

Report to: Planning Applications Committee
Date: 4 November 2020
Application No: LW/20/0414
Location: Newhaven Fort, Fort Road, Newhaven, East Sussex, BN9 9DL
Proposal: Replacement of existing concrete and steel framed bridge to the main entrance of the Fort.

Ward: Newhaven South
Recommendation: It is recommended that the application is approved.
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Map Location:



1. **Executive Summary**

- 1.1 Newhaven fort is a 'Palmerston' fort, located on cliffs overlooking Newhaven Harbour. Current access to the Fort is by way of Fort Rise.
- 1.2 The proposed development is seeking full planning permission for the replacement of existing non-original concrete and steel framed bridge to the main entrance of the fort.
- 1.3 This application is coming before the committee as the applicant is Lewes District Council.

2. **Relevant Planning Policies**

- 2.1 National Planning Policy Framework
 - 2 Achieving sustainable development
 - 16 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment
- 2.2 Lewes District Local Plan Part 1 – Joint Core Strategy:
 - CP4 Economic Development and Regeneration
 - CP11 Built and Historic Environment and Design
- 2.3 Lewes District Local Plan Part 2:
 - DM25 Design
 - DM33 Heritage Assets
- 2.4 Newhaven Neighbourhood Plan:
 - D1 Promoting Good Design
 - E3 The Visitor Economy

3. **Site Description**

- 3.1 Newhaven fort is a 'Palmerston' fort, located on cliffs overlooking Newhaven Harbour. Current access to the Fort is by way of Fort Rise. The Fort is a major tourist attraction.
- 3.2 It was designed by a Lieutenant Ardagh of the Royal Engineers in 1854. It was constructed throughout the 1860's with works being completed in 1871. It is classified as a Scheduled Monument by English Heritage.
- 3.3 To the east of the application site is a terrace of residential dwellings, located on Fort Rise, with further residential development at the foot of the cliffs on Fort Road. There is also a public house nearby.

4. **Proposed Development**

- 4.1 The proposed development is seeking full planning permission for the replacement of existing non-original concrete and steel framed bridge which provides the main entrance of the fort.

4.2 The development would be see the existing two-span concrete and steel framed bridge which provides access to the Fort reduced to ground level and new support columns erected to support a new two-span bridge.

4.3 The proposed bridge shall have a width of approx. 3.1m, with a length of 12.4m. It is to be 2.35m high above the roadway with railings 1.1m high above the bridge deck level.

5. **Consultations**

5.1 Main Town or Parish Council:

5.1.1 The Town Council opted to support the proposal, though requested that the Planning Authority note that it is likely that the Fort Rise Car Park would need to close to facilitate these works, and therefore make an allocation for parking in the Staff Car Park in mitigation of the same.

5.2 Historic England

5.2.1 No comment

5.3 Environmental Health

5.3.1 No comment

5.4 Design and Conservation Officer

5.4.1 The Design and Conservation officer offered no objection as consent has already been granted by Historic England for the works.

6. **Neighbour Representations**

6.1 A total of one letter of objection have been received, the points raised are summarised below.

- Impact upon parking during the course of the works.

6.2 A single letter representation in support has been received, summarised as follows.

- Newhaven fort needs a new bridge, as the old one was damaged and is held up by temporary scaffolding;

7. **Appraisal**

7.1 Principle of Development

7.1.1 Para. 11 of the revised NPPF (2019) states that decision taking should be based on the approval of development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay. Underlining that there is to be a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

7.1.2 Para. 192 of the Revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account the desirability of sustaining and

enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation

- 7.1.3 Policy CP4 of the Lewes District Joint Core Strategy aims to support development which supports the provision of sustainable tourism, including recreation, leisure, cultural and creative sectors, and having particular regard to the opportunities provided by the South Downs National Park, both within and outside the National Park boundary.
 - 7.1.4 Policy CP5 of the Lewes District Joint Core Strategy recognises the need to promote and achieve a sustainable tourism industry in and around the district.
 - 7.1.5 The application site is both a scheduled monument and a public attraction. The development is required as the existing bridge has fallen into disrepair and a safe replacement is required to maintain its continued use as a tourist attraction.
 - 7.1.6 It is therefore considered that the principle of replacing the existing bridge to ensure continued safe access to the Fort is acceptable, subject to compliance with relevant local and national planning policies, against which the development will be assessed in the main body of this report.
- 7.2 Newhaven Neighbourhood Plan:
- 7.2.1 Policy E3 of the Newhaven Neighbourhood Plan recognises that Newhaven serves as a vital gateway, not just into the South Downs National Park, but to the South East Region as a whole. And seeks to support proposed development which encourages tourism activity within Newhaven.
 - 7.2.2 By virtue of the fact that the proposed works support the functioning of a tourism site within Newhaven the proposals are considered to comply with the aims and objectives of the above mentioned policy.
- 7.3 Design and Appearance
- 7.3.1 This application is for the replacement of the existing main entrance bridge and would restore the function of the bridge to provide safe access, in sympathy with the construction of the original bridge. It is proposed that the existing non original bridge and concrete pier will be reduced to ground level and the site made good to support the new bridge.
 - 7.3.2 External materials will comprise a pair of steel columns to the existing pier base to support the new bridge structure. The bridge deck will be carried by rolled steel joists with each joist closest to the Fort being tapered to reflect the form of the original bridge.
 - 7.3.3 The standards supporting the handrail will be “I” section steel with a rounded top, while the rails will be circular hollow section steel. It is proposed that the bridge deck will span across the steel beams and be rough sawn timber. The balustrade is to be stainless steel rectangular mesh.

- 7.3.4 All metalwork will be finished in marine grade paint, colour black.
- 7.3.5 It is considered that appearance of the application site and the street scene would be enhanced by the installation of the replacement bridge, because at present there is visually unpleasant temporary scaffolding supporting the old bridge which is to be replaced. The proposed works would not introduce any new aspect of overlooking or overshadowing to near neighbours in accordance with Policy DM25 of the Lewes District Local Plan Part 2, and policy D1 of the Newhaven Neighbourhood Plan.
- 7.3.6 The external materials used would comprise a mixture of steel and timber, with metals finished in black paint. These materials and finishes have been chosen to reflect the materials utilised in the original construction of the fort in accordance with Policy DM33 (Heritage Assets) of the LDLP Part 2.
- 7.3.7 It is considered that steel and timber represents a suitably durable material that would tolerate exposure to the surrounding elements, particularly the sea air, without deteriorating significantly in appearance in accordance with Policies DM25 (Design) and DM33 (Heritage Assets) of the LDLP Part 2, and policy D1 of the Newhaven Neighbourhood Plan.

7.4 Impact on Neighbouring Residents

- 7.4.1 The proposed works would not result in the introduction of any unacceptable loss of light, overshadowing or overlooking to near neighbours in accordance with Policy DM25 of the Lewes District Local Plan Part 2, and policy D1 of the Newhaven Neighbourhood Plan. This is because the development is concentrated to an area where there is currently a bridge installed.
- 7.4.2 Comments from residents regarding the impact upon parking during the course of works are noted, however it is considered that due to the essential nature of the works and the prevailing public safety implications it is necessary for the works to proceed. Parking is a matter that the management of the site will have to take into account and address whilst the works are taking place.

7.5 Other Matters

- 7.5.1 Scheduled Monument Consent has already been granted for the proposed works by English Heritage, under their reference: S00154618.

8. **Human Rights Implications**

- 8.1 The impacts of the proposal have been assessed as part of the application process. Consultation with the community has been undertaken and the impact on local people is set out above. The human rights considerations have been taken into account fully in balancing the planning issues; and furthermore the proposals will not result in any breach of the Equalities Act 2010.

9. **Recommendation**

9.1 It is considered that the proposed replacement bridge is in accordance with the aims and objectives of policies DM25 and DM33 of the Lewes District Local Plan Part 2, Policies D1 and E3 of the Newhaven Neighbourhood Plan and Policies CP4 and CP11 of the Lewes District Joint Core Strategy.

9.2 It is recommended that the application is approved.

The application is subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved drawings:

- * 5188732-002 Proposed Block Plan
- * 781 Design and Access Statement
- * 19222-1-01 Proposed Bridge Scheme
- * Historic England Consent
- * HERS
- * 5188732-001 Location Plan
- * E10919 Bridge Report

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

Informatives:

The applicant is reminded of the obligation that works must be carried out in accordance with the conditions set out by English Heritage in their approval of works reference number - S00154618.

10. **Background Papers**

10.1 None.