



Delegated Report

Planning and Listed Building Consent Applications

Planning Application No: 20240641
20240642

Location: Canal Basin Albion Parade Gravesend Kent

Description: 20240641 - Alterations to swing bridge.
20240642 - Application for Listed Building Consent for alterations to swing bridge.

Applicant: The Embankment Marina Gravesend Ltd

Site Visit Date: Previously for the pre-application enquiry

Submitted Documents/Plans

- Application form;
- Location Plan;
- Drawing no. 12428-PP-00-XX-DR-S-0001 Rev. P5 – Proposed Alterations Sheet 1;
- Drawing no. 12428-PP-00-XX-DR-S-0002 Rev. P1 – Block Plan;
- Drawing no. 12428-PP-00-XX-DR-S-0003 Rev. P2 – Proposed Alterations Sheet 2;
- Flood Risk Assessment; and
- Planning and Heritage Statement.

Superseded

- ~~Drawing no. 12428-PP-00-XX-DR-S-0001 Rev. P4 – Proposed Alterations Sheet 1;~~
- ~~Drawing no. 12428-PP-00-XX-DR-S-0003 Rev. P1 – Proposed Alterations Sheet 2;~~

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20210406	Application for Listed building Consent for alterations and refurbishment of Grade II listed Swing Bridge in association with the redevelopment of Albion Waterside.	Permitted	06.09.2021

Prior to submitting these planning and listed building consent applications the applicant submitted a pre-application enquiry for alterations to the bridge.

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014)

- CS01 – Sustainable Development
- CS02 – Scale & Distribution of Development
- CS12 – Green Infrastructure
- CS18 – Climate Change
- CS19 – Development & Design Principles

- CS20 – Heritage and the Historic Environment

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- TC2 – Listed Buildings
- TC3 – Development Affecting Conservation Areas
- TC7 – Other Archaeological Sites
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Paragraph 33 of the NPPF (2023) sets out that policies within adopted local plans should be reviewed to assess whether they need updating at least once every five years, and should then be updated as necessary. Such reviews are also a legal requirement as set out in Regulation 10A of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) England Regulations 2012.

The Council undertook such a review in September 2019 and found that the adopted Local Plan Core Strategy is in need of a partial review in terms of Policy CS02, due to the increased need for housing since the Local Plan Core Strategy was adopted and the need to ensure that a sufficient land supply exists to meet this need. Whilst saved policies from the Local Plan 1st Review (1994) generally conform with the NPPF (2023), the Council will also seek to replace these.

National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

- Section 2 – Achieving sustainable development
- Section 4 – Decision-making
- Section 9 – Promoting sustainable transport
- Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places
- Section 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Other Material Considerations

The Council has a statutory requirement under Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 in considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works to 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.

Under Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 the Council has a statutory duty in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting to 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 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended which states that, with respect to buildings or other land in a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- Gravesend Riverside Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2009);
- Management Plan Gravesend Town Centre Conservation Areas (2009);

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Consultees

GBC Conservation Officer

Just looked through the submissions and it appears to be in line with what we had discussed at our site meeting. It's a little thin on past history and the evolution of the bridge and could do with more detail photographs, which could be required as part of the consent in the form of a photographic record to include the land structure (kerbs, walls) either side of the bridge. I also note that hardwood decking is to be

adopted for the restoration rather than the artificial decking material we were shown on site, which is positive.

We could do with more detail, which could be submitted as a condition. Scale drawings at 1/10 and ½ or full size will be required for the handrails, and intersection of the bridge with the granite kerbs, with final colour to be agreed.

Regarding the granite kerbs at each end of the bridge, you may recall that these evidenced the widening of the bridge (the additional granite kerbs were different in appearance to the original ones), which due to the additional weight of the widening unbalanced it and caused difficulty in opening and closing it. The bridge is balanced on a counterbalance system that is weighted at the pivot end. This will need to be checked and adjusted to ensure the weighted side of the bridge is balanced properly. To this end we will need to see that this is understood and implemented as part of the repair work and so details of the adjustments to the counterbalance system must be submitted as part of the repair work.

