

PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT

Development Management Service
Planning and Development Division
Environment and Regeneration Department
PO Box 333
222 Upper Street
LONDON N1 1YA

PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE B		
Date:	8 th October 2015	NON-EXEMPT

Application number	P2014/5019/LBC
Application type	Listed Building Consent
Ward	Junction/Hillrise
Listed building	Listed Grade II*
Conservation area	Whitehall Park
Development Plan Context	Article 4(2) Whitehall Park (2) Local cycle routes Strategic Cycle Route Local Flood Risk Zone (LFRZ) Site within 100m of a TLRN Road
Licensing Implications	None
Site Address	Archway Bridge, Archway Road, London, N19
Proposal	Proposed anti suicide measures by installation of fencing to bridge parapet.

Case Officer	Kristian Kaminski
Applicant	Transport for London - Mr Scott Lester
Agent	Frankham Consultancy - Mr Al Grant

1. RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is asked to resolve to **GRANT** listed building consent

- subject to the conditions set out in Appendix 1.

2. SITE PLAN (site outlined in black)



3. PHOTOS OF SITE



Image 1: Looking east, Islington to the south



Image 2: View from Islington to the south

4. SUMMARY

- 4.1 This proposal is for anti-suicide measures to Archway Bridge in the form of fencing. Applications have been submitted to both Islington and Haringey Councils as the borough boundary extends down the middle of the bridge. Objections have been received, primarily on the grounds that the proposals will harm the appearance of the listed bridge.
- 4.2 The application has been brought to committee due to the level of public interest in the proposals and the sensitive nature of the application which has attracted both public support and objections.
- 4.3 Issues arising from the proposal include: the harm to the architectural and historic appearance of the bridge; disruption of views from the bridge; concern that alternative designs had not been adequately explored; that insufficient expert advice had been sought; and concern over the lack of public consultation prior to the submission of the application.
- 4.4 A number of other issues have been raised including concerns over whether the proposals will be effective in their aim to deter and prevent suicides from taking place at the bridge; and concern that the proposals will not stop suicide or save lives, only relocate the suicide attempt.
- 4.4 It is considered that the revised proposals are acceptable and an improvement on an initial proposal. They appear to be more effective than the initial proposal as the vertical steel cables cannot be climbed while causing less harm to the appearance of the bridge. The height of the fencing has been lowered and set back from the inner face of the

balustrade, and the caging to the central lantern omitted. When viewed from the south (and north) the fencing should be hard to perceive, thus reducing its visual impact. The vertical steel cables will allow views across London as well as to the original balustrade which will be more visible as the existing wire mesh obscuring the decorative detailing can be removed. The proposals also allow for the removal of the existing steel spikes to the external face of the central plinth.

- 4.6 While it is accepted that the proposals will cause some visual harm to the heritage asset the harm is less than substantial and outweighed by the public benefit of deterring and preventing suicide from taking place at the bridge. The proposals will not unacceptably harm the significance of the heritage asset and therefore comply with national and local policy.

5. SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

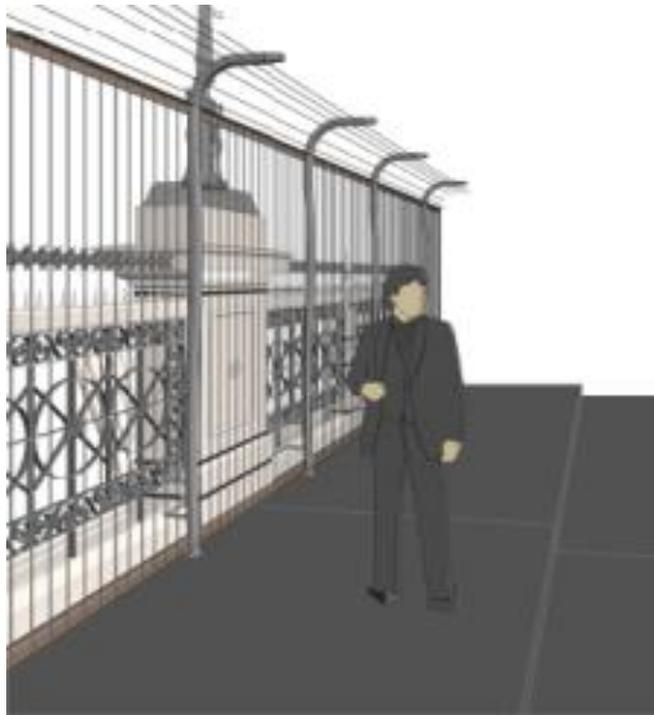
- 5.1 The northern part of Archway Bridge is located within the London Borough of Haringey and is separately listed to that part within Islington. A separate application for Listed Building Consent has been submitted to the London Borough of Haringey. At the time of writing the report Haringey Council were still assessing the proposal and have yet to make a determination. Officers report any update to the Committee.
- 5.2 Archway Bridge has architectural and historic significance for the age and quality of its design. It is Grade II* listed and located within the Whitehall Park Conservation Area which is considered to be of importance by virtue of its Victorian development. It is a local landmark and there are important views of the bridge, especially from within Islington to the south, as well as views from the bridge over London.
- 5.3 The list description states:

