

RECOMMENDATION FOR PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

APPROVAL

DATE: 3rd April 2023

REF: BT

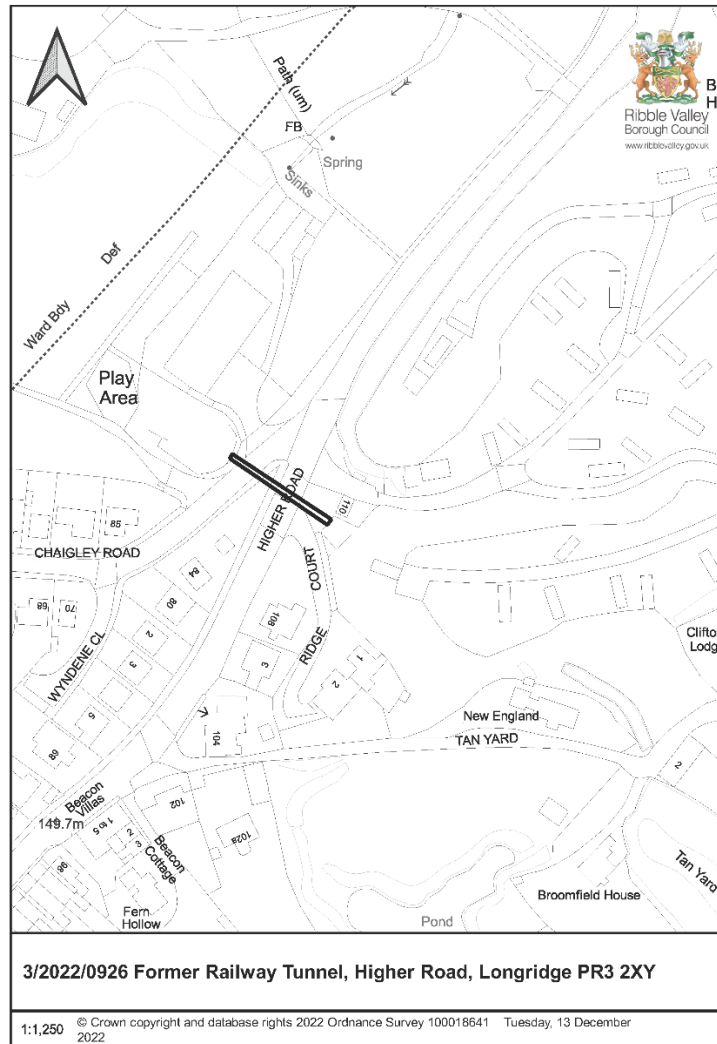
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APPLICATION REF: 3/2022/0926

GRID REF: SD 361149 437812

DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:

WORKS TO STONE PORTAL OF FORMER RAILWAY TUNNEL. MASONRY BLOCKS TO BE STITCHED AS NECESSARY TO REPAIR/MAINTAIN THE INTEGRITY OF THE STONE PORTAL.



CONSULTEE RESPONSES/ REPRESENTATIONS MADE:

PARISH COUNCIL:

Longridge Town Council have no objections to the proposed works.

LANCASHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL HIGHWAYS:

No objections subject to conditions.

LANCASHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL ARCHAEOLOGY:

No objections.

HISTORIC AMENITY SOCIETIES:

Consulted 4/10/22 – no response.

ADDITIONAL REPRESENTATIONS:

None.

1. Site Description and Surrounding Area

- 1.1 The application relates to a former railway tunnel located on the North-eastern edge of Longridge. The tunnel is sited underneath the junction between Chaigley Road and Higher Road and comprises an elliptical tubed design which runs for a distance of approximately 50 metres in a linear North-west to South-east direction. Access to the tunnel is via a gated archway on the North-western side of the structure with the South-eastern side of the tunnel having been blocked off.
- 1.2 The Eastern and Western ends of the tunnel are surrounded by numerous trees, bushes and ground level vegetation. The surrounding area comprises a mixture of residential housing, woodland and public open space.
- 1.3 The former railway tunnel is a Grade II Listed Building. The official listing description reads as follows:

West portal of a tunnel, which is now blocked at the other end, dated 1839. Sandstone. The centre piece of the portal is flat on plan and projects a little between abutments which curve forward. All the masonry is rusticated and rock-faced. The tunnel is, apparently, an elliptical tube of coursed stone, and the voussoirs of the entrance are individually rusticated and rock-faced under a plan projecting string course. The taller keystone bears a panel incised with the letters P & L R 1839 FHP CT Overall is a smoother-faced blocking course (of single stones over the centre piece and of three shallow courses over the abutments) and a flat coping. Many of the stones bear masons' marks.