I think this covers the main points but let me know if you have any other points to include.

Regarding the width of the hardwood timber, assuming the thickness doesn't change then this would be acceptable and preferable to the artificial plank we were shown at our site visit.

KCC Heritage

I have no objections to the works or recommendations in respect of archaeological matters. I would defer to your Conservation Officer in respect of advice regarding the balance between matters such as health and safety, weight and a design which conserves the heritage significance of the bridge and its associated mechanism and fittings.

Historic England

Historic England provides advice when our engagement can add most value. In this case we are not offering advice. This should not be interpreted as comment on the merits of the application.

We suggest that you seek the views of your specialist conservation and archaeological advisers. You may also find it helpful to refer to our published advice at <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/find/>

It is not necessary to consult us on this application again, unless there are material changes to the proposals. However, if you would like advice from us, please contact us to explain your request.

Environment Agency

Environment Agency Position

We have **no objections** to the alterations being made to the bridge. The applicant will need to contact us for a Flood Risk Activity Permit as set out in the informative below.

Informative Environmental permit - advice to applicant:

The Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016 require a permit or exemption to be obtained for any activities which will take place:

- on or within 8 metres of a main river (16 metres if tidal)
- on or within 8 metres of a flood defence structure or culverted main river (16 metres if tidal)
- on or within 16 metres of a sea defence
- involving quarrying or excavation within 16 metres of any main river, flood defence (including a remote defence) or culvert
- in a floodplain more than 8 metres from the riverbank, culvert, or flood defence structure (16 metres if it's a tidal main river) and you don't already have planning permission

For further guidance please visit <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-activities-environmental-permits> or contact our National Customer Contact Centre on 03708 506 506 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm) or by emailing enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk.

Neighbouring properties

20240641 – 4 neighbouring properties were consulted plus site and press notices – overall consultation expiry date was 04.10.2024 – no responses received.

20240642 – Site and press notices - overall consultation expiry date was 20.09.2024 – no responses received.

