

British Library Access Planning Application

4. Design, Access & Planning Statement (incl. Crime Impact)

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Introduction

This Design and Access Statement is submitted pursuant to the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) (Amendment) (England) Order 2006 in respect to a planning application for enabling works comprising the relocation of the existing British Library Access to a point south of its existing location.

This application comprises the:

"permanent relocation of the British Library access road to replace existing temporary access point."

Proposal

The application proposes the relocation of the existing temporary access road to the British Library. The permanent access point is proposed to be located further to the south of the existing temporary entrance on Midland Road, as illustrated within the accompanying drawing package.

In association with the relocated access this application seeks a number of highway alterations along Midland Road, comprising:

- the removal of two existing pedestrian crossings along Midland Road and replacement with a pedestrian crossing between the centre of the two;
- Relocation/reconfiguration of the bus stop and bus layover on the eastern side of Midland Road; and
- Amendments to bus lane delineation

Context

In preparing this application, an assessment has been carried out as to the need for the proposals, and the context of the site and the immediate surroundings, in order to identify the most appropriate location to meet the immediate and future operational requirements of the British Library. This assessment also ensures that the proposals comply with PPS1, in that any future developments of the wider area maximise the sites potential. A summary of this assessment is provided below.

Existing Access

The British Library is located on a parcel of land bound by Euston Road to the south, Ossulston Street to the west, Midland Road to the east and the development site under the freehold of the Wellcome Trust to the north. Pedestrian and all other visitors to the British Library use pedestrian entrances on the main plaza on Euston Road and the southern ends of Ossulston Street and Midland Road. Service access for staff and disabled visitor parking is towards the rear of the site, via an existing temporary access road from Midland Road, opposite the St Pancras International rail terminus.

Relocation Requirement

The need for this application arises as a consequence of a Land Swap Agreement undertaken between the British Library and Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), the then owners of the site to the north of the British Library (now in the ownership of the Wellcome Trust), in 2007. The freehold transfer of land was subject to a temporary right of way in favour of the British Library upon the DCMS transferred land until an

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alternative permanent access was in place. The purchasers of the site were required to enter into an obligation to provide the British Library with a permanent vehicular access point.

In seeking to secure a vehicular access point the British Library, through its agents Drivers Jonas (now Drivers Jonas Deloitte) submitted an application in June 2007 for the relocation of its temporary Midland Road access point to Ossulston Street (ref: 2007/0894/P).

Application ref: 2007/0894/P, which to date remains undetermined, sought to meet the immediate operational needs of the British Library, rather than its longer term requirements but its 'preferred' solution to the access relocation obligations. The application proposals were discussed with officers of Camden Council, TfL and local residents prior to submission. However, concerns were subsequently raised by both local residents and officers from Camden Council and accordingly, pursuant to the requirements of the land swap agreement, the British Library has subsequently reviewed alternative access road locations specifically including Midland Road as recommended by officers.

In the interim period, the freehold of the northern site has transferred from the DCMS to Wellcome Trust, and with it the obligation to provide an alternative route from the road to British Library's Service Area remains.

Following meetings with the Council's planning and highways officers, in addition to the GLA and TfL, an alternative access point to serve the British Library has been identified which meets all parties' requirements, as well as addressing the concerns made by local residents on the Ossulston Street access application.

The benefits of this application are as follows:

- Removal of the existing access immediately opposite the Midland Road entrance to St Pancras International Station will allow for the potential future provision of a pedestrian linkage in this area that will support any future proposals for the land to the rear of the British Library, and allow for enhanced public realm in the vicinity of the station entrance; and
- Completion of the site assembly and land swap envisaged by DCMS will enable future proposals to exploit the potential of the northern parcel of land, whilst concurrently enabling the future intensification of the British Library area all in accordance with National Planning Policy.

In drawing up these proposals regard has been given to the future development potential of the British Library site and, that of the northern parcel. This proposal ensures that both sites can achieve their full potential. The proposals have specifically been designed to accommodate both the immediate and long term access requirements of the British Library site regardless of whatever use for which the northern parcel may ultimately be developed. However, the proposals and the design/ positioning of the British Library access road respond to the proposed potential future master plan proposals for the British Library on the southern site, and the proposed development proposals which UKCMRI hope to bring forward on the northern site. This ensures that the design and positioning of the British Library's access road are appropriate for the likely short, medium and long term uses of both sites.

Policy Framework

Within the provisions of both the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (the "1990 Act") and the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (the "2004 Act") the Statutory Development Plan for the application site comprises:

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- The London Plan (consolidated alterations since 2004) adopted in 2008 and subsequently amended in April 2010, comprises the spatial and development strategy for Greater London; and
- The London Borough of Camden replacement Unitary Development Plan 2006 Saved Policies, which sets out a borough wide and site specific planning policies.

Although these proposals relate to the relocation of an existing access, the principle for which is established, regard has been given to the relevant planning policies set out in the Statutory Development Plan. It is considered that the proposals, as set out in the accompanying drawings, comply with planning policy (and supplementary policy) specifically:

- London Plan Policy 3C.16 and paragraph 3.235 and,
- Camden UDP Policies T3, T12, T13 and T16 (Part B)

Design

The detailed design, construction methodology and materials to be used in the construction of the proposed access road are set out in the accompanying drawings.

