

16 June May 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 Vauxhall Bridge, Bristol

I hereby enclose an application by Bristol City Council and North Somerset Council for listed building consent for adaption works to Vauxhall Bridge. 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-0103-001: Vauxhall Bridge Location Plan (A3);
5. Drawing No. CTR-ADU-1700-3792-02: Vauxhall Bridge Chainage 3795m Existing Layout (A1);
6. Drawing No. CTR-ADU-1700-3795-03: Vauxhall Bridge Chainage 3795m Proposed Layout (Subject to Change) (A1); and
7. Heritage, Design and Access Statement Appendix G: Vauxhall Bridge Modification – 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 Vauxhall 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

Vauxhall Bridge is a pedestrian footbridge that crosses the River Avon New Cut, Chocolate Path, Bristol Harbour Railway and Cumberland Road. It connects Coronation Road on the south side and Cumberland Road, and the Chocolate Path, on the north side.

Vauxhall Bridge is made up of two structures which connect pedestrians between Cumberland Road and Coronation Road. Together they span the River Avon (known locally as the New Cut) and the adjacent Bristol Harbour Railway and Cumberland Road.

The old bridge is a Grade II listed structure which was built circa 1900 and is made up of two riveted, wrought iron lattice trusses with a wrought iron troughed deck supported on transverse wrought iron cross plate beams. It is not known on what date the bridge was listed on. The superstructure was built by Lysaght's and the hydraulic gear by Armstrong Whitworth.

It was originally constructed as a swing bridge to allow for navigation by river traffic but has not been operational since the late 1930's. The bridge sustained bomb damage during the Second World War.

The new link bridge was constructed in 1986 and consists of a main span made up of two steel Warren girders joined by a steel deck and is accessed by two flights of steps and two steel ramps.

A recent structural survey of the bridge by Bristol City Council revealed that a number of structural members, including transverse beams and bottom flanges to the fixed aspect of the original bridge are in dire need of repair and replacement. The lattice work is also badly corroded and in need of urgent attention.

Bristol City Council plan to undertake emergency repair works that will ensure that the bridge is fit for purpose. However, even following the completion of these works, there is no guarantee that it would be possible to raise the structure.

Reason for the works to Vauxhall Bridge

An integral part of the Scheme is to ensure that the Ashton Vale to Temple Meads and Bristol city centre Rapid Transit system ("the Rapid Transit System") does not increase the likelihood of flooding between the harbour and the New Cut.

During the design of the section where the Rapid Transit System shares the Bristol Harbour Railway track, it became evident that the existing alignment below Vauxhall Bridge would need to be raised to maintain the minimum flood height requirement of 8.98 metres. As a result, it will be necessary to raise Vauxhall Bridge by 350mm to maintain suitable headroom for the double deck buses that will be permitted to use the route.

Halcrow's engineers considered three options for increasing the clearance of the existing railway span by 350mm. Each option required a new connection ramp between the rail and road crossings and a detailed survey of the existing main bridge supports was undertaken to ensure that the option chosen caused the least interference to the bridge.

Option 1: Reposition the railway span at a slope of 1 in 40 between the pier and the road bridge. To keep to this slope it would be necessary to install additional deck plates forming a ramp on the existing opening span to raise the footway level at the north river pier by about 100mm.

Option 2: Raise the whole of the original structure vertically by 350mm by freeing the ends and jacking at the central bearing. The south approach would then be re-graded to suit, the existing parapet is about 2000mm high at the south end so could remain unchanged, but the approach slope gradient would be increased to about 1 in 10.

Option 3: Keep the southern approach as level and jack the original at the supports to give a constant gradient of about 1 in 150 from the south end to the road bridge connection ramp.

After careful consideration of the options, Halcrow's engineers have chosen option 1 as it does not involve jacking of the main bridge.

The rapid transit project team consider that the identified works to Vauxhall 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 do 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.”

Vauxhall Bridge falls within the city of Bristol and is located to the west of Wapping Wharf and the city boundary.

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 Buildings, Conservation Areas and Ancient Monuments Procedure) Regulations 1992, we trust that if the Secretary of State causes an inquiry to be held into this application for listed building consent, 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)