



St Pancras Bridge

PLANNING STATEMENT

December 2021

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CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION.....	3
2.	SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA	5
3.	PLANNING HISTORY	6
4.	PRE-APPLICATION ENGAGEMENT	7
5.	PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT	10
6.	PLANNING POLICY	12
7.	PLANNING POLICY ASSESSMENT	14
8.	CONCLUSIONS.....	18

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of Reef Estates Limited (the “Applicant”) in support of the following application to London Borough of Camden Council (“LBC or the “Council”) for the construction of a pedestrian and cycle bridge over the Grand Union Canal, adjacent to the development site at 2-6 St Pancras Way.

1.2 Detailed planning permission (the “Application”) for (the “Site”). The proposed description of development is:

‘Creation of pedestrian and cycle bridge over the Grand Union Canal, linking Granary Street and Camley Street.’

Content of the Planning Application Submission

1.3 The following documents have been submitted in support of this application, in agreement with LBC Officers:

Ugly Brown Building- Application Documents
Covering letter
Application forms (including Certificate B Notices)
Site Location Plan
CIL Additional Questions Forms
Planning Statement
Application Drawings
Design and Access Statement (including Lighting Strategy, Access Report, and Ecology Assessment).

1.4 The remainder of this Planning Statement comprises the following sections:

- Section 2.0: Site and Surrounding Area;
- Section 3.0: Planning History;
- Section 4.0: Pre-Application Engagement;
- Section 5.0: Application Proposal;

- Section 6.0: Planning Policy Framework Overview;
- Section 7.0: Planning Policy Assessment;
- Section 8.0: Conclusion.

2. SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

2.1. This section describes the Site, the existing building and its surrounding area.

Site Description

2.2. The 923sqm Site is located between Camden Town and Kings Cross and is bound by Camley Street to the east and Granary Street to the west. The Site lies over the Regent's Canal, which the proposed bridge will cross over.

2.3. The Site is located at the intersection of the Regent's Canal, the Canal & River Trust land and moorings, Camden Borough Council land, Granary Street, the Ugly Brown Building development site, and the 101 Camley Street development site.

2.4. The Site sits between the Oblique Bridge (Camley Street) and Gray's Inn Bridge (St Pancras Way). The western landing is situated on Plot C of the Ugly Brown Building development site at 2-6 St. Pancras Way, which is currently occupied by a data centre operated by Verizon. The eastern landing is located on the raised terrace of 101 Camley St.

2.5. In its existing state, the Site has no function. The area is largely forgotten land, and is mostly walled off and inaccessible to the public, with views to the canal only available through gaps in railings.

2.6. The Site has a PTAL rating of 6B (excellent), with Kings Cross and Mornington Crescent London Underground Stations both within 750m from the Site.

2.7. The Site is located within the Regents Canal Conservation Area and has the following designations as identified on the LBC 2019 Policies Map:

- Habitat Corridor (the Regents Canal);
- Open Space (the Regents Canal);
- Site of Nature Conservation Importance (the Regents Canal).

2.8. There are no statutorily listed buildings within the Site or in the immediate vicinity. The hospital buildings, to the south of the Site, benefit from Certificates of Immunity from Listing.

3. PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1. The Site has a limited planning history. Most recently, planning permission 2017/5497/P was granted on the adjoining site for the following development:

'Demolition of the existing building (Class B1 and B8) and erection of 6 new buildings ranging in height from 2 storeys to 12 storeys in height above ground and 2 basement levels comprising a mixed use development of business floorspace (B1), 73 residential units (C3) (10xstudio, 29x1 bed, 27x2 bed 7x3 bed), hotel (C1), gym (D2), flexible retail (A1 - A4) and storage space (B8) development with associated landscaping work.'

- 3.2 The Section 106 agreement for this permission, signed on the 17th March 2020, set out the Heads of Terms for the delivery of the Regents Canal Bridge. The Heads of Terms established the Canal Bridge Cooperation Agreement, which stated that the covenanting party and the Council would collaborate to construct a footbridge over the Regent's Canal, in order to facilitate pedestrian movement into and through the site, which would benefit the wider borough.
- 3.3 As part of the S106 agreement, it was established that the covenanting party (in this case Reef Estates Limited, the Applicant) would lead on the design of the Canal Bridge and obtain all necessary consents and approvals for its construction.

