

Planning

Growth & Development

Delegated officer report for planning application

Application no. 128239/LO/2020

Date registered valid: 7 October 2020

Proposal: Listed building consent to replace 2 sections of deck plate

Address: Stephenson Bridge Spanning Over Great Ducie Street, Manchester,

Ward(s): Deansgate Ward

Applicant: Network Rail Infrastructure Ltd 1 Eversholt Street, London, NW1 2DN

Agent (if any): Sue Wood Network Rail Infrastructure Ltd Square One , 4 Travis Street, Manchester, M1 2NY

Case officer: Christopher Smith
Tel: 0161 234 4529
Email: christopher.smith@manchester.gov.uk

Recommendation: Approve

Date of recommendation: 2 December 2020

Application details

Type of application: Listed Building Consent

Development type: Listed building alteration

Date of site visit: 21 October 2020

Standard consultations:

Printed: 19 October 2020 Expired: 9 November 2020

Neighbour notifications

Printed: 19 October 2020 Expired: 9 November 2020

Site notice

Posted: 21 October 2020 Expired: 11 November 2020

Press advert

Published: 27 October 2020 Expired: 17 November 2020

Departure from Development Plan: No

Environmental Statement: Not required

Description of site/building

Listed building: Grade II

Conservation area: Cathedral Conservation Area 1972

Tree Preservation Order: Not applicable

Stephenson Bridge is located on the section of railway between Salford Central and Manchester Victoria stations. The bridge is located at the western approach to Victoria station and carries the line over the River Irwell, then extending east to bridge Victoria Street (A56) to the immediate west of Victoria Station. It is the southernmost of a cluster of bridges to the west of Victoria station, with the 'Middle Bridge' and now redundant 'North Bridge' (both Listed at Grade II) over Victoria Street/Great Ducie Street. The Cathedral Conservation Area lies to the immediate south of the bridge, although the bridge does not fall within the Conservation Area's boundary.

The bridge is formed of two structures, one built in 1844 and an 1884 'expansion'. However, both structures are contiguous for their full length and this is reflected in the fact that they both fall under the same Listing.

The boundary between the Manchester and Salford administrative areas falls in the middle of the River Irwell in this location.

Manchester's Victoria Station was constructed for the Manchester and Leeds Railway Company in 1844 to a design by George Stephenson. Its construction formed part of the second phase of railway expansion witnessed throughout the country in the 1840s. This era is now termed 'Railway Mania' due to the frenzied, speculative expansion of the railways. The Stephenson Bridge was constructed in the same year, in order to carry the line over Victoria Street and the River Irwell.

The 1844 section of the bridge was the first rail crossing over Victoria Street and the River Irwell. It has two cast iron arches carrying the railway line over Victoria Street, supported by masonry abutments, with brick arches between the two main spans on the north side.

Further expansion of the railways throughout the Victorian era resulted in the construction, in 1864, of another bridge (the Middle Bridge) over Victoria Street. Subsequent further expansion resulted in the construction of Exchange Station on a site to the immediate east of the Irwell, which was constructed to provide additional capacity at Victoria Station, which by the 1880s had become one of the busiest stations in the country. Coinciding with this was the 'expansion' of the original 1844 bridge with the construction of the 1884 element of the bridge to immediate south of the original structure, effectively widening the original bridge structure. This is of plate-girder construction with a cast iron parapet. The rationale behind this widening was to provide access between the two stations. This linkage formed what was the longest passenger platform in Europe, part of which was carried on the bridge and extended through the original 1844 section of Victoria Station, with a canopy over the platform and track. Exchange Station was heavily damaged during World War II and was subsequently closed in 1969 and the canopy was finally removed in 1994.

In 2015 a programme of works were undertaken to the Stephenson Bridge in connection with the Manchester Victoria to Euxton Junction element of the North West Electrification programme. This involved the installation of gantry structures capable of supporting Overhead Line Equipment ('OLE').