'Bridge carrying Hornsey Lane over Archway Road, and designed to replace a bridge of brick and stone construction designed in 1813 by John Nash. Dated 1897 in panel at crown of arch, and completed 1900. By Sir Alexander Binnie, for London County Council. Portland stone, steel and iron. Portland stone piers to either side with splayed bases having vermiculated quoins, the body of the piers rusticated and vermiculated. Segmental-arched span of 120 feet, of steel and cast-iron construction with rope mouldings to archivolt and circular ornament and arabesques in the spandrels; modillion cornice. Balustrade of Portland stone piers to either end, carrying cast iron lamp standards of the type designed by Lewis Vulliamy for the Thames Embankment in the 1860s, with the initials of the LCC on the south-eastern and north-western lamps, and the date 1897 on the other pair; smaller central piers, now painted, with lamp standards flanked by griffins; intermediate piers surmounted by ball and spike finials with spiked rail between; the cast-iron panels between with wheel motifs and scrolling ornament.'

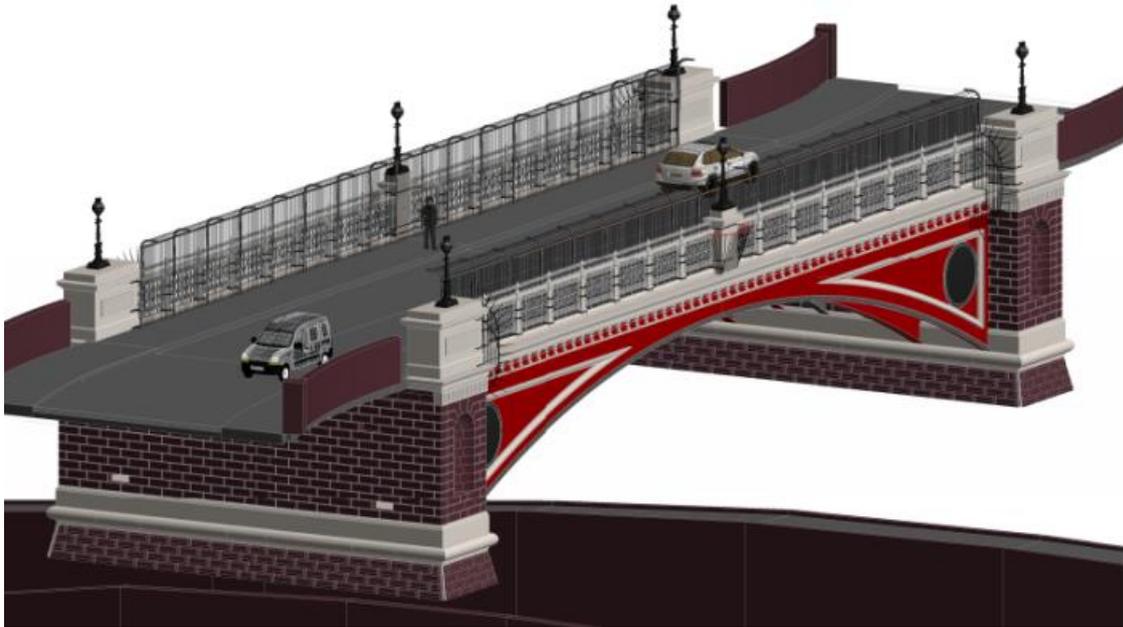
- 5.4 Historic England's letter of 15 September states that 'the bridge is of great historical value, and also possesses much aesthetic value for its elaborate ironwork including its decorative lamp standards and robust stone piers. Its architectural grandeur is particularly evident from Archway Road below... As a prominent landmark, the bridge is also of much communal value to the local community; however it is sadly equally infamous as a location for suicides'.