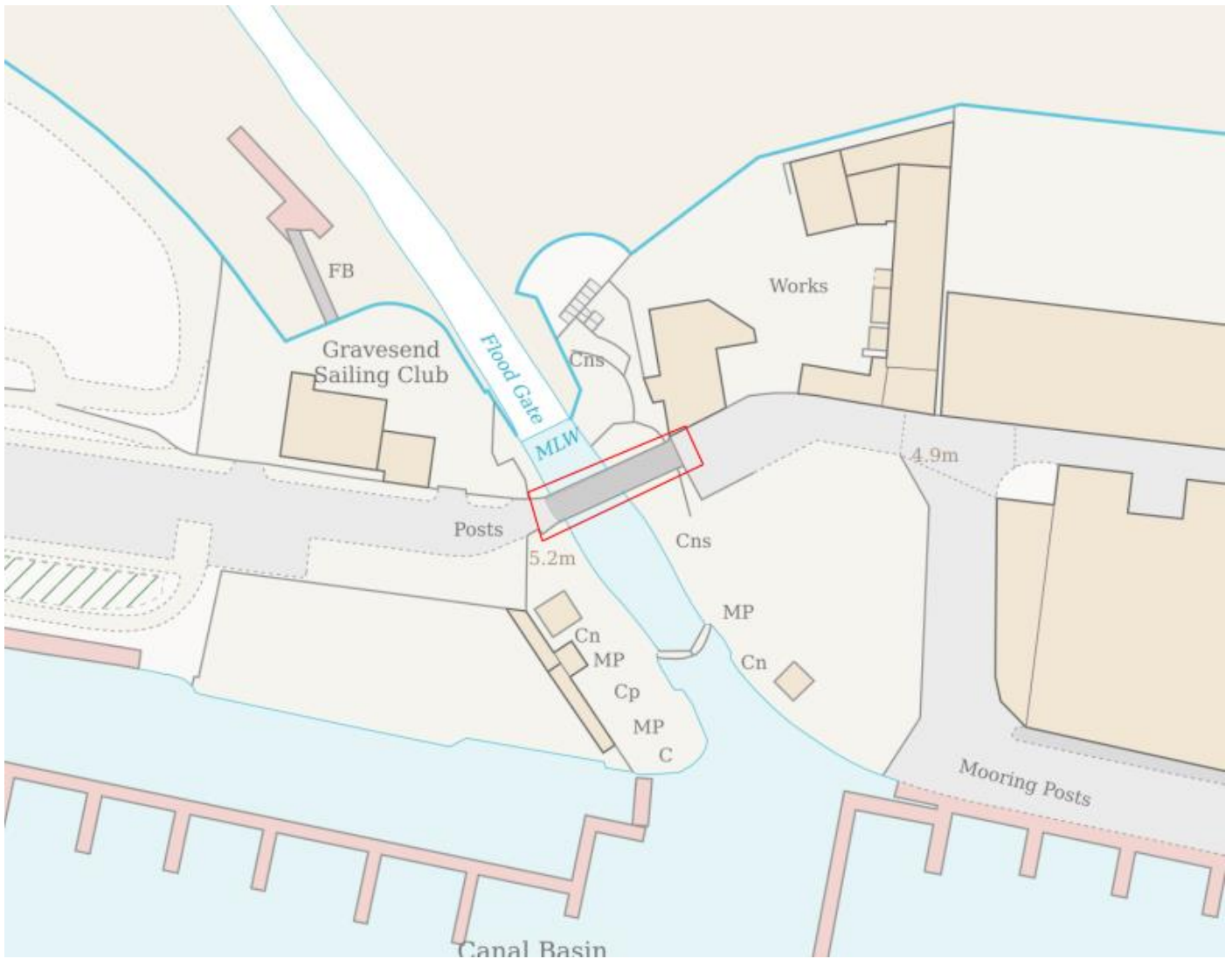
Officer's Analysis

The application site consists of the swing bridge which is located over the tidal lock to the entrance into the Canal Basin Marina from the River Thames, immediately east of the Gravesend Sailing Club and just before the industrial buildings at Albion Parade/Albion Waterside. It provides access for pedestrians and cyclists etc. over the lock barrel but not vehicles and when open it provides access from the River Thames for boats entering and leaving the canal basin. Due to the bridge being in a poor state of repair with many of the flooring timbers being either partially or wholly rotting away, it has been closed to the public.

The swing bridge is a grade II listed building under a listing which also includes the barrelled lock chamber, sea walls, locks and canal basin and is situated in the Riverside Conservation Area.

The site is also a Public Right of Way (NG2A), situated in the Gravesend Riverside East & North East Gravesend Opportunity Area and the Canal Basin Regeneration Area Key Site (sub area 2.1), Area of Archaeological Potential and Flood Zone 3.

The location of the swing bridge is shown below:



The bridge is shown in the below images:



The principle consideration in the assessment of the applications is:

- The impact on the architectural and historic interest of this grade II listed building and whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Gravesend Riverside Conservation Area;

Other Matters

- Flooding;
- Archaeology.

The impact on the architectural and historic interest of this grade II listed building and whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Gravesend Riverside Conservation Area

Listed Building Consent was granted under application ref. 20210406 for alterations and refurbishment of the swing bridge. The Inspection Report submitted with that application stated how there are a number of

areas of the bridge that were in need of repair.

It was therefore proposed to refurbish the bridge as follows:

