ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL:SS/6/06/ 26/07/2006

SOUTH STOKE REPLACEMENT BRIDGE

Planning Application
Supporting Statement

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ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL
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1. INTRODUCTION

The application

1.1 This statement is submitted in support of an application for full planning permission on behalf of Mr. William Knight for an alternative bridge design for the replacement bridge crossing the river Arun in South Stoke, West Sussex.

1.2 This application proposes an alternative design to the bridge approved by the Development Control Committee on May 10th 2006 (application SS/2/06).

1.3 The proposed works in this application relies upon the established consents for the demolition of the existing steel truss bridge within the South Stoke Conservation Area (SS/3/06/CA), and also works to Lop, Top or Fell existing trees to accommodate the works (SS/1/06/TO), and the principle of a replacement bridge being constructed (SS/2/06).

1.4 The following documentation is submitted in support of this proposal:

- Full planning application form, plans, alternative design drawing, certificates and fee.
- This supporting statement.
- Written consent from the Environment Agency to rely upon information submitted previously.
- Full set of supporting information submitted by the Environment Agency previously for applications SS/2/06, SS/3/06, SS/1/06/TO.

Context to the application

1.5 In February 2006, The Environment Agency submitted a full planning application (SS/2/06) to replace the existing bridge in South Stoke with a new steel truss bridge of '*similar appearance and along the same alignment*'. The Development Control Committee considered this planning application and the supporting evidence on May 10th 2006 and subsequently granted approval.

1.6 The bridge proposal falls within level 2 of the EIA regulations, which places the decision as to whether a full EIA is required at the discretion of the local planning authority. In establishing that a full EIA report was not required, an Environmental Report produced by Jacobs Babtie on behalf of the Environment Agency was submitted and considered by Arun District Council to be full and sufficient to determine the application.

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1.7 In making this application the assumption is made that this position remains. The application enclosed and supported within this statement, submitted on behalf of Mr. William Knight, proposes an exact replication, with exception of the bridge design, of the works approved within the Environment Agency's application (ref: SS/2/06). There is no variance between this proposal and the approved works with regard to:

- construction methods, timings and access arrangements,
- works to Lop, Top and Fell trees both within and outside the designated Conservation Area, and
- conservation area consent for the demolition of the existing bridge.

1.8 The Development Control Committee has established the principle for this development through granting consent for the Environment Agency's proposal. The proposed works, potential environmental impacts, and proposed mitigation measures have been deemed acceptable, and therefore as this application relates solely to design matters and no other environmental concerns are affected, it is assumed that no duplicating work is required in support of this application.

1.9 For completeness, enclosed with this application is the full set of supporting documentation submitted by the Environment Agency, and their written confirmation for it to be resubmitted and relied upon in support of this application.

1.10 It is acknowledged that the application made by the Environment Agency is a full and valid consent and the proposed works can be implemented, however Mr. William Knight (the applicant) believes that minor amendments to the design can achieve a 'like for like' design to replace the existing bridge.

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2. THE PROPOSAL

The site

2.1 South Stoke Bridge spans the river Arun (grid reference TQ 026 101) in the village of South Stoke, approximately 3km north of Arundel **(See plan).** The site, which includes construction areas required for the demolition of the existing bridge and erection of the replacement bridge, is approximately 0.41 ha.

2.2 The site is located within Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The village side of the bridge crossing falls within the South Stoke Conservation Area. The course of the new channel and the old channel of the river Arun are designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), known as the 'Arun Banks'. The site is also designated as a Site of National Importance for Nature Conservation.

2.3 The village side of the application site encompasses land within the ownership of Mr. William Knight and crosses the river to adjoin land within the ownership of The Norfolk Estate. The site is currently accessible via a track to the west of the Church.

The need for replacement

2.4 The existing steel truss bridge, which was built to a carry capacity of 7.5 tonnes, has now fallen into disrepair and is structurally weak. It was closed to all traffic, including pedestrians in June 2005 for health and safety reasons.

2.5 A replacement bridge is now required to reopen the access across the river for the local community, primarily for access to farmland and as a public right of way footpath. It also enables the Environment Agency to access flood defense works and to fulfill their maintenance requirement to utilize heavier vehicles, of up to 20 tonnes in weight.

