Heritage Statement in Support of Proposed Gantry Impact Protection Guard at Castlefield Railway Viaduct (Woolam Place)

May 2012

Introduction

This document is intended to outline the works proposed to be undertaken to a section of the Castlefield railway viaduct, specifically the installation of one vehicle impact protection guard to one

gantry in the Woolam Place area. Network Rail are proposing to electrify the Liverpool-Manchester railway line, and Listed Building Consent was recently granted for the erection of gantries to the viaduct, which are now in situ. The electrification project will provide huge opportunities as electric trains are cleaner, quieter and cheaper to operate, produce lower carbon emissions (by approx. 20 - 30%) and will provide a quicker and more reliable service.

The 'proposals' section below explains the proposed development in further detail, setting out the rationale for the guard's installation and justifying the need for the proposals. This will also include analysis of the proposals' heritage implications to satisfy the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Site Location and Context

This application relates to The Manchester, South Junction and Altrincham Railway viaduct, which for simplicity is referred to as 'Castlefield viaduct'. The viaduct carries the existing operational railway line from Ordsall Lane Junction in Salford in a generally south-westerly direction towards Deansgate Station in Manchester. This elevated section carries the railway over the River Irwell before passing over Water Street, to the south of its junction with Liverpool Road (A6143). Continuing south-west it passes over the Castlefield canal basin, after which it passes underneath the Metrolink viaduct and merges with the 'Southern' route from Manchester to Liverpool, running via Trafford Park and Warrington Central. The viaduct then crosses the Rochdale Canal and Bridgewater Viaduct, before terminating at Deansgate Station. The viaduct was listed at Grade II on 4th February 1988 and also falls within the boundaries of the Castlefield Conservation Area.

The site of the proposed impact protection guard is to the viaduct's northern elevation at Woolam Place, an unadopted road connecting Liverpool Road and Water Street, a short distance to the south-east of the Liverpool Road/Water Street junction. This section of viaduct features arches that have been infilled and are let by Network Rail to commercial tenants. To the north of the site is a block of three-storey apartments, with their associated car parking area.

Site History

Construction of the Manchester, South Junction and Altrincham Railway viaduct was completed in 1849 and the line opened the same year. This allowed a direct rail linkage between Manchester London Road Station (the present day Piccadilly Station) and the existing line from Liverpool to Manchester Victoria.

London Road opened in 1842, originally serving as the terminus of the Manchester and Birmingham Railway (M&BR) and later the Sheffield, Ashton-under-Lyne and Manchester Railway (SA&MR). Through a desire to connect its terminus with other lines, the SA&MR proposed to create a linkage with the Liverpool & Manchester Railway. A new company – the Manchester South Junction and Altrincham Railway – was established to build and operate the railway, and this received royal assent on 21 July 1845. The linkage between Piccadilly and the L&MR junction at Ordsall Lane was to be facilitated by the construction of a 1.5 mile long section of elevated railway. The Oxford Road to Altrincham section of line opened on 20 July 1849, with the South Junction portion completed on 1st August 1849.

Planning History

- 097161/LO/2011/C1 - LISTED BUILDING CONSENT Erection of gantries to railway viaduct capable of supporting overhead electrical cabling, in connection with the electrification of the Liverpool-Manchester railway line. Consent granted 6 December 2011.

Planning Policy

Relevant National and Local planning policy is outlined below:

National Planning Policy Framework

The NPPF was published in March 2012 and established the Government's vision for planning to help achieve sustainable development. Central to this is that economic, social and environmental gains

should be sought jointly and exclusively through the planning system. The NPPF's approach to Heritage is fundamentally unchanged from that of PPS5, in that there is still a focus on the identification of 'heritage assets', outlining their 'significance' and considering any impact upon that significance as a consequence of any proposed works.

NPPF paragraph 128 establishes the information requirements for an application for consent affecting a heritage asset. Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.

Paragraph 129 details the policy principles that should guide LPAs in determining applications in relation to heritage assets. It states that in considering the impact of a proposal on any heritage asset, Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

When determining applications, LPAs should take account of (paragraph 131):

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality;
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Paragraph 132 states 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.

Manchester Unitary Development Plan (UDP)

When developing the proposals, regarding was had to the policies within the Manchester UDP and in particular the following:

Listed Buildings

Policy DC19.1 states that in determining applications for listed building consent or planning applications for development involving or having an impact on buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, 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 setting. In giving effect to this policy, the Council will:

a. not grant Listed building consent for the demolition of a listed building other than in the most exceptional circumstances, and in any case, not unless it is satisfied that every possible effort has been made to continue the present use or to find a suitable alternative use;

b. not permit a change of use of a listed building, where it would have a detrimental effect on the character or appearance of the building;

c. not permit any external or internal alteration or addition to a Listed building where, in its opinion, there would be an adverse effect on its architectural or historic character;

d. seek to preserve and enhance the settings 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;

e. permit demolition only where there are approved detailed plans for redevelopment and where there is evidence of a firm building contract;

f. not permit alterations to a listed building which would prevent the future use of any part of the building, in particular upper floors or basements, or where poor maintenance is likely to result.

