

The Gresley Statue at King's Cross

Attachment to PP 03424400

Design and Access Statement

1. Introduction

It is recognised that King's Cross station, which is a Grade I listed building, is of great national significance. In comparison with St Pancras station next door, King's Cross is very plain. It predates St Pancras by many years, and its simplicity is much admired. That simplicity is seen in the brick wall against which we wish to erect the statue of Sir Nigel Gresley. It is a plain wall, save for inset bands between every sixth course of bricks.

Sir Nigel is unquestionably the best-known of all the past occupiers of the offices at the station, and the symbolism of placing the statue adjacent to them, as indicated in **drawing GST2**, is that he has behind him the old building, representing the past, and he looks out to the new, and to the future. This is in keeping with his character as a forward-thinking designer.

It is felt that the addition of a historically-conventional statue of one of the office's most distinguished former occupants is wholly appropriate to, and in keeping with, the appearance and function of the station.

We have submitted an application to Network Rail, as owners of King's Cross station, for authority to erect the statue. Within that application we have referred to this submission for Listed Building Consent, and that we regard the application to Network Rail as the formal notification as required by the certifications section of this Application.

2. Design

Our statue will be very traditional in its style and appearance, and so will not be out of keeping with the 160-year old building behind it. We aim to place the head of Sir Nigel's figure in front of a line of six bricks, rather than with one of the inset bands, as shown on **Drawing GST1** and **Photographs 2-4**. This will be to ensure that his face will be seen without the visual interference of one of the inset bands.

The floor of the Western Concourse is laid throughout with Azul Pepperino granite flooring slabs, 400mm wide x 300/400/600mm length x 20mm thick (random bond), and grouting. If necessary, approximately four or six slabs will have to be removed to allow the insertion of the slab of slate on which the statue will be mounted. Particular details of the installation will be agreed with Network Rail if we are given authority to erect the statue, but this will also depend upon whether or not we are permitted to mount a plaque on the wall nearby. If such

permission is granted, we will mount the statue directly on the floor by drilling holes for steel rods from the legs to be inserted. If we are not permitted to mount a plaque on the wall, we will need to mount the statue on a slate slab; this will provide space for engraving the name and descriptive text, and will require the removal of granite slabs to allow it to be set into the floor.

The statue will have the title ***Sir Nigel Gresley and Mallard.***

The statue of Sir Nigel Gresley will be a standing figure, to approximately 120 per cent scale, or 2255 mm high. This is the same scale as that of Sir John Betjeman at St Pancras station. It will be sculpted by Hazel Reeves, SWA, FRSA, and cast in bronze. It is expected to have a maximum weight of 800lbs. This is well within the advised floor-loading limit of two tons. The statue will be standing on the floor, and not on a raised plinth. If the statue has to be on a base of some sort, such as a slab of slate, it is intended that this will be sunk into, and flush with, the surrounding floor. The floor at that point is shown in **Photo 1**. The metal strip seen at the top is at the foot of the wall. Discussions with Network Rail (Mr Russell Sweeting-White, Asset Engineer) are concentrating on details of the proposed installation.

Network Rail has suggested the possibility of a spotlight, mounted on the wall above the statue, to illuminate it. We request that this proposal be considered as part of this application.

The pose of the figure was determined by the creation of three preliminary maquettes, to explore the pros and cons of various ideas that we had had. The selected pose was then made the subject of a more detailed maquette, cast in bronze and used in the three photo-montages attached to this Application. See **photos 2-4**.

The statue will stand no more than two feet from the wall of the West Offices. As it will be in bronze, it is not expected that it will be unduly intrusive, visibly, with the wall behind it.

The selected pose for the statue will show Sir Nigel with the right hand in a jacket pocket and the left down to his side, holding a railway trade magazine. This will result in there being no projecting parts upon which members of the public may be tempted to climb or swing, or to hang bags, and no parts that may offer a trip hazard. We do not believe that any member of the public passing close by will run the risk of catching or snagging their clothing on the statue. It is our casual observation that passing passengers do not walk close by the wall at that point. Network Rail is to undertake a risk analysis of, for example, trip hazards.

Accompanying the statue, and standing close to it, will be the likeness of a mallard duck. This also will be in bronze, standing on the floor. This duck is no mere whimsy: it is an allusion to Sir Nigel's most famous locomotive, *Mallard*, which holds the world speed record for steam locomotives. It is also an allusion to Sir Nigel's habit of feeding mallards at his pre-war home in Salisbury Hall. It is probable that the unexpected presence of the duck will attract public attention, and so its fastening to the floor will be on particularly strong internal steel legs, in case children decide to sit on it. Please see **Photos 2-4**. These are montages of

the bronze maquette made by the sculptor, superimposed on photographs of the wall at the proposed site.

It would be pleasing to think that over time, the statue might become a rendezvous point for travellers. This is rendered possible by its being somewhat taller than the average passenger, and that it will be visible not only from across the concourse, but also from the mezzanine floor.

3. Access

Because the statue will be standing on the floor, it is expected that members of the public will find that they can relate to it, and will wish to have their photographs taken standing by it. There is ample evidence of this at the Betjeman statue at St Pancras. Standing by it is made deliberately easy by the configuration of the design, and which is why there will be no projecting parts. Access for the disabled will not be adversely affected by any aspect of the design of the statue.

We expect that small children will wish to engage with the mallard, and this will be about a foot away from the standing figure of Sir Nigel, and slightly behind its leading edge. The mallard will be on the same scale as the figure: approximately 120 per cent.

The figure will be holding a railway trade magazine, and this, or the wall plaque if permitted, will bear, in one corner, a QR code. This will provide for the users of smart phones the ability to scan the QR code and so obtain direct access to the website of the Gresley Society. This will offer comprehensive information about Sir Nigel and his work, and so assist our charitable obligation to educate the public.

The placing of the statue will allow access behind it, for cleaning the floor, but will not provide a recess for the secreting of objects, as the wall is in a flat plane at both sides.

The title of the statue, given above, will be accompanied by these or substantially similar words thus:

SIR NIGEL GRESLEY AND MALLARD

From 1923 to 1941 this building contained
the offices of Sir Nigel Gresley CBE, D.Sc
and his principal assistants.

Here were conceived handsome locomotives
and beautiful trains.

Placed by the Gresley Society Trust
5 April 2016

Hazel Reeves

It is preferred that we place these words on a bronze plaque on the wall, behind and to the left of the statue, at eye height, as shown in **Drawing GST1**. It will be approximately 300 mm x 200 mm, (12 in x 8 in), landscape format. The use of bronze will not only complement the bronze of the statue, but also will ensure that the plaque is not visually intrusive on the wall of the building. We are proposing that the securing bolts for the plaque will be positioned to penetrate the mortar, not the bricks.

If this plaque is permitted, the QR code will be placed in a corner of it, rather than on the magazine in his left hand. If this proposal is not approved, we will need to have the words cut into the slate slab into which the statue will then need to be set. In this case they will be at floor level, and for this reason this is our second choice, as they will not be as immediately visible, and possibly more susceptible to damage. However, the name of the sculptor, Hazel Reeves, and the date 2016 will also be incised in the slab.

The chosen words are designed to give adequate information to explain the significance of the statue, why it was placed where it is, and to encourage the observer to learn more: What handsome locomotives? What beautiful trains?

AD/ND
9 July 14