Description of Proposal

Whilst works were being completed on the bridge structure in 2019 it was noticed that there were fractures in 2 deck plates. These fractures seriously compromise the safety of the structure for trains passing above and for the traveling public below. The deck plates have had monitoring on them and increase assessments in the interim period until they can be replaced. The monitoring in place and has had a number of triggers already and shows signs of further deterioration. If the deck plates are not replaced then this would result in a closure of both the road below and the passage of trains above to ensure public safety or risk a catastrophic failure.

Network Rail propose to replace two sections of deck plate. The bridge span itself measure approximately 293sqm, whilst the proposed replacement is 10sqm. Network Rail aren't aware of any previous replacement having taken place to this section before – however, this doesn't mean that one hasn't taken place – there might have been previous repairs, which the documentation has unfortunately been lost or not recorded properly over the years, or might have taken place prior to the listing of the structures. The original deck plates are of a steel construction and have fractured, the extent of the fracturing doesn't allow for a safe repair that would provide a global factor of safety.



Image of broken deck plates (network rail photographs)

Consultations & Notification Responses

Publicity - A total of 7 notifications were sent to adjoining properties and a local advert and site notice were produced. At the time of writing this report no neighbour representations have been received by the City Council.

Urban Design & Conservation Team - No comments received.

Issues

Policy

The main issue for consideration relates to the impact of the proposals on the identified heritage assets in regard to preserving and, where possible, enhancing identified assets. The main policies that relate to the proposal are Section 16 (Conserving and enhancing the Historic Environment) of the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019), and Policies DM1 (Development Management), EN3 (Heritage), EN1 (Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas), CC9 (Design and Heritage) and SP1 (Spatial Principles) of the Adopted Core Strategy for the City of Manchester (2012), and saved policies DC18.1 (Conservation Areas) and DC19.1 (Listed Buildings) of the Unitary Development Plan for Manchester (1995).

The revised NPPF (2019) Section 16 (Conserving and enhancing the Historic Environment) paragraph 193 highlights that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is

irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

Paragraph 196 of the revised NPPF (2019) highlights that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

Core Strategy policy CC9 (Design and Heritage) states that development in Manchester City Centre should preserve or enhance the heritage assets that have been identified. Developers must recognise the specific design challenges that must be overcome to ensure complementary of function and form.

Core Strategy policy EN 3 (Heritage) states that the Council will encourage development that complements and takes advantage of the distinct historic and heritage features of its districts and neighbourhoods. New developments must be designed so as to support the Council in preserving, or where possible, enhancing the historic environment, the character, setting and accessibility of areas and buildings of acknowledged importance.

Core Strategy policy SP1 (Spatial Principals) states that development in all parts of the city should protect and enhance the built and natural environment.

Core Strategy policy DM 1 (Development Management) states that development should have regard to appropriate siting, layout, scale, form, massing, materials and detail; impact on surrounding areas in terms of the design, scale and appearance of the proposed development; development should have regard to the character of the surrounding area; and effects on amenity.

Saved UDP policy DC18.1 (Conservation Areas) states that the Council will give particularly careful consideration to development proposals within Conservation Area. The Council will seek to preserve and enhance the character of its designated conservation areas by carefully considering; the relationship of new structures to neighbouring buildings and spaces; and the effect of major changes to the appearance of existing buildings.

Saved UDP policy 19.1 (Listed Buildings) states that the Council will have regard to the desirability of securing the retention, restoration, maintenance and continued use of such buildings and to protecting their general settings by; not permitting any external or internal alterations or addition to a listed building where, in its opinion, there would be an adverse effect on its architectural or historic character; and seek to preserve and enhance the setting of listed buildings by appropriate control over the design of new development in their vicinity, control over the use of adjacent land, and where appropriate, by the preservation of trees and landscape features.

Legislation

Section 16 (2) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the "Listed Building Act") provides that "in considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works to a listed building, the local planning authority or the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses"

Section 66 Listed Building Act requires the local planning authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the setting of listed buildings. This requires more than a simple balancing exercise and considerable importance and weight should be given to the desirability

of preserving the setting. Members should consider whether there is justification for overriding the presumption in favour of preservation.