History: built for the Preston and Longridge Railway Company's line from Tootle Height Quarry which was opened in 1840. The chairman was Sir Peter Hesketh-Fleetwood (to whom the initials FHP are said to refer).

2. **Proposed Development for which consent is sought**

- 2.1 Consent is sought for repair works to the former tunnel in order to repair a circumferential crack between the Voissoirs and arch barrel of the tunnel and other areas of cracked masonry within the tunnel. The repair works proposed would involve the installation of numerous stitching bars in order to maintain the structural integrity of the tunnel.

3. **Relevant Planning History**

None.

4. **Relevant Policies**

Ribble Valley Core Strategy (Adopted Version)

Key Statement DS1: Development Strategy

Key Statement DS2: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Key Statement EN5: Heritage Assets

Policy DMG1: General Considerations

Policy DME3: Sites and Species Protection and Conservation

Policy DME4: Protecting Heritage Assets

National Planning Policy Framework

National Planning Practice Guidance

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990: Section 16

5. **Assessment of Proposed Development**

5.1 **Principle:**

5.1.1 The former railway tunnel is a Grade II Listed Building. The LPA must accord with their duties at section 16 (2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 which states:

5.1.2 *16. In considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works 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.*

5.1.3 The NPPF at paragraph 16 sets out expectations with regards to conserving and enhancing the historic environment. Applicants are required to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting.

5.1.4 The council should consider any loss of historic fabric to constitute harm, but to make an assessment as to the significance of the asset and apply weight to its conservation accordingly.

5.1.5 Para 202 of the NPPF States:

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 including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

- 5.1.6 The proposed works to the listed building must be subject to careful consideration with respect to the duties above and the other material considerations.

5.2 Impact upon the heritage asset:

- 5.2.1 Paragraph 199 of the National Planning Policy Framework states:

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.

- 5.2.2 In addition, Policy DME4 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy states:

[the Council] aims to seek positive improvements in the quality of the historic environment through monitoring heritage assets at risk and supporting development proposals consistent with their conservation.

- 5.2.3 Furthermore, Historic England guidance with regards to carrying out repairs on heritage assets states:

The extent of the repair should normally be limited to what is reasonably necessary to make failing elements sound and capable of continuing to fulfil their intended functions...the use of materials or techniques with a lifespan that is predictable from past performance, and which are close matches for those being repaired or replaced, tends to carry a low risk of future harm or premature failure.

- 5.2.4 In this instance, the works proposed would involve the insertion of a series of holes to the voussoirs on the tunnel's Western end. The holes to be inserted would be modest in size measuring 16mm in diameter and would be installed with specialist rock drilling equipment.

- 5.2.5 Stitching bars comprising a 10mm width would then be inserted into each of the holes in order to 'stitch' the cracked sections of masonry with each of the stitching bars strategically inserted to avoid the mortar joints on the masonry blocks.

- 5.2.6 The drilled openings would then be filled with grout at low pressure with the holes on the Voussoirs then pointed up with mortar to match the external appearance of the tunnel.

- 5.2.7 Similar repair works would be carried out to the additional cracks located within the central and Eastern sections of the tunnel in the form of low pressure grout insertion and mortar tab installation.

- 5.2.8 Accordingly, the proposed development would constitute small scale and visually unobtrusive repair works underpinned by appropriate engineering methodologies

that would be wholly appropriate and respectful to the historic character and structural integrity of the heritage asset.

- 5.2.9 With the above in mind, it is considered that the works proposed would outweigh the less than substantial harm to the identified heritage asset in terms of public benefits by preserving the structure and extending its lifespan, thereby conforming with Paragraph 202 of the NPPF.