2.6 Mr. William Knight fully supports the principle of re-opening the river crossing at the earliest opportunity through the replacement of the existing bridge. This application is submitted in order to achieve this principle, whilst ensuring the detail design of the bridge is of a quality suitable to this environmentally sensitive area.

The replacement bridge design

2.7 The steel truss bridge has been part of South Stoke since 1863 making a direct contribution to establishing the distinctive character of this environmentally sensitive area. Given the rural setting of the site and its location within an AONB, SSSI and Conservation Area, the detailed design and visual impact of the replacement bridge is a clear priority to ensure that the attractive setting currently created is retained.

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2.8 The proposed bridge has been designed as a 'like for like' replacement to match the structural form of the 1863 bridge not only in design geometry but also in choice of sections and detailing to recreate the defining characteristics of the old bridge. These details will ensure that the bridge fits sensitively into the local landscape, enhancing this attractive and historic setting. As stated previously the construction methods and potential impacts to the local environment will be no different to the details assessed within the Environment Report submitted by the Environment Agency for their application (SS/2/06).

2.9 The proposed construction spans approximately 27 meters across the river Arun and provides a carriageway of 3.6 meters in width (**see plan**). As specified in the Environment Agency's proposal the new bridge will be a little longer than the existing bridge as a result of the new supports being constructed behind the existing abutments. An illustrative image of the proposed replacement is provided. The variations to the bridge design are purely aesthetic, and can be detailed as follows:

- Geometry of the bridge is identical, but flanged sections are used which cast shadows and give a crisper appearance.
- Outriggers provide the bracing of the truss in the traditional way as currently demonstrated by the existing structure.
- Proposed to retain the existing stone abutments. However these may be reduced if required as per application SS/2/06.
- Safety barrier to be provided using larger timber sections as shown on the proposal drawing.

2.10 The alternative bridge design will be sufficient to fulfill the Environment Agency's maintenance requirement to utilize heavier vehicles, of up to 20 tonnes in weight.

Construction

2.11 The sensitive location of the application site is acknowledged. The alternative bridge design proposed in this application requires no variation to the approved construction methods and periods as set out in the supporting information submitted previously by the Environment Agency and resubmitted also with this application. There is also no variation to the anticipated noise levels during construction as agreed and submitted by the Environment Agency and replicated in this submission.

Tree works

2.12 This application seeks to gain planning permission for an alternative bridge design only. The tree works required to implement the replacement bridge are exactly as agreed with regard to the Environment Agency's approved proposal (ref: SS/1/06/TO). The trees affected within the Conservation Area and those outside of the designation are the same for this application. An extensive plan

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detailing the trees works proposed was submitted and approved under the application SS/1/06/TO, and is reprovided for information purposes with this submission with the support and consent of the Environment Agency.

3. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

3.1 The following development plan policies are considered applicable to this proposal:

- *West Sussex Structure Plan*
  DEV1, CH2, CH4, CH7, LOC2

- *Arun District Local Plan*
  GEN3, GEN7, GEN16, GEN29, GEN30, AREA2, AREA9, AREA13, AREA14, AREA17

3.2 The following national planning policy documents are considered applicable to this proposal:

- PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development
- PPS7 – Sustainable Development in Rural Areas
- PPS9 – Biodiversity and Geological Conservation
- PPG15 – Planning and the Historic Environment
- PPG16 – Archaeology and Planning

3.3 In considering the application made by the Environment Agency (SS/2/06) the planning officer concluded in the committee report that '*the proposal is considered to comply with relevant Development Plan policies in that there would be no materially adverse effect on the character or appearance of the area, nature conservation or archaeology*'. Compliance of this application with development plan policy and national planning guidance has therefore been ratified by the decision made for application SS/2/06.

3.4 The conservation area consent to demolish the existing bridge has been established under the Environment Agency's approved application SS/3/06/CA. In the conclusions of the conservation area consent report the officer states that '*there is a scheme put forward for the replacement of the bridge which is similar in appearance and is considered to be acceptable to the Local Planning Authority and therefore it is recommended that the application be granted consent*'. This consent was granted on the 10th May 2006. The application submitted in conjunction with this statement proposes no alterations to the proposal to demolish the existing bridge.