Section 72 of the Listed Building Act provides that in the exercise of the power to determine planning applications for land or buildings within a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

Assessment of significance

The bridges display historic significance as a consequence of the role it played in the development of Manchester as a transportation hub.

Following the introduction of the railways to Manchester, the explosive rise in numbers of passengers and freight carried by the railways soon made the canals redundant and obsolete. Here the railway allowed goods to be transported at much greater efficiencies than ever before. This introduction of a new technology (railways) replacing old (canals) was symptomatic of the association the railways have with the increased mechanisation stemming from the industrial revolution and the rise of Manchester as an economic powerhouse throughout the nineteenth century.

The English Heritage document 'Designation Listing Selection Guide: Transport Buildings' (2011) is of particular importance when assessing the historic value associated with railway infrastructure. This document sets out four 'ages' of railway construction which, in descending importance, is as below:

- o The pioneering first phase, 1825-41;
- o The heroic age, 1841-50;
- o The third phase 1850s-1870s, the consolidation of the network; and
- o The fourth period, up to 1914, the completion of the network.

The construction date for Stephenson bridge is from 1844 - 1893, it is apparent that the first of the structures stem from the 'heroic' age of railway construction, with the other bridges constructed within the third and fourth periods.

The proposed works will secure the long-term future of the listed bridges in their original use. The bridges also present visual and aesthetic qualities: As highlighted in the List Descriptions, the bridges are notable for their decorative nature and group importance within the Manchester city centre urban landscape. The proposals will not detract from interpretation of the structure as forming part of a wider, historic entity.

Nature of Significance

It is apparent that the railway bridges, individually and collectively possess significance due to their historical and aesthetic value and also with their relationship with other heritage assets in close proximity.

The bridges form a strong visual group with the decorative parapets a reflection of their important location. The bridges possess aesthetic value in their own right, but also contribute to the broader visual qualities of the area and specific heritage assets located close by and within the adjacent Cathedral Conservation area. The bridges are a key component in a collective of distinct structures which collectively present a unique visual landscape that is dominated by transport infrastructure.

Considerable importance and weight is to be given to the desirability of preserving both listed buildings and their settings. The surrounding environment of the bridges contain a number of listed structures, both rail-related and non-rail related, including:

- Manchester Victoria Railway Station.
- Former Manchester Parcel Post Office- Grade II listed red brick building with moulded brick and terracotta detailing completed in 1894 was a specialist building strategically sited between the Exchange and Victoria Stations in Manchester and a key component of the extensive network of transportation and storage facilities in late 19th century Manchester.
- Chethams Hospital and attached wall - Grade I listed coursed red sandstone with dressings of gritstone and stone slate roof established in 1422, now part of the School of Music
- 3 Grade II listed structures within the Cathedral area, including the south east wing to Chethams Hospital (Former Manchester Grammar School) from 1873 - 1878 with red brick with sandstone dressings, now part of the School of Music. Detached block of School room south of Chethams Hospital constructed in 1878 with coursed squared sandstone and slate roof and fragment of Hydes Cross also south of Chethams, the shaft of cross, dating back to 1653, was formerly at the Junction of Fennel Street with Withy Grove but relocated to this site in 1913.

Therefore, when viewed holistically, the application site and other heritage assets form an integral element of the townscape and historic environment.

Impact on the heritage asset

Each plate is attached with 6 Fixing bolts these are to be replaced with modern equivalents. We have procured the most similar deck material available and the same for the fixing bolts.

Unfortunately, the traditional materials and fixing methods are no longer available and would not meet the current Safety standards we need to adhere too. We have procured the product which is most like and in keeping with the structure.

Network Rail need to use fixings that meet with the current safety standards, trains and the frequency of them is significantly greater since when these bridges we first constructed. We must also take into account the rail safety and the ongoing maintenance of the future of the railway, which in turn safeguards the historic importance of the listed structure. This is an extremely busy section of railway and in order to maintain its original function and to keep the railway moving the proposed works need to take place.