Function

The relocated access road has been designed to service the short, medium and long term needs of the British Library, comprising the objectives to provide access to; the British Library service yard, staff and disabled visitor car parking and the tank farm. It provides two way access into and out of the site, both via Midland Road.

Material

Materials used will be consistent with those used for the existing temporary access road and pedestrian crossings, as applicable. The existing security hut, traffic barriers and sliding gate will be relocated to the proposed entrance.

Access

As the proposed access road is private and runs to a private staff car and private service yard it will not be open to members of the public. This represents no change to the current access road arrangement. A pedestrian entrance into the British Library site for staff will be from the northern side of the new access point, (as the gate traverses north to south), and through a new pedestrian gate to the south. This southern staff pedestrian access will also provide disabled level access. With respect to the general public, the public will continue to gain access to the Library through the pedestrian entrances on the main plaza (Euston Road/Ossulston Street junction), or from the Midland Road pedestrian access point. These are existing pedestrian access points which are accessible to disabled people and people with limited mobility.

At the junction of the proposed new access road with Midland Road the pavement will take precedence over the road, so that pedestrians and disabled people using the pavement will continue to use the pavement with ease. The kerbs will be dropped at each side of the access road and the relevant textured concrete tactile paving will be used to ensure the pavement is easily usable for people with sight and mobility difficulties. The same measures will be adopted for the proposed new pedestrian crossing across Midland Road, opposite the St Pancras station entrance. Where the existing pedestrian crossings on Midland Road

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are removed, any tactile paving will be replaced with the same paving materials as the adjoining areas.

Planning considerations

This application is accompanied by a detailed Transport Statement which considers both an assessment of the junction design and the likely trip generation associated with the operation of the access. The proposed permanent access road will meet the long-term development needs of the British Library.

In preparing this submission regard has been given to planning policy and to other key material considerations. The requirement to provide a permanent solution to the existing temporary access is, itself, a major consideration and comprises enabling works to ensure compliance with PPS1 and with the policy objectives of the Camden UDP and other Supplementary Guidance. As such, it is wholly appropriate that these proposals should be progressed in advance of any substantive proposals across the wider site. It would be for those applications to consider wider development/policy objectives. Further planning applications for development on the 'island site' should be considered on their planning merits at the time they are submitted.

In drawing up this application consideration has been given to the advice of officers from the GLA, TfL and Camden Council, together with the concerns expressed by residents in respect to the currently undetermined proposals by the British Library for an access to Ossulston Street, and the views of London & Continental Railways.

It is considered that these proposals meet the requirements of planning policy set out with both national guidance and within the Statutory Development Plan. They remove any potential impact on the amenities of local residents (a concern expressed in respect to the Ossulston Street application) and have been designed to minimise the effects on the operation of Midland Road, both as a highway and in respect to its relation to the operation of public transport. In this respect, the proposals are considered to enhance the operation of St Pancras station through the establishment of a revised pedestrian crossing to Midland Road, to be provided immediately in front of the Midland Road entrance. This new crossing point will enhance pedestrian safety as it reflects the 'desire lines' currently being used by those exiting the station, whilst those approaching, from the west, invariably cross between the two existing crossings (currently to the north and south), which will be replaced.

CRIME IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The Crime Impact Assessment is provided in accordance with the ODPM / Home Office guidance set out within the publication 'Safer Places' (February 2004).

How the proposals accord with this guidance is set out below:

Access and Movement

The access road will form a well defined route with an entrance which provides for convenient movement without compromising security.

The road will only be used/accessed while both the British Library service yard and security lodge (both of which will be lit after dark) are manned. There will only be one entry/exit point to the access road / British Library service Yard. This will prevent people from getting lost and will discourage criminals from entering the site as there are no other vehicle exits. There are no pedestrian alleyways on the site which might attract criminals.

The security barriers will be closed at night so no people or vehicles will be able to access the site while the British Library service yard is closed. The proposals will not adversely affect pedestrians and cyclists using Midland Road, who will continue to use Midland Road as they do at present, and will help to provide 'natural' surveillance.

Structure

The existing access point is located some 30 metres to the north, resulting in the security lodge being separated from the wider British Library site and with restricted surveillance. The relocation of the security lodge to the south will give greater visibility across the British Library site thereby improving the security arrangements.

Surveillance

The road will not be publicly accessible, however, those using it will be subject to surveillance from people using Midland Road, staff at the security lodge and from the entrances to St Pancras Station.

The manned security lodge will add to the surveillance of the proposed road and Midland Road. The length of the road will be visible to staff working either in the British Library service yard or in the security lodge.

Ownership

As the proposed access road is private, and there is no pedestrian access for the local community, this criterion is not applicable. Physical protection and surveillance measures will make it difficult for people who should not be using the road to access it.

Both security personnel and staff working on the British Library site will provide supervision of the road.

Physical Protection

The road will be physically protected by the security lodge and barrier, surveying those entering and exiting, and preventing access to those who should not be visiting the British Library Site.

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Activity

When the road is open, there will be a security guard at the security lodge. This will create a sense of safety to users of the private access road and reduce the risk of crime.

The additional activity at the security lodge will also help to reinforce a sense of safety, reducing the risk of crime on Midland Road, particularly associated with the St Pancras station entrance.

Management and Maintenance

The road will not constitute public realm or public open space but it will be managed and maintained by the British Library.