Conservation Areas

Policy DC18.1 states that the Council will give particularly careful consideration to development proposals within Conservation Areas.

a. The Council will seek to preserve and enhance the character of its designated conservation areas by carefully considering the following issues:
i) the relationship of new structures to neighbouring buildings and spaces;
ii) the effect of major changes to the appearance of existing buildings;
iii) the desirability of retaining existing features, such as boundary walls, gardens, trees, (including street trees);
iv) the effect of signs and advertisements;
v) any further guidance on specific areas which has been approved by the Council.
b. The Council will not normally grant outline planning permission for development within Conservation Areas.
c. Consent to demolish a building in a conservation area will be granted only where it can be shown that it is wholly beyond repair, incapable of reasonably beneficial use, or where its removal or replacement would benefit the appearance of character of the area.
d. Where demolition is to be followed by redevelopment, demolition will be permitted only where there are approved detailed plans for that redevelopment and where the Council has been furnished with evidence that the development will be undertaken.
e. Development proposals adjacent to Conservation Areas will be granted only where it can be shown that they will not harm the appearance or character of the area. This will include the protection of views into and out of Conservation Areas.

Transport
T1.5 The Council will, in conjunction with the PTA/E, work to upgrade and further develop the local rail network.
Objective: To improve all forms of public transport so that it make a much greater contribution to meeting the City's travel needs and achieves a better balance between public and private transport.
Reason: The local rail network which serves Manchester is one of the most extensive in the Country. At present about 15% of journeys to work in the City Centre are made by train. This figure has remained relatively static for the past ten years. The Council sees it as essential that this proportion is increased if its objectives to reduce pollution, save energy and reduce accidents are to be met. If rail services are to compete more effectively and carry the proportions common in many other European cities, it is essential that the quality and value of the rail product in Greater Manchester is improved.
The Council attaches particular importance to achieving the following:-
a) improvements to the reliability, comfort and attractiveness of rail services;
b) further electrification of the network to improve speeds and reliability and allow greater flexibility in how the network is used;
c) improvements in the quality of information provided in relation to rail services.

Significance of Heritage Asset
The requirement for applicants proposing to undertake works to heritage assets to describe the significance of the heritage asset affected is set out in the NPPF. Guidance to assist with assessing the asset's significance is provided in the PPS5 Practice Guide. Notwithstanding the fact that PPS5 was deleted following the publication of the NPPF, the associated Practice Guide remains a valid and Government endorsed document. Paragraph 54 of this document states '*being able to properly assess the nature, extent and importance of the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting is very important to an applicant in order to conceive of and design a successful development and to the local planning authority in order to make decisions in line with the objectives of the PPS and the development plan'*. When evaluating the existing significance of an asset, the Guide recommends assessing the nature of significance, extent of fabric and level of importance. These are all considered below.

Assessment of Significance
It is apparent that the viaduct possesses significance due to its historical and aesthetic value and also as a consequence of its grouping with, and relationship with, other heritage assets in proximity to it.

- *Historic Value*

The viaduct displays historic significance as a consequence of the role it played in the development of Castlefield and, more broadly, Manchester as a transportation hub. The Castlefield area has had a significant history as a crucially important element of Manchester's transport infrastructure. The railway lines carried over Castlefield by the various viaducts represented the next stage in the development of Manchester's transport infrastructure. Following the introduction of the railways to Manchester, the explosive rise in numbers of passengers and freight carried by the railways of 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. In particular, the Great Northern viaduct's association with the Great Northern Warehouse on Deansgate – one of Manchester's most significant warehouse buildings – serves to reinforce the linkage between the railways in and around Castlefield, and Manchester's role as a centre of warehousing and commerce during this era. The viaduct is Listed at Grade II, see Appendix 1 for the associated List Description.

- *Townscape and Aesthetic Value*

The viaduct possesses aesthetic value its own right, but also contributes to the broader visual qualities of the Castlefield Conservation Area and specific heritage assets within the Conservation Area. Further to this, the viaduct should be regarded as a key component in a collective of distinct structures (i.e. the other viaducts and canals in close proximity) which collectively present a unique visual landscape that is dominated by transportation infrastructure . As stated in the Castlefield Conservation Area Appraisal, the result of Castlefield's many elevated railways is 'a multi-level environment which is unique in the world' (http://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/511/conservation_areas/972/castlefield_conservation_area/4).