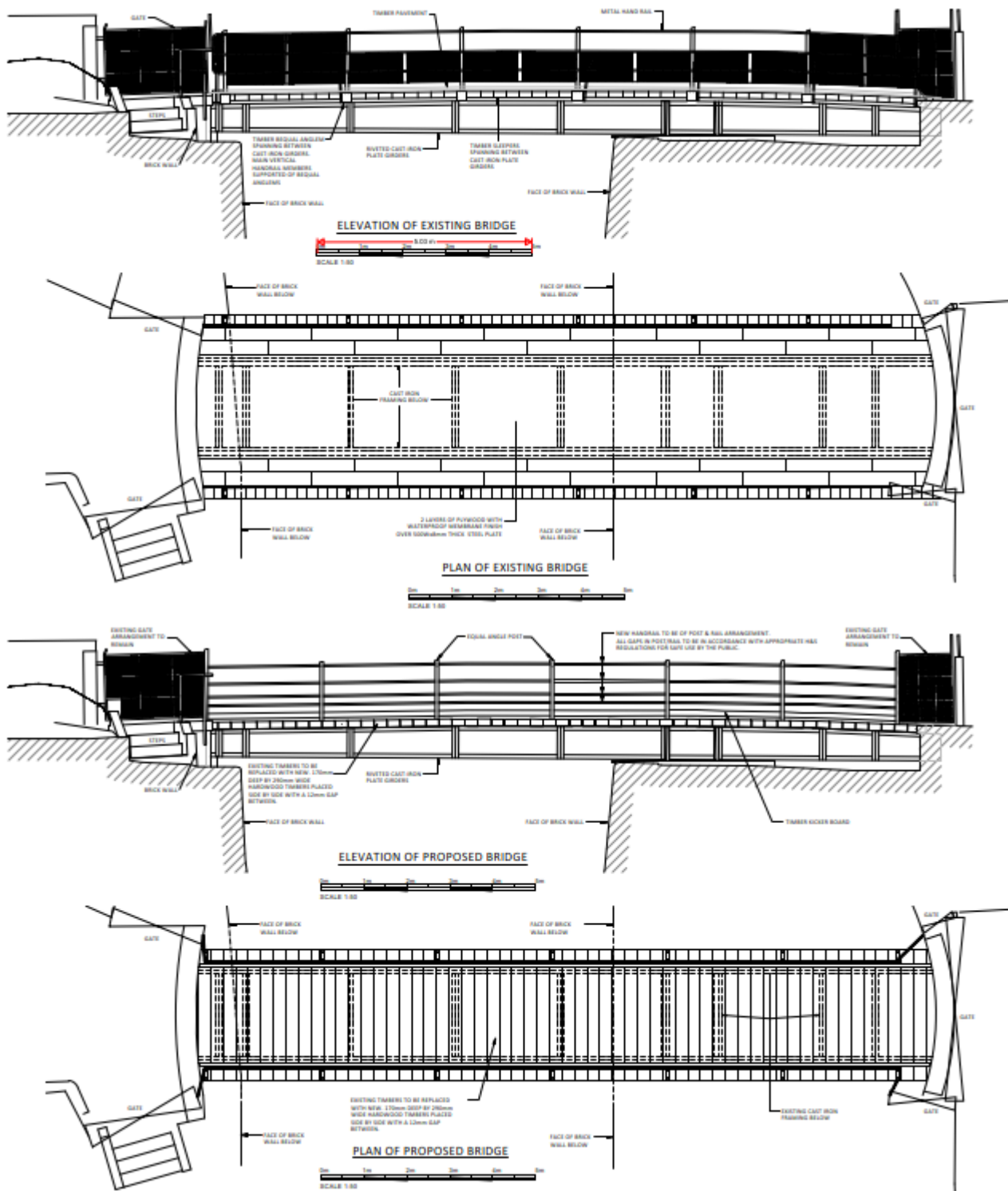
- Resurfacing of the bridge;
- Replacing rotten timbers with like-for-like; and
- Installing a new set of railings to replace late 20th century interventions.

There were no direct works to the bridge mechanism proposed and the alterations to the timber elements of the bridge were to improve the day-to-day operation of the swing bridge which was said to have been impacted by the decay and deterioration of the timbers. However, these current planning and listed building consent applications have been submitted as it is stated that listed building consent ref. 20210406 cannot be implemented as this would likely lead to ongoing problems with the operation of the bridge and that a lighter, new design for the bridge is required to allow the original operating mechanism of the bridge, which has become completely difficult to operate, to be resumed.

It is stated that the main steel structure element of the bridge appears to be in reasonable condition with comparatively minor modifications and it is the timber structure on top of the steel main frame which is said to be in very poor condition and has been replaced more than once due to the environment of the River Thames. It is stated that the side walkways were added to the bridge c.1930s/1940s and this placed the bridge's operating mechanism under loads that they were not designed for and that the bridge became difficult to operate from that time onwards. The bridge is said to have been operating under excessive loads for a great period of time and there is concern at the impact this will have if this continues. It is also stated that additional timber sheeting which was added to the bridge as a temporary repair in the last 10 years has added even further weight to the bridge and as a result it has become extremely difficult to operate the swing bridge and almost impossible in high winds.