Repairs to the original design were considered and explored but ruled out as they would not provide an acceptable factor of safety or comply with euro codes. The alternative would be to replace the entire deck which would be far more costly and intrusive and result in a more significant impact to the heritage significance of the listed structure.

It is felt that in this instance, the proposals will have a limited harmful impact on the character and setting of the railway bridge. It is considered that the proposed works will ensure the longevity of the structure and this public benefit would far outweigh any damage to the historic environment.

Conclusion

The proposal will not result in any unacceptable impact upon the significance of the bridges and any harm is considered to be outweighed by the benefit of ensuring the safe use of the railway for future generations.

Human Rights Act 1998 considerations

This application needs to be considered against the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998. Under Article 6, the applicants (and those third parties, including local residents, who have made representations) have a right to a fair hearing and to this end the local planning authority must give full consideration to their comments.

Protocol 1 Article 1, and Article 8 where appropriate, confer(s) a right of respect for a person's home, other land and business assets. In taking account of all material considerations, including Council policy as set out in the Core Strategy and saved policies of the Unitary Development Plan, the Director of Planning, Building Control & Licensing has concluded that some rights conferred by these articles on the applicant(s)/objector(s)/resident(s) and other occupiers and owners of nearby land that might be affected may be interfered with but that that interference is in accordance with the law and justified by being in the public interest and on the basis of the planning merits of the development proposal. She believes that any restriction on these rights posed by the recommendation given is proportionate to the wider benefits of and that such a decision falls within the margin of discretion afforded to the Council under the Town and Country Planning Acts.

Recommendation: Approve

Article 35 Declaration

Officers have worked with the applicant / agent in a positive and proactive manner to guide the application through all stages of the planning process and resolve any issues that arose in dealing with the planning application.

Condition(s) to be attached to decision for approval OR Reasons for recommendation to refuse

1) The development must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.

Reason - Required to be imposed pursuant to Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

2) The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following drawings and documents:

Location Plan Drawing No. 5866401-3, stamped as received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on 07 October 2020.

Drawing No. 0201-04-AU007926-UT41D Revision 01, 0200-04-UA007926-UT41D Revision 02, 0100-04-JMS007926-UT41D-DSE, stamped as received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on 07 October 2020.

Statement for the repair/refurbishment of the Stephenson Bridge over Great Ducie Street/Victoria Street, Manchester, stamped as received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on 07 October 2020.

Reason - To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans, pursuant to policies EN1, EN3, CC9, DM1 and SP1 of the Core Strategy for the City of Manchester, and saved policies DC18 and DC19 of the Unitary Development Plan for

Manchester, and the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Appendix 1 – List of consultees & neighbours notified

Urban Design & Conservation
Network Rail

Unit 4, Arena Court, Mirabel Street, Manchester, M3 1PJ
Unit 2, Arena Court, Mirabel Street, Manchester, M3 1PJ
Unit 5, Arena Court, Mirabel Street, Manchester, M3 1PJ
Unit 3, Arena Court, Mirabel Street, Manchester, M3 1PG
Unit 1, Arena Court, Mirabel Street, Manchester, M3 1PJ
Unison, Arena Point, 1 Hunts Bank Approach, Manchester, M3 1UN
JD Williams, Hunts Bank Approach, Manchester, M3 1AX

Appendix 2 – Planning constraints

Article 4 Direction - City Centre PD Restriction - Class B1(a) To C3
Article 4 Direction - Removal Of PD Rights Change Of Use From Class C3 To Class C4
Aircraft Safeguarding Zone - Aircraft Safeguarding Zone - All Exceeding 90M
Coal Authority - Development Low Risk - Name: DEVELOPMENT_LOW_RISK_AREA
Conservation Area - Cathedral Conservation Area 1972
Flood Zones Type 2 (low to medium risk) -
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Less) -
Area Team Boundary - Name: CITY1