4. PRE-APPLICATION ENGAGEMENT

- 4.1. The Applicant has undertaken a thorough pre-application process and has made significant effort to engage with stakeholders. The Proposed Development has evolved in response to the consultation feedback, which has provided the applicant with a clear vision of what is expected of the scheme.
- 4.2. This section sets out the programme of engagement that has been undertaken, which can be broadly categorised within the following stakeholder groups:
- LBC Officer Engagement;
 - Public and Stakeholder Consultation;
- 4.3. Further details of the public consultation process are provided within the Statement of Community Involvement prepared by Particip8r, which has been submitted in support of the application.

LBC Officer Engagement

- 4.4. A series of pre-application meetings have been held with Camden Borough Council Planning and Design Officers, which has allowed the development to evolve in response to the feedback received.
- 4.5. Separate pre-application discussions have been held with LBC Planning Officers on:
- 24th June 2020;
 - 5th December 2020;
 - 2nd September 2021
- 4.6. Throughout these meetings, the design of the scheme has been refined in response to officer comments. Based on comments made by officers in the initial meeting in June 2020, the design of the bridge was amended to increase the visibility of the steps from Granary Street, to reduce the impact of the brick wall facing the street, to provide additional opportunity for seating and planting, and to minimise the impact of the bridge on the terrace of the adjacent Co-op retail premises.

- 4.7. In the pre-application meeting in December 2020, officers welcomed the changes noted in the paragraph above, and queried whether further details could be provided on accessibility and safety arrangements, namely where the ramp meets the steps. In response to this, the design of the bridge has been reconfigured to ensure access provision and safety for all users. This work has been undertaken in consultation with Access Consultants David Bonnett Associates, who have provided an Access Statement, which forms part of the Design and Access Statement.

Canal and River Trust

- 4.8. A meeting was held on the 8th September 2020, in which the bridge design was presented to the Canal and River Trust. In response to CRT comments, the design of the bridge has been revised to lower the adjoining wall below the ramp level, in order to increase visibility and reduce anti-social behaviour.

Canal Boat Residents

- 4.9. A meeting with Canal Boat Residents living near the Site was held on the 6th October 2020. In response to questions, security was reviewed, with the wall being lowered below ramp level and a lighting strategy adopted which would provide good visibility and deter crime. Residents supported that the bridge's western landing was pushed as far as possible from the permanent moorings, avoiding issues of oversailing and reducing impact on amenity.

Public Consultation

- 4.10. A detailed public consultation process has been undertaken during the pre-application stage. The Applicant team have set up a project website containing background information on the project, a project timeline, and a feedback questionnaire and contact form for members of the community to raise any questions they may have. The website received 223 visits from different members of the community in total, with feedback generally positive.
- 4.11. The Applicant team have also distributed postcards with information about the development (including a link to the website) to all 312 residential and business addresses within a 0.2 mile radius of the site.

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- 4.12. A written briefing was drafted and issued to a range of local and community political stakeholders, setting out project information, consultation, and an invitation for direct contact with the Applicant should the stakeholder have any queries. A list of the stakeholders is set out in the accompanying Statement of Community Involvement.

5. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

5.1. Full Planning Permission is sought for the following development:

'Creation of pedestrian and cycle bridge over the Grand Union Canal, linking Granary Street and Camley Street.'

The Proposals

- 5.2. The Proposed Development consists of a new pedestrian and cycle bridge across the Regent's Canal, spanning from Granary Street to Camley Street, which also links to the Canal towpath proposed as part of the adjacent Ugly Brown Building development. The proposal involves the construction of the new bridge itself, along with lighting access ramps, stairs, seating areas, and associated landscaping works, in connection with the redevelopment of the Ugly Brown Building Site.
- 5.3. The Proposed Development consists of a direct cycle and pedestrian bridge, an earthwork bridge landing involving ramps, steps, terraces and planters, bound by a simple brick retaining wall; and gently sloped landscaping, public space and seating areas that integrate seamlessly into the Ugly Brown Building site's public realm, providing connections to Granary Street and any future public space.
- 5.4. The bridge itself will extend from Granary Street to Camley Street and will be composed of steel. The bridge will incorporate tapered steel balusters, non-super epoxy paint, and a painted metal handrail to ensure safety for pedestrian users. The bridge will form a V-shape when viewed from below, with bow tie shaped pre-cast concrete lintels installed at either side where the bridge meets the brickwork. The pre-fabricated metal bridge will be elegant and discreet, yet robust, and add visual appeal through its simplicity and lightness. The alternation between solid parapet and space out balusters on the bridge will allow continuous views along the length of the Canal and the Conservation Area.
- 5.5. On the Granary Street side of the canal bridge, the proposed earthwork landing will gently slope down towards towpath level to the north and street level to the south. The highest section of the ramp will be aligned to the Canal. The stretch of ramp will lead up to the generous mid-level

landing, which bifurcates into two directions of sloped pavement leading to the north and south. This arrangement will encourage cyclists to slow down and improve safety.