PPS5's Practice Guide places emphasis upon the importance of considering the setting of heritage assets when evaluating significance. The environs of the viaduct contain a number of listed structures, including:

- 123 Liverpool Road, a pair of Grade II listed early to mid 19th century red brick town houses, now converted to other uses.
- Commercial Hotel, 125 Liverpool Road, a Grade II listed early to mid 19th century red brick public house.
- Three Grade II listed structures in the Potato Wharf area, including the Bridgewater canal basin, 'Giant's Hole' and weir. A complex of 19th century canal structures including basin and ancillary water management features. This area has been regenerated and now contains a mix of modern and historic structures.
- Former passenger railway station at terminus of Liverpool and Manchester Railway. This Grade I listed structure is an internationally important railway station terminus. Developed in 1830 by George Stephenson for the Liverpool and Manchester Railway Company, with an earlier attached house of 1808. Now part of the Museum of Science & Industry complex.

Therefore, when viewed holistically, the application site, surrounding viaducts and other heritage assets form an integral element of the Castlefield Conservation Area's townscape and historic environment.

Proposals

In order to facilitate the electrification of the railway, it is necessary to install Overhead Line Equipment (electric cabling and associated infrastructure) to the viaduct. This requires the installation of a number of gantries to the viaduct to support the cabling, which was granted consent in December 2011, with the scheme fully implemented shortly afterwards.

However, as a consequence of a risk assessment undertaken following the installation of the gantries, it has come to light that at one of the gantries there is the potential for a high-sided vehicle (such as a bin wagon) to strike the newly-installed structure. Although the potential of this occurring was identified as being very low, the consequences of a vehicle striking the gantry are considered to be so severe (the gantry could potentially be severed from its bracket and fall onto either the road or the live railway), that intervention is required to remove this risk.

In light of this, it is proposed to install supplementary protection to the bracket which holds the gantry to the viaduct. This consists of two "U" shapes fabricated from circular hollow (168mm diam.) tubes wrapping around the bracket – fixed to the solid brickwork with Cintec anchors. The brackets will be painted with black and yellow stripes to act as a visual warning to the drivers of tall vehicles, which will bring their attention to the presence of the gantry. Should a collision occur, the bracket will take the force of the impact and ensure that there is no damage to the gantry itself. Further detail on the precise location and specification of the proposed installations is indicated on the attached drawings.

Analysis and Assessment of impact upon Significance

It is considered that there is a sound a reasoned justification for the proposed development, in that the guard will be of vital importance to ensure the safety of rail travellers and the public in general. In terms of the guard's visual impact, when viewed in the context of both the viaduct itself, and the gantries that have recently been installed, it is apparent that the proposed bracket will be clearly subservient in terms of size, scale and massing. A design has been chosen that has a degree of visual permeability, which will allow views of the original viaduct fabric at this location to be maintained.

The bracket will be painted in a colour scheme which is not traditionally a feature of the viaduct (which is predominantly red brick, with some sandstone). However, there is a clear rationale for this, which is to make the bracket visually conspicuous and to draw drivers' attention to the presence of the structure. But, this will be done in a manner that is sensitive to the context of its siting on a designated heritage asset. Moreover, given the structure's relatively small scale, and the fact that it is not in a visually prominent position within the Castlefield Conservation Area, it is considered that there will be no unacceptable impact upon the character and appearance of the broader setting of the viaduct.

In light of the above, it is considered that the proposals will represent a visually acceptable method of preventing unauthorised access to the viaduct, which is respectful to the character and appearance of the Grade II-listed viaduct structure and the surrounding Conservation Area.

As outlined above, UDP policy T1.5 offers support for the principle of further improvements to the local rail network, making specific reference to further electrification of the network as a particularly important scheme. The proposed impact protection guard is a small but essential element of the electrification scheme and, therefore, it is considered that the proposals are consistent with the objectives of T1.5.

Conclusion

In summary, it is considered that the works proposed represent the minimum intervention necessary to enable the safe operation of the electrified line and the guard will not result in any unacceptable impact upon the significance of the heritage asset. The electrified line will deliver substantial economic, environmental and social benefits, which undoubtedly renders it a 'sustainable development'.

In light of the above, the proposals are considered to be in accordance with the policy thrust stipulated by the NPPF and the Manchester Unitary Development Plan. Consequently, it is considered that Listed Building Consent should be granted for the proposed development.

Appendix 1 – List Description

Viaduct running west from Knott Mill and Deansgate Station, dividing into 2 at Castlefield, the northern branch terminating on west side of River Irwell, the southern on the east side of Dawson Street. c.1850. Red brick. Segmental arches and brick piers with stone capitals and brick parapet. Gothic style cast-iron bridge over Deansgate, the Rochdale Canal and the River Medlock. Viaduct branches into 2 at Castlefield; the northern branch terminating with the Irwell Bridge (half in City of Salford) which has a segmental arch with rusticated sandstone voussoirs and rusticated pilasters; the southern branch terminating at bridge over Dawson Street. Part in the City of Salford.