO inquiry.

If any further information is required, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

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cc Bob Fowler – Bristol City Council (without enclosures)