5.3 Highways and Parking

- 5.3.1 Lancashire County Council Highways initially responded to the application with a request for additional information regarding further technical details pertaining to the proposed repair works.
- 5.3.2 The applicant has since provided a Technical Note which has been reviewed by the LHA who subsequently have no objection to the proposed works subject to the implementation of a condition and informative with regards to the submission and agreement of further technical information including the provision of an Approval in Principle (AiP) Structural Report.
- 5.3.3 On this basis no highway issues are identified and the proposal satisfies Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

5.4 Landscape / Ecology

- 5.4.1 A preliminary bat roost assessment and hibernation surveys were carried out at the application site between January and March 2023 in order to determine the presence of any protected species on site.
- 5.4.2 The surveys undertaken deemed the heritage asset and the surrounding area to hold moderate bat hibernation roosting potential however a visual inspection of potential roost features within and around the tunnel found no evidence to suggest use by bats, with no bats recorded hibernating within cracks and crevices within the tunnel.
- 5.4.3 The overall findings from the report show that the impacts of the proposed works would carry a low risk disturbance to protected species with no loss of bat roosting sites anticipated as a result of the proposed repair works to the tunnel. This report has been assessed by the Council's Countryside Officer who is satisfied with the survey methodology and its findings.
- 5.4.4 Numerous mitigation measures were provided within the submitted ecology report which can be secured by way of additional planning conditions. On this basis the proposal satisfies Policy DME3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

5.5 Observations/Consideration of Matters Raised/Conclusion:

- 5.5.1 The proposed development would constitute small scale and visually unobtrusive repair works through the use of appropriate materials and construction techniques, all of which would be reasonably necessary to restore the defective elements of the identified heritage asset.

5.5.2 The works proposed would be respectful to the historic character and structural integrity of the heritage asset and would contribute to the ongoing preservation of the heritage asset in accordance with Section 16 of the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Paragraphs 199 and 202 of the NPPF and Policy DME4 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy. Furthermore no other issues including highways and ecology are identified and the proposal satisfies Policies DMG1 and DME3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

RECOMMENDED:

That Listed Building Consent be granted subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted must be begun not later than three years from the date of this permission.

REASON: Required to be imposed by Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990.

2. The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out otherwise than in conformity with the following submitted plans and details and recommendations therein received by the Local Planning Authority unless prohibited by any other condition.

Plans

Existing General Arrangement And Defects Drawing No: 1045-SWA-00-XX-DR-S-0001
REV P2

22 0926 Location Plan

Strengthening Works Drawing No: 1045-SWA-00-XX-DR-S-0002 REV P1

Reports

22 0926 Bat survey

22 0926 Heritage Statement

22 0926 Technical Note

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and so that the Local Planning Authority shall be satisfied with the details.

3. No development shall take place until an Approval In Principle (AiP) Structural Report setting out how any structures within 6 metres of the edge of the adopted highway (and outside of this measure where the failure of any structures would affect the safety of road users) will be assessed, excavated, constructed, strengthened or demolished has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall then proceed in accordance with the approved AIP Report.

REASON: To ensure the works safeguard the structural integrity of the adopted highway during the demolition and construction phase of the development.

4. No part of the development hereby granted consent shall commence until details of a method statement have been submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. The details of the method statement shall be in accordance with the Bat Mitigation Guidelines 2004 (or any equivalent updated guidance which may be subsequently published) and include information on measures that aim to avoid, cancel or reduce negative effects of the development on protected species / roosts / habitat, including timings of the work.

The details submitted shall also include information on enhancement and compensatory measures including the type and function of replacement roosts, bat access points and long term security for roosts, together with a timeframe for implementation. This shall include the installation of compensatory bat boxes on site in line with the mitigations measures detailed within Bat Survey Report and Method Statement European Protected Species (Bats) Reasonable Avoidance and Mitigation Measures dated 10.03.2023.

The development shall then proceed in accordance with the approved method statement. Any approved enhancement and compensatory measures shall be implemented in accordance with the approved timeframe and shall thereafter be retained in perpetuity.

REASON: To ensure the protection of species/habitat protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as Amended) and in the interests of biodiversity and to enhance habitat opportunities for species of conservation concern/protected species and to minimise/mitigate the potential impacts upon protected species resultant from the development.

Informative (Highways)

Prior to works commencing, the Design and Work certificates shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority, in consultation with the Local Highway Authority. Once works are complete, the Construction Compliance certificate shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority, in consultation with the Local Highway Authority.

Informative (Ecology)

Site contractors and site project managers shall be made aware of the legal protection afforded to all species of bats in the UK. In the event that any bats are found or disturbed during any part of the development, all work shall cease until further advice has been sought from a licensed ecologist.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

https://webportal.ribblevalley.gov.uk/site/scripts/planx_details.php?appNumber=3%2F2022%2F0926