- 5.6. On the Camley Street side, the bridge will end at the terrace by the Co-op retail unit. The extent of the bridge's eastern abutment has been reduced to avoid intrusion around the front of the Co-op retail unit, and the bridge backspans will continue in the direction of the bridge pointing away from the Co-op building. The compact form of the bridge termination allows a high degree of visibility and sense of connectivity to the Canal.
- 5.7. Eight bicycle parking spaces will be provided in total, with five provided on the Camley Street side of the bridge, and three on the Granary Street side. The cycle parking stands have been located so as to avoid disrupting pedestrian and cyclist movements.
- 5.8. The design of the project has evolved through several iterations, underpinned by the aim of improving the pedestrian and cyclist experience, framing key views to and from the canal, and respecting the wider context of the Regent's Canal Conservation Area. In order to harmonise with the Regent's Canal Conservation Area, the design has been inspired and influenced by the contextual references of the Oblique and Roving Bridges, the Camden Goods Depot, and the Canalside Seating at Granary Square.
- 5.9. The proposed bridge will provide greater strategic connectivity to the wider borough, and will be delivered in tandem with the Ugly Brown Building Site. Further detail on the proposal can be found in the accompanying Design and Access Statement prepared by Niall Mclaughlin Architects.

6. PLANNING POLICY

6.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires development proposals to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan is made up of the following documents:

- London Borough of Camden Local Plan (Adopted July 2017);
- The London Borough of Camden Policies Map (Adopted 2019);
- London Plan 2021 (Adopted March 2021).

6.2 This section assesses the relevant planning policy and guidance at national, regional and local levels, and specific topics relevant to the assessment of the Proposed Development in planning terms.

Planning Policy Framework and Site Designations

6.3 In addition to the above, the wider planning policy framework for the Site has been taken into consideration. This includes the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which carries material weight in decision making along with the relevant Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), the National Design Guide and Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG).

6.4 This section sets out the planning policy framework and guidance of relevance to the Proposed Development and identifies planning designations that relate to the Site. References to specific policies and guidance are included where relevant in the Planning Policy Assessment of the Proposed Development in Section 7.

National Planning Policy

6.5 The National Planning Policy Framework (last updated 19th June 2019) (NPPF) focuses on the delivery of sustainable development and requires that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The core planning principles include, amongst others, to “drive and support development” and to “encourage” the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed.

- 6.6 The NPPF notes that proposed development that accords with an up-to-date Development Plan should be approved without delay.
- 6.7 The NPPF is supplemented by an online suite of Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), which is updated periodically and the National Design Guide, which was published in October 2019.

Regional Planning Policy

- 6.8 London Plan 2021, adopted in March 2021, is the principal land use and planning guidance for London and forms part of the Camden Borough Council Development Plan. It sets out the spatial strategy and policy context for how and where growth should be accommodated across London.
- 6.9 The supporting documents submitted with the planning application also refer to the suite of published Mayor of London Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) documents which have helped to inform the composition of the Proposed Development.

Local Planning Policy

- 6.10 The Camden Local Plan and Policies Map, adopted in July 2017 and 2019 respectively, are the key policy documents for determining planning applications in the borough.

7. PLANNING POLICY ASSESSMENT

- 7.1. This section reviews the Proposed Development against the policies of the Development Plan at national, regional and local level.

Principle of Development

- 7.2. The principle of development is supported by policy at a local, regional and national level. The National Planning Policy Framework contains a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which supports policy compliant development and encourages growth.

Design

- 7.3. Paragraph 58 of the NPPF states that when making planning decisions, local authorities should require the following from developments:
- Function well and add to the overall quality of the area;
 - Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and landscaping;
 - Sympathetic to local character and history;
 - Establish a strong sense of place; and
- 7.4. Policy D3 of the London Plan 2021 requires buildings of the highest architectural quality to be provided and the use of details and materials that complement the local architectural character, encouraging optimal design in terms of layout, respect to heritage, and use of materials to complement the surrounding streetscape. Local Plan Policy D1 sets out that LBC will seek to secure high quality design in development and will require that development respects local and historic context, is sustainable in design and construction, integrates with the surrounding area, and incorporates high quality landscape design and amenity space.
- 7.5. The design of the Proposed Development has been carefully curated to slot seamlessly into the surroundings of the Site, and achieves this through appropriate use of materiality, massing, and overall design. The Proposed Development is considerably designed and adds to the quality of

the area in terms of function and appearance, and thus accords with planning policy at borough and regional level.