6. PROPOSAL (IN DETAIL)

- 6.1 It is proposed to erect a 2.83m high fence set back from the inner face of the existing balustrade to the bridge. To prevent climbing of the fence it will consist of 8mm vertical stainless steel vertical rods at 108mm spacing supported by 60x60mm stanchions with a recessive matt finish. Each span of vertical rods will be welded together and independently fixed to the stanchions to allow temporary removal for maintenance and cleaning of the original parapet. The stanchions will be clamped with steel straps to the original cast iron parapet piers and the installations will be reversible.
- 6.2 For additional security 6 stretched catenary cables are proposed to be erected above the fence curving inwards for 350mm to a height of 3.14m. At the stone caps to the end piers the terminal frames will be fixed by steel straps requiring fixings into the masonry. At each extremity of the bridge, there are cages with padlocked access gates to prevent access to the bridge ledges located outside the parapets. It is intended to enhance these protection measures by extending the height of the cage and the addition of painted steel spikes. These will be screened by existing vegetation to the embankments either side of the bridge.



Schematic drawing showing the revised proposals, note visualisations overemphasize the vertical rods which will be only 8mm thick



Schematic drawing showing the revised proposals

- 6.3 The initial proposal was to increase the height of the original cast iron parapet by erecting a 2.54metre stainless steel catenary fence of stretched cables for the full width of the bridge above the parapet. The top of the proposed fence would be 4.54 metres above the pavement. This fence would be supported by 60x60 mm stainless steel stanchions clamped with steel straps off the original cast iron parapet piers. In order to enclose the central lamp standard above the centre pier a stainless steel welded mesh cage was proposed with the top of cage being 3.23 metres above the original parapet height. (Height above the pavement, 5.77 metres) The catenary fence of stretched cables would be fixed to the cage in order to fully enclose the centre pier.



Schematic drawing showing the proposals prior to revision

Revisions to the Proposal

- 6.4 On 19th March 2015 a sample section of the proposed fencing was erected and discussed with representatives from Islington, TfL, Haringey and Historic England. Further discussions took place on 13th April 2015.
- 6.5 Concerns were raised over the harm to the appearance of the bridge, that alternative designs had not been adequately explored and that insufficient expert advice had been sought and it was questioned whether the proposals will be effective in their aim if horizontal wires could be climbed.
- 6.6 Concerns were also raised that the most important views of the bridge are from the A1 to the south (and north) and that the height of the proposed fencing and the need for caging around the central lantern caused most harm to the appearance of the bridge. TfL were advised that the aim should be to lower the height of the fencing and omit the caging to the central lantern. A suggestion made was to have fencing formed from vertical steel cables that could not be climbed, set back from the inner face of the balustrade. This would result in fencing of a lower height than proposed and the omission of the caging around the central lantern. It was also suggested that the number of stanchions should be the minimised and made as slender as possible, aiming to avoid an overly utilitarian appearance. TfL agreed to investigate the proposed design solution and submitted revised proposals.

7. RELEVANT HISTORY:

- 7.1 Since its completion in 1900 Archway Bridge has been used by people to commit suicide and has gained the unfortunate alternative name of 'Suicide Bridge'. This is a cause of great distress to the local community. In 2001 the Hornsey Lane Association, with funding from Camden and Islington Health Authority, commissioned a feasibility study by Robert Dearman Architects to consider options for preventing suicides at the bridge. The options were not taken forward. When, at the end of 2010, three men in three weeks committed suicide by jumping from the bridge, a campaign was set up by local residents for anti-suicide measures to be put in place. In addition suicide attempts which are prevented by the emergency services also cause distress and TfL has also explained that this results in the closure of the A1 to traffic which leads to disruption of the strategic and local road networks.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

- 7.2 None relevant

ENFORCEMENT

- 7.3 None relevant

PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE:

- 7.4 A pre-application (Q2014/0413/MIN) site visit was undertaken and advice provided. It was advised that any proposals should minimise the visual impact on the bridge having explored all possible options, be effective and justified.

8. CONSULTATION

STATUTORY CONSULTATION UNDER TAKEN AS PART OF