Albert Bridge – Impact Statement

The principal character of the bridge is based on its sandstone single span construction, and its overall classical architecture. The listing description points to the main architectural interest being below street level. At street level the parapets are formed in plain stone blocks with an obvious raised stone panel in the centre with two lamps positioned some distance either side. Three of the four raised panels that terminated the parapets have been modified, some substantially, with that at the Manchester end of the northern parapet remaining in tact. It is to the front face of this panel that the proposed plaque will be attached. Fixing will be achieved by 6 no. brass / bronze flush tamperproof security fixings, resin anchored into the stonework. (all fixings to be approved prior to work being undertaken).

In assessing the impact of the proposal on the special historic and architectural character of the listed bridge structure the following factors have been considered;

- the size and appearance of the plaque,
- the limited fixing required.
- the position of the plaques relative to the architectural features of the bridge,
- the purpose of the displays in promoting an understanding of the history of the waterway, its crossing points, and its part in the development of Manchester and the broader area.

The bridge is a grade 2 listed structure that has most of its architectural interest concentrated at below street level. The parapet design, although plain and simple is an important feature of the bridge and the proposal will be seen in this context. The plaque is however small and restrained in its appearance. It is therefore unlikely to have a significant or detrimental impact on the appearance or visual character of the parapet or the setting of the listed bridge within this part of the city centre. In addition it is believed that the information contained within the plaque draws attention to the importance of the river to Manchester and is therefore consistent with the City Council's policy objectives of using watercourses as an amenity resource and creating better access to and along such water features. For the above reasons it is considered that the proposal;

- does not detract from the architectural or historic importance of the listed bridge,
- will not detract from the particular physical features of the listed bridge,
- has a minimal impact on the bridge's setting within the street scene, and
- will bring some benefit in aiding the public's understanding of the role of the River Irwell in the City's past and future development.

As a result it is believed that a proper balance between the bridge's special interest and alteration will be achieved and that the proposal is consistent with guidance contained within paragraph 3.5 of Planning Policy Guidance: Planning and the Historic Environment (PPG15)

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