The proposal is therefore for a new design for the replacement timber structure on top of the main steel frame in order to lighten the weight of the bridge. It is proposed to do this by removing the side walkways; removing the hardwood decking overlay and spacing out of the sleepers below; and replacing the railings with new ones of a post and rail design.

The existing and proposed elevations and plans are as follows:



The proposal to remove the two side walkways is considered acceptable as the walkways are not original but are a relatively more recent addition and their removal would revert the bridge back to its original width.

The replacement of the existing timber structure on top of the main steel frame is considered acceptable as many of the timbers are rotting and in need of repair, the timber structure is not original as it has been replaced more than once. It is proposed to use hardwood for the replacement timbers which is acceptable and sympathetic to the age and style of bridge. It would also be a hardy material to use given the environment the bridge is located. As originally submitted the timbers were proposed to be 170mm in depth x 290mm in width. The agent advised of a change in these measurements during the course of the application and the timbers are now proposed to be 150mm in depth x 230mm in width. The spacing

between the timbers would be the same as originally proposed – 12mm. The Conservation Officer advised the new measurement for the width was acceptable providing the thickness does not change. The thickness would change but would not be any thicker, it would be less, and the agent has confirmed that the timbers would sit within the grooves as such that there would be no visible difference in the thickness externally.

The replacement of the railings is considered acceptable as they are not original. The proposed post and rail design for railings is considered acceptable and is a light and open design sympathetic to the age and character of the bridge.

The Conservation Officer raises no objections to the proposal and requests conditions regarding a photographic record to include the land structure (kerbs, walls) either side of the bridge and scaled drawings at 1/10 and ½ of full size for the handrails, and intersection of the bridge with the granite kerbs, with final colour to be agreed and lastly details of the adjustments to the counterbalance system to ensure the weighted side of the bridge is balanced properly. The photographic record and scaled drawings conditions would need to be pre-commencement conditions and the agent has agreed to these.

It is therefore considered that subject to conditions the proposed works would not cause any harm to the significance of this grade II* listed building and would help repair the bridge for the future and allow this public right of way to be open again to the public and boats when open. By extension the works would also preserve the character and appearance of the Riverside Conservation Area. In respect of listed building and conservation area impact the proposal is therefore considered compliant with Policies CS19 and CS20 (LPCS) and saved Policies TC2 and TC3 (LPFR).

Other Matters

Flooding

The site is in Flood Zone 3; a Flood Risk Assessment has been submitted with the application. The Environment Agency (EA) were consulted on the application and they state that they have no objections to the proposed alterations to the bridge. They advise that the applicant will need to contact the EA for a Flood Risk Activity Permit which can be attached as an informative should permission be forthcoming. As such it is considered the proposal is acceptable in respect of flooding and therefore compliant with Policy CS18 (LPCS).

Archaeology

The site is located in an Area of Archaeological Potential however, there are no groundworks with the proposal. KCC Heritage have advised that they have no objections to the proposal, the proposal is therefore acceptable in respect of archaeology and compliant with saved Policy TC7 (LPFR).

Any Other Material Planning Considerations

None.

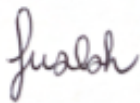
Conclusion

The proposal subject to conditions would therefore protect the architectural and historic significance of this grade II listed building and preserve the character and appearance of the Riverside Conservation Area. It would also not impact on flooding or archaeology. The proposal would repair the bridge for the future and bring it back into use. The proposal is compliant with local and national planning policy.

Recommendation

20240641 – Permission
20240642 – Permission

(For detailed conditions and informatives, see draft Decision)

Case Officer:	Ms Rebecca Harrison	Team Leader:	Mrs Faye Walsh
Signed:	<i>Rebecca Harrison</i>	Signed:	
Dated:	28th November 2024	Dated:	28 November 2024