Heritage

- 7.6. Paragraph 127 of the NPPF states that developments should be “sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment”, and the NPPF goes on to stress ‘great weight should be given to an asset’s conservation.’
- 7.7. Local Plan Policy D1 seeks high quality, sustainable design in development, which respects local context and the historic environment, whilst ensuring inclusivity, accessibility and safety. Policy D2 leads on from this, requiring development in Camden’s conservation areas to preserve, and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation areas.
- 7.8. In adherence to policies D1 and D2, throughout the design of the bridge the intention has remained to achieve an optimal, sustainable design and respect and enhance the heritage of the surrounding conservation area. As the accompanying Design and Access Statement shows, several aspects of the Regent’s Canal Conservation Area have been taken into account in the design of the bridge, including the canal itself, and the historic Goods Depot, Granary and Sorting Office.
- 7.9. The materiality will incorporate steel for the bridge, and red brick in the surrounding structure, consistent with the area’s characteristic industrial design and materiality. The design of the bridge will be subtle and light and will appear elegant and minimal when compared to the nearby Oblique Bridge. The bridge will also grant pedestrians and cyclists new views of the Conservation Area that were previously unavailable. As such, the Proposed Development respects and enhances the surrounding heritage and conservation area, and should be supported and encouraged as a result.

Transport

- 7.10. Chapter 9 of the NPPF is dedicated to promoting sustainable transport. Within the chapter, the following requirements are established from development (paragraph 110):
- Give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas; and second – so far as possible – to facilitating access to high quality

public transport, with layouts that maximise the catchment area for bus or other public transport services, and appropriate facilities that encourage public transport use;

- Address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport;

7.11. Chapter 10 of the London Plan 2021 is dedicated to transport. London Plan 2021 Policy T1 establishes the main targets, which aim to ensure 80% of all trips in London are made by foot, cycle or public transport by 2041.

7.12. London Plan 2021 Policy T2 establishes the 'Healthy Streets Approach' and requires development to demonstrate how they will improve health and reduce health inequalities; reduce car dominance, ownership and use, road danger, severance, vehicle emissions and noise; increase walking, cycling and public transport use; improve street safety, comfort, convenience and amenity.

7.13. Policy T1 of the Camden Local Plan encourages improvements to the pedestrian environment which are permeable, safe, and of high quality, explicitly voicing support for developments which contribute towards bridges and water crossings where appropriate. Policy T1 also seeks to ensure that the Council makes contributions toward connected, convenient and safe cycle routes in the area, also supporting the creation of bridges and water crossings where appropriate.

7.14. The Proposed Development fully aligns with national, local and regional transport related policy, by creating new cycle parking spaces, and a safe and accessible pedestrian and cycle bridge in a location that will vastly improve the convenience of local residents by reducing the walking distance to sites across the canal and will thus encourage pedestrian and cycle journeys as an alternative to other modes of transport.

Nature Conservation and Biodiversity

7.15. Local Plan Policy A3 sets out that LBC will grant permission for development unless it would directly or indirectly result in the loss or harm to a designated nature conservation site or adversely affect the status or population of priority habitats and species.

- 7.16. An Ecology Assessment has been produced in support of this application, which assesses the current ecological status of the site. The Assessment finds that, by incorporating a sensitive, low impact lighting design, the proposals are anticipated to have no adverse impacts on fauna or flora.

8. CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 The Proposed Development represents an opportunity to create a considerably designed bridge over the canal, that will substantially improve accessibility and strategic connectivity to the surrounding development sites and encourage pedestrian and cyclist activity.
- 8.2 The proposals will transform the existing Site, which serves no purpose and is publicly inaccessible, into an open, inviting public realm and bridge, which will create a sense of space, improve safety, and allow a greater appreciation of the Regent's Canal Conservation Area.
- 8.3 The proposals will complement and enhance the current and future public realm from the surrounding development sites, and will encourage footfall and stimulate pedestrian activity across each of the sites.
- 8.4 The Proposed Development fully accords with planning policy and will provide a wide range of planning benefits whilst causing minimal impact.