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4. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

4.1 In developing the proposals considerable regard has been made to the key environmental considerations. Due to the sensitivity of the site and its existing environmental designations, as outlined above, care has been taken to develop the most sensitive design and construction methods for this essential replacement facility.

4.3 It is noted that the Development Control Committee in granting full planning consent approved the principles set out in the Environmental Report produced by Jacobs Babtie on behalf of the Environment Agency. As the only variation between the proposed works and this application relates to the detail of design, the key issues and mitigation measures identified within the Environmental Report are equally applicable to this submission, and therefore the Environmental Report is resubmitted in support of the application. The key issues on page 6 of the Environmental Report are:

'- Loss of access to a public right of way on the southern flood embankment,
- *Disturbance to breeding birds and loss of nesting habitat,*
- *Potential disturbance of bat roosts,*
- *Disturbance and potential spread of Japanese Knotweed,*
- *Disturbance of migratory salmon,*
- *Significant levels of noise and vibration generated by pile driving activities,*
- *Disruption to public navigation on the River Arun,*
- *Pollution of the watercourse,*
- *Removal of the South Stoke Bridge, a monument of archaeological interest,*
- *Disturbance or destruction of archaeological remains and deposits of palaeoenvironmental interest,*
- *Increased traffic movements on the access track, causing disturbance to local residents'.*

4.5 In addressing these key environmental issues, page 6 of the Environmental Report outlines the following mitigation measures:

'- Temporary diversions for the footpath will be put in place with adequate signage,
- *Vegetation clearance will be undertaken during the winter months prior to the breeding bird season (before March), and will be kept cleared during the construction period,*
- *An arboriculture and bat survey will be undertaken prior to tree clearance; advice will be sought from a qualified ecologist if presence of bats is confirmed,*
- *Re-planting of trees, hedgerows and reedbed,*
- *An Environmental Management Plan will be produced by the Contractor with methodology for avoiding further spread of Japanese knotweed,*

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- *Avoid piling during the main salmonid migratory period (July and August). Prepare method statement and programme for piling operations and submit to EA Ecological Appraisal for advice on mitigation,*
- *Alternative piling methods will be used which generate reduced levels of noise and vibration. Piling operations will be restricted to day time working only with no piling at weekends,*
- *Consultation with relevant river user groups, adequate signage on the river and on local notice boards, provision of traffic light system, lighting at night and a safety boat on site,*
- *Provision of netting to catch debris, sediment trap during piling operations, adherence to pollution prevention guidance notes, submission of method statements to Environmental Management,*
- *Drawing and recording of the bridge by an industrial archaeologist and coring/borehole investigations of site if new abutments,*
- *Production of a traffic management plan.*

4.6 The measures outlined above will be adhered to should the Environment Agency adopt the alternative design proposed within this application.

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5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1 This application seeks to replace the existing 150 year old bridge crossing the river Arun at South Stoke.

5.2 The need for a replacement bridge following the closure of the existing bridge on health and safety grounds is well acknowledged and fully supported by the applicant, adjoining landowners, the local community of South Stoke, and the Environment Agency who require a new river crossing to accommodate weight of up to 20 tonnes to access flood defense works.

5.3 This application seeks to ensure the bridge design achieves the highest possible standards in design to complement the established attractive design of the existing bridge. The 'like for like' design proposed within this submission will positively enhance and contribute to the surrounding Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, South Stoke Conservation Area, meeting the need to deliver a structure, which could feature within the landscape for another 150 years.

5.4 In May 2006 the Environment Agency gained planning consent to remove the existing bridge and replace with a new bridge. Work was undertaken as part of an Environmental Report to determine the potential impact and required mitigation measures needed to ensure this environmentally sensitive area was respected.

5.5 The principles established and agreed by the Development Control Committee for construction and appropriate mitigation measures are mirrored in this application. The proposal is not seeking to alter the scale of the bridge or the works proposed. No duplicating supporting work was therefore deemed necessary. The Environment Agency have recognized this position have provided consent for their background supporting material to be resubmitted in conjunction with this application.