

LONDON BOROUGH OF BROMLEY
TOWN PLANNING
RENEWAL AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

DELEGATED DECISION

21/05119/LAORD **Shortlands Railway Station**
Russell Penn **Shortlands Road**
 Shortlands
 Bromley
 BR2 0JA

Description of Development

Prior approval under Part 18 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 of the design and siting of the proposed works comprising: Erection of three new 16-person lift shafts, one to platforms 1/2, one to platforms 3/4 and the other on the other side of platform 1/2, erection of one new stairwell on the far side of platform 1/2; and erection of one steel footbridge between the lifts.

Proposal

The proposal seeks Prior Approval for under Part 18 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 of the design and siting of the proposed works comprising: Erection of three new 16-person lift shafts, one to platforms 1/2, one to platforms 3/4 and the other on the other side of platform 1/2, erection of one new stairwell on the far side of platform 1/2; and erection of one steel footbridge between the lifts.

Prior approval of design and siting is required.

Revised plans were submitted on 11th April 2022 to address concerns raised by the Conservation Officer and APCA regarding the design.

Location and Key Constraints

Shortlands Station is located on the lines leading to Victoria station and situated to the western end of Shortlands Neighbourhood Centre. The station building is accessed directly from the station car park which occupies a corner plot at the junction between Shortlands Road and the A222 Bromley Road. The station building is at street level with the track raised approximately 5m above this. The tracks cross the Highway via an overbridge. Access to the stations two island platforms is currently via a subway and two staircases. The first set of stairs on the subway lead to Platform one and two and the second to three and four. In addition to the main entrance via the station building, there is a side entrance which connects into the subway and is open out of hours.

On the platforms there are various buildings. On Platform one/two there is a waiting room, store room, platform staff office and staff toilets. On Platform three/four there is an electrical room, a station manager office telecoms room and BTP offices with toilets. The platforms are approximately 180m in length and relatively narrow, approximately 7.8m at their widest. The platform buildings are spaced apart with seating areas between. There are canopies to both platforms covering the subway and platform

buildings. These canopies are supported by columns and also by connections to the platform buildings.

The station is located within the newly designated Shortlands Conservation Area. The platforms are noted as being the most "architecturally interesting aspect of the station preserving original and decorative ironwork fencing around the stairwells topped with mitres referencing the Bishops of Rochester".

There are a group of trees to the west of the tracks, behind the station building, which are subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO).

Comments from Local Residents and Groups

Nearby owners/occupiers were notified of the application and representations were received, which can be summarised as follows:

Objections:

- o No need for footbridge between the platforms. People with mobility issues can use the areas under the platforms to move from one to the other.

Support

- o Support has been given for the installation of step free access to the station. Access has to be the top priority for all people across the full range of needs

Local Groups

- o Bromley Civic Society has commented that the proposals are highly detrimental to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area both in their physical arrangement and lack of any architectural treatment.

Case Officer Note: The application has been revised since the above comments were made.

- o Ravenbourne Valley Residents Association have objected to the appearance of the proposed works in respect of the revised drawings. It is stated that the "The appearance of the lift towers, bridge and stairwell would not 'preserve or enhance the character or appearance' of the new Shortlands Village Conservation Area"

Comments from Consultees

- o Conservation Officer:

I would not object to this amended proposal with added architectural detail such as horizontal brick banding and the introduction of different vertical brick planes with some decorative brick detailing which softens the design and softens the impact in my view.

Planes in architecture define three-dimensional volumes of mass and space. The properties of each plane - size, shape, colour, texture - as well as their spatial relationship to one another ultimately determine the visual attributes of the form they define and the qualities of the space they enclose. These new vertical planes help to soften the staircase towers in my view.

The heritage balance talked about in the NPPF is very important in this case as there is undoubtedly a strong public justification for these works and there are clear public benefits although the new staircase towers will be seen in the Conservation Area context the access benefits are clear.

I do not consider that these staircase towers will intrude unacceptably and although they will be seen in my view any harm will be less than substantial and therefore balanced against the strong public justification the application is acceptable.

