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

SUPPORTING INFORMATION PRODUCED BY OR ON BEHALF OF THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

Originally produced to accompany application SS/2/06 the enclosed information is now re-submitted in support of this application, under agreement with the Environment Agency

July 2006

ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL
No. SS 6 06
RECEIVED 26-7-06

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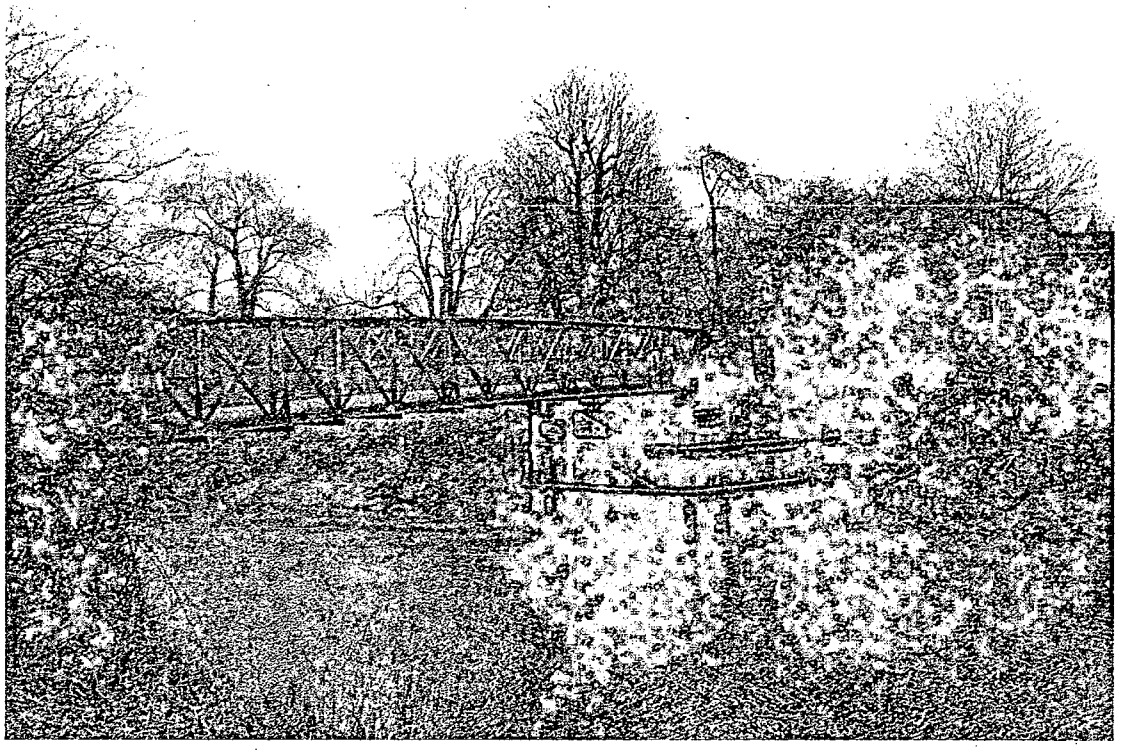
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A Supporting Statement for the Planning Application for The Replacement of South Stoke Bridge.



ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL
No. SS 6 06
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CLIENT DETAILS

Client: Environment Agency Southern Region

Contact: Peter Easton

Date: February 2006

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1 The Submitted Application Documentation

1.1 The documentation submitted includes

- Planning Application Form, Plans, Certificates and Fee.
- Conservation Area Consent Application, for the demolition of the existing bridge, part of which falls with the South Stoke Conservation Area.
- The Environmental Report.
- This Statement Of Support.

1.2 An application to Lop, Top or Fell Trees In South Stoke Conservation Areas has already been submitted separately.

2 The Proposal

2.1 Jacobs Babtie on behalf of The Environment Agency has prepared the application. The proposal is to provide a replacement bridge for the existing South Stoke Bridge, located approximately 3km north of Arundel (Grid Ref: TQ 026 101) spanning a tidal reach of the River Arun. (see PA Plan1).

