
APPLICATION NO.	P09/W0342
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL
REGISTERED	20.04.2009
PARISH	WARBOROUGH
WARD MEMBER(S)	Mr John Cotton Mr Philip Cross Mrs Celia Collett
APPLICANT	Oxfordshire County Council
SITE	Shillingford Bridge Shillingford (In the parishes of Brightwell Cum Sotwell & Warborough)
PROPOSAL	The erection of a 900mm high steel railing painted black over the south-west wing wall of the bridge to provide pedestrian protection
AMENDMENTS	As amended by letter from Agent dated 26 May 2009
GRID REFERENCE	459665/192067
OFFICER	Mr R. Turner

1.0 **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This application has been referred to the Planning Committee because the officer recommendation conflicts with that of Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Parish Council.
- 1.2 The bridge is a Grade II* listed building structure, which spans the River Thames, to the south of Shillingford. The structure lies within both the parishes of Warborough and Brightwell-cum-Sotwell. The bridge provides a single lane carriageway, controlled by three way traffic signals, and footways on either side of the highway. The current layout is a result of recent alterations following an approved County Matters application in December 2006.
- 1.3 Constructed in limestone ashlar and some red brick, the central section of the bridge has three graduated segmental arches with projecting keyblocks and balustraded parapet. White metal railings are visible along both sides of the northern end of the bridge. Identical railings run along the southern side leading up to the hotel entrance and along the boundary of the swimming pool. However, these are significantly concealed within the hedges along both sides of the road.

2.0 **PROPOSAL**

- 2.1 The application site is shown on the OS plan **attached** at Appendix 1
- 2.2 The current application proposes to provide a 900mm high railing to the south west end of the bridge. The proposed railing is to be constructed in black painted hollow steel and spans 12m along the south west of the bridge. Listed Building consent has been granted under application P09/W0199/LB for essential maintenance and the erection of steel railings.
- 2.3 A copy of the submitted plans is **attached** at Appendix 2 along with the applicant's supporting information.

3.0 **CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

3.1 **English Heritage (South East)**

- No objections. Application should be determined in accordance with national and local policy, and on the basis of the council's specialist conservation advice.

Conservation Officer (SAS)

- Supports the application, subject to written details describing the location of fixings and the manner in which the railings will be attached to the pavement.

Warborough Parish Council

- No response received

Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Parish Council

- Recommend refusal. Contrary to SODC policies. The introduction of railings on a 200 year old bridge is questionable as a safety measure. Would also be too attractive to children climbing up for a view.

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 **P09/W0199/LB.** Bridge maintenance works involving the replacement of stone in arch barrels, voussoirs, balusters, cutwaters and spandrel walls. Erection of steel railings on the south-west side in front of the existing stone parapets to protect pedestrians. Approved 14 May 2009.

P06/W0775/CC. Removal of existing road surface, waterproofing of relieving slabs, construction of two new footways, narrowing of carriageway and erection of three-way signals to control traffic. Approved 7 December 2006.

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

5.1 Adopted SOLP Policies

CON3: Alterations and extensions to listed buildings

C2: Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

PPG15: Planning and the historic environment

6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

6.1 The main issues in this case are:

- Impact on the character and appearance of the listed building and street scene
- Impact on the North Wessex Downs AONB

6.2 **Impact on the character and appearance of the listed building and street scene.**

The proposed steel railings would sit in front of the existing parapet wall of the bridge's south west, roadside, elevation. Although not an original feature the proposed railings would be constructed in steel and painted black. These would be of a similar style to the existing railings to the north and south of the bridge.

6.3 Located on the roadside elevation and sitting at 0.9m in height, the railings would be visible to highway and footway users on the south west side of the bridge, and a small element of the southern most section would be visible from the section of the Thames footpath, river and hotel grounds to the west.

6.4 Historically the parapet wall to the south west was higher, due to the fact that the road level was lower. However, over the years the road surface has been raised due to the need to carry various infrastructure and services over the bridge to the north side. As

a result the parapet, which sits at 0.6m at its lowest point, is now too low to meet health and safety standards.

- 6.5 During pre application discussion with the council's conservation officer and English Heritage, alternatives were considered. Lowering the existing road sufficiently to address the health and safety issues would be impractical given the load-spreading reinforced concrete, buried public utility apparatus, and highway drainage beneath the road surface. Raising the level of the stone parapet using matching materials was also considered. However, this would have changed its overall character and visual appearance to a greater degree than the proposed scheme.
- 6.6 Although the proposed railings are not an original feature, they have been designed to have a minimal impact on the special historic and architectural character of the stone bridge and could be readily reversible in the future.
- 6.7 Brightwell-cum-Sotwell parish council have objected to the proposal as they consider it would be contrary to the council's policies. They also consider that the introduction of railings is a questionable safety measure, which would be attractive to children climbing up for a view. At present the parapet height does not meet health and safety requirements. In the short term orange, temporary barriers are in place to protect public safety. These will remain in position until a permanent solution can be found.
- 6.8 Policy CON3 of the SOLP seeks to ensure that any alteration to a listed building respects its established character and does not diminish its special historical or architectural qualities. Following detailed discussion with council officers and English Heritage representatives, the proposed railings are considered, by your officers, to provide a suitable safety measure whilst respecting the character and architectural qualities of this listed structure.
- 6.9 **Impact on the North Wessex Downs AONB.** The proposed steel railings are of a traditional style and finish, similar to existing railings found on the bridge. Your officer considers that the proposal would not harm the beauty or distinctiveness of the AONB.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The scheme provides an essential health and safety feature which has been designed to have a minimal impact on the character and architectural qualities of this listed building. It is therefore recommended that planning permission is granted subject to appropriate conditions.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

8.1 Planning Permission

1. **Commencement 3 yrs - Full Planning Permission**
2. **Details of fixings and method of fixture to be agreed**

Author Richard Turner
Contact No. 01491 823753
Email Add. planning.west@southoxon.gov.uk