The detailed materials will need to be conditioned and samples will need to be provided.

o Advisory Panel Conservation Areas (APCA):

The Panel fully supports the principle of installation of lifts but strongly objects to the current proposals which will be seriously detrimental to the character and appearance of the newly designated Conservation Area.

The original permission, several years ago, for lifts up from ground level to platforms is obviously the only acceptable solution and should be revisited. The current proposals are visually intrusive in height and in the shameful lack of architectural treatment.

We have been made aware of the reasons given by the applicant for not implementing the previous permission but consider these can be overcome with the extra effort which is required now the Village is designated as a Conservation Area and any development should

'preserve or enhance its character or appearance'. These proposals do neither. We recommend refusal and pursuance of the original permission but with a greater effort towards appropriate design now the Village is a designated Conservation Area and the setting of Listed buildings (e.g. the Pumping Stations)

Case Officer Note: The application has been revised since the above comments were made.

Policy Context

The application requires the Council to consider the acceptability of the proposal under Class A of Schedule 2, Part 18 of the General Permitted Development Order 2015 (as amended).

Under this class works are not permitted unless the prior approval of the appropriate authority to the detailed plans and specifications is first obtained and in this regard this prior approval is not to be refused, and conditions should not be imposed, unless the authority is satisfied that:

(a) the development ought to be and could reasonably be carried out elsewhere on the land; or

(b) the design or appearance of any building, bridge, aqueduct, pier or dam would injure the amenity of the neighbourhood and is reasonably capable of modification to avoid this.

Relevant Planning History

The relevant planning history relating to the application site is summarised as follows:

17/04769/LAORD: Installation of two lift shafts and alterations to existing canopies (prior approval of design and siting of the proposed works submitted by Network Rail under Class A of Part 18 Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015. Approved 13.03.2018

17/04769/CONDIT: Details of Condition submitted in relation to planning permission ref: 17/04769/LAORD - Installation of two lift shafts and alterations to existing canopies. Condition 1: Prior to commencement of the development details of the brickwork finish, including material samples and elevational drawings of the lift shafts. Approved 07.01.2020

Considerations

As outlined above, under Class A of Part 18 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning General Permitted Development Order work can be carried out under local or private Acts or Order.

Under this class works are not permitted unless the prior approval of the appropriate authority to the detailed plans and specifications is first obtained and in this regard this prior approval is not to be refused, and conditions should not be imposed, unless the authority is satisfied that:

- (a) the development ought to be and could reasonably be carried out elsewhere on the land; or
- (b) the design or appearance of any building, bridge, aqueduct, pier or dam would injure the amenity of the neighbourhood and is reasonably capable of modification to avoid this.

It is considered that the installation of three lift shafts, a stairwell and footbridge is practical given that the existing walkway/subway under the station platforms are already located within close proximity of this section of the station, where the lift shafts will be installed. As such, it is considered that the works could not be reasonably carried out elsewhere on the land.

Extensive discussions have been undertaken with Network Rail and a revised suite of drawings has been submitted regarding modifications to the proposed scheme in order to minimise the visual impact, including a redesign of the visual appearance of the lift shafts and associated structures involving changes to the external facing brickwork including the use of an external facing brick, with darker red banding in order to be more in keeping with the existing platform buildings. This is considered to be a positive modification, which would complement the appearance of the existing development on site. The appearance of the lift shafts is not considered to detract from the station building.

It is also noted that whilst the lift shafts would be highly visible, they would provide improved accessible access to the station platforms.

On balance, the design and appearance of the development would not result in harm to the visual amenity of the neighbourhood and character and appearance of the Shortlands Conservation Area.

In regard to the potential impact on the neighbourhood amenity arising from the development no undue loss is anticipated to surrounding residents. The site is situated a considerable distance from surrounding residential properties, the closest being Nightingale Court at approximately 30m away. Although, the proposed lift shafts, would be subject to long views from the public realm, particularly due to their prominent siting at the north-eastern end of the platforms, elevated position of the platforms and location of the development in relation to surrounding roads, this not considered to negatively impact the amenity of the neighbourhood.

Accordingly, it is considered that approval should be granted.

Decision

Approved

For conditions or grounds of refusal please refer to the Decision Notice