2.2 The existing steel truss bridge which is estimated to have had a capacity of around 5 tonnes, was built about 1838, when the Commissioners of Sewers decided to construct a new cut at South Stoke to bypass a 2.5km loop in the river. Since the cut would go through land owned by the then Duke of Norfolk, the Commissioners also agreed to build a bridge over the cut to connect the two landholdings severed by the cut. Since then the bridge has been maintained by the predecessors of the Environment Agency who have also made repeated declarations as to their ownership and responsibility for the bridge.

2.3 The existing bridge is structurally weak and has been closed for health and safety reasons to all traffic (including pedestrian since June 2005). The existing bridge is beyond economical repair and needs replacement to reopen access across the river.

2.4 The Environment Agency has looked at various options and wishes to replace the existing steel truss bridge with a new steel truss bridge of similar appearance and along the same alignment. The new bridge would be a little longer than the existing bridge because the new supports would be constructed behind the existing abutments. To provide improved access across the river and remove the need for heavier vehicles to cross the railway when needing to access the land on the northern bank, the new bridge will have a 20 tonnes loading and a 3.6-meter carriageway width. (see PA Drawing 1)

PA Plan1: South Stoke Replacement Bridge: Site Location

PA Plan 2: South Stoke Replacement Bridge; Planning Application Site.

PA Drawing 1: South Stoke Replacement Bridge: Bridge Details

3 The Application Site

3.1 The application site of approximately 0.41 ha. includes the area on which the replacement bridge will be located and additional areas, which will be required for the removal of the old bridge and the construction of the new bridge. (The extended area is included to allow appropriate considerations of the proposal and its construction). See Plan: PA Plan 2

3.2 Appendix B gives the details of the replacement bridge, the construction areas and works compounds.

4 Construction Period and Hours of Work

4.1 To minimise the impact of construction a detailed construction programme is being developed. It is anticipated that works should be scheduled to begin in April 2006, to be completed by November 2006.

4.2 Normal working hours would be 7am.-5pm Monday to Friday with the possibility of Saturday working if required. There would be no piling works on Saturdays or Sundays.

5 Access to the Site

5.1 South Stoke is at the end of a narrow no through road, which runs from Arundel to the south. The access to the site from South Stoke is via the narrow unmade track west of the church. This is a private road and arrangements will need to be made with the owner. Some low hanging branches and trees along the road will require removal to allow clear access. It is considered that articulated vehicles would not be able to negotiate the narrow lane and tight bends. It is assumed that goods and equipment will be delivered to site in rigid bodied vehicles up to 20 tonne tare. Due to the narrowness of the access track, traffic management will be provided on selected days whilst delivery vehicles access the site. The construction traffic routes are shown on PA Plan 4 (see Appendix D)

5.2 Estimates of the total number of traffic movements associated with the works have been obtained from the Contractor. During peak periods i.e. site setup, de-mob and material deliveries approximately 5 (>7.5T) trucks will visit the site per day. On a normal construction day this is expected to decrease to approximately 3-4 per week.

5.3 Road access will not be required to the northern bank, as a crane positioned on a temporary platform over the river will be able to swing plant and materials over the river to the northern bank. (see: Appendices B & C)

6 Planning Considerations

6.1 The Arun District Local Plan (adopted April 2003) identifies all or parts of the current application site as being included within the South Stoke Conservation Area, the Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and a Site of National Importance For Nature Conservation.

6.2 English Nature has designated the banks and the course of the new channel (c1838) and the old channel of the River Arun as the "Arun Banks" Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Two units form the SSSI; Unit 1 (some 0.26ha) abuts the existing bridge downstream on the southern bank. The much larger Unit 2 (some 25.54ha.) includes the old channel and banks and the new channel and the remainder of its banks.

6.3 The proposal is clearly in a sensitive area. The Environment Agency is committed to applying environmental best practice; following their procedures for EIA it has been determined that a Level 2 is required for the proposed works. An Environmental Report accompanies this planning application.

6.4 A summary of the potential impacts and the mitigation measures identified in the Environmental Report is provided at the end of this section after the policies of the Local Plan have been addressed.

Local Plan Policies

6.5 The part of the application site, on the southern bank of the River Arun, is within the South Stoke Conservation Area where the following policy applies.

POLICY AREA2 Conservation Areas

Planning permission will be granted for development which preserves or enhances the character or appearance of a Conservation Area or its setting.

6.6 The proposal to demolish and replace the bridge with a similar designed bridge on the same alignment is intend to preserve the character and appearance of the area. However, it is accepted that the demolition and construction process will have a short-term impact on the area due to views of the construction site, noise and the loss of some vegetation. In planning the project, efforts have been taken to minimise the impact during the construction stage. Following construction, the ground and vegetation will be re-instated and, where opportunities arise, enhanced.

6.7 As the proposal includes the demolition of the existing bridge, of which the southern abutment is within the South Stoke Conservation Area, a separate Conservation Consent Application has been submitted to accompany the main application.

6.8 It has been identified that works to trees located within the South Stoke Conservation Area will have to be carried out to prepare for the demolition and construction of the replacement bridge. As these works need to be carried out prior to this year's (2006) nesting season, a separate application to Lop, Top or Fell Trees in a Conservation Area, has already been separately submitted.

6.9 The whole of the application site is within "Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty" (AONB) where the following policy applies.

POLICY AREA9 Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Development will not be permitted within the Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) unless:

(i) development is essential for agriculture, forestry, mineral extraction or disposal of waste, quiet informal recreation, rural diversification or essential community needs; and

(ii) it is demonstrated that it would not be harmful to the visual quality and characteristics of the AONB; or

(iii) in exceptional circumstances, it is demonstrated that the development meets national interests; no alternative site is available; and any harmful effects are minimised.

Development outside but near to the AONB will not be permitted where it would be unduly prominent in, or detract from, views into or out of the AONB.

6.10 The existing bridge was built around 1838 and has become a well-established feature in the landscape. The bridge has provided access across the River (until it was closed for safety reasons) to farmland on the northern bank and for footpath users enjoying the local network of footpaths. The replacement bridge will reinstate this important access across the river. The proposal to replace the existing bridge with a replacement bridge of a similar steel truss design will help maintain the established visual qualities and character of the area and will avoid introducing any new harmful features.

6.11 In planning the project, strimming of existing vegetation has been kept to a minimum. Following construction, the applicant proposes to re instate the ground and vegetation and to take up any opportunities for further enhancement.

6.12 A significant part of the application site falls within the Arun Banks SSSI, where the following policy applies.

POLICY AREA14 Sites of National Importance for Nature Conservation

Proposals for development in, or likely to affect (directly or indirectly) Sites of Special Scientific Interest will be subject to special scrutiny. Where such development is likely to have an adverse effect, it will not be permitted unless the reasons for the development clearly outweigh the nature conservation value of the site itself and the national policy to safeguard the national network of such sites.

Where the site concerned is a National Nature Reserve, a site identified by the Nature Conservation Review or Geological Conservation Review, particular regard will be paid to the national importance of that site.

Where development is permitted, harm to the nature conservation interest must be minimised. The use of conditions or planning agreements will be considered to ensure the protection and enhancement of the nature conservation interest, and to provide appropriate compensatory or mitigation measures and site management.

6.13 In planning the project, consultations have been held with English Nature to ensure the proposal has the minimal impact on the SSSI. Apart from assuring the extent and form of works will have a minimal impact on the SSSI, it is recognised that it is important to time the works to avoid critical periods in the life cycle of the flora and fauna of the SSSI.

The Environment Report

6.14 Consultations on the Environmental Report and pre application discussions with interested bodies, particularly English Nature, have helped identify and address the potential impact of the proposal.

6.15 The Environmental Report, which is submitted as part of the application, identifies the following potential impacts.

- Diversion of public rights of way
- Loss of some vegetation
- Disturbance to breeding birds, 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 water course
- 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.

6.16 To address the key impacts the following mitigation measures will be implemented;

- Temporary closures for the small parts of the affected public rights of way will be applied for and alternative routes around the closures will be put in place with adequate signage. See PA PLAN 2
- Re-instatement of any disturbed ground and replanting with appropriate vegetation. Enhanced planting where the opportunities arise.
- Vegetation clearance will be undertaken during the spring months prior to the breeding bird season, and will be kept cleared during the construction period.
- An aboricultural and bat survey will be undertaken prior to tree clearance; advice will be sought from a qualified ecologist if presence of bats is confirmed.
- An Environmental Management Plan will be produced with methodology for avoiding further spread of Japanese knotweed.
- Avoid piling during the main migratory period (July and August). Prepare method statement for piling operations and programme which has been submitted and approved as part of the internal Environment Agency consultation process.
- Alternative piling methods will be used which generate reduced levels of noise and vibration. Piling operations will be restricted to daytime 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, potential for bridge to be donated to local industrial museum, coring/borehole investigations of site of new abutments.

- Providing details of the times and days within which construction works will be limited to.

Tree Works

6.17 The proposal will require the clearance of some vegetation and selective lopping within and outside the application site. The detailed schedules and plans for this work are given in Appendix A.

6.18 Some of the tree works are within the South Stoke Conservation Area and a separate application for these tree works has been submitted. Some of the tree works are also within the Arun Banks SSSI and notice has been given to English Nature, who have indicated that they have no concerns about the works within the SSSI. Some further works are to trees along the route to the site. These works are outside the application site, the Conservation Area and the SSSI and are included for information purposes only.

6.19 Where appropriate it is proposed to replace the removed vegetation as part of the re-instatement of the area following construction of the replacement bridge.

Environmental Enhancement

6.20 The application covers a relatively small area. Apart from improvements made during reinstatement and painting the bridge a sympathetic colour, there are few opportunities for environmental enhancement. However, the location of the bridge is an asset itself. The bridge is an established feature in the landscape and well located within the river environment and the footpath network. There is an opportunity to provide local area interpretation boards giving information on the qualities of the local environment, the creation of Stoke Cut, the history of Thomas Dunn's original bridge and the ancient river environment.

7 Conclusions

7.1 The structural condition of the existing (c1838) bridge is such that it has been closed to all vehicles and pedestrians. The bridge is considered beyond economical repair and if left to deteriorate further would represent a risk of collapse. There is a clear need for a replacement bridge.

7.2 The replacement bridge will re-establish an important and historical local link across the River Arun for access vehicles and users of the local footpath network.

7.3 The proposed replacement bridge is within a designated sensitive area, and care has been taken in the planning the replacement bridge and its construction to minimise any adverse impacts of the proposal.

7.4 The proposed replacement bridge does not raise any significant conflicts with the development plan for the area that would merit any refusal of the application.

end

Appendix A: Tree Works: South Stoke Replacement Bridge.

Schedule A: List Of Tree Works within Conservation Area

PA Plan 5a; Location of Tree Works within Conservation Area

Schedule B: List Of Tree Works Outside Conservation Area

PA Plan 5b: Location of Tree Works Outside Conservation Area

Appendix B

PA Plan 3: South Stoke Replacement Bridge;

Location of Construction Areas and Compounds.

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Appendix C:

PA Drawing 2: South Stoke Replacement Bridge;

Crane Platform Details.

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Appendix D:

PA Plan 4: South Stoke Replacement Bridge;

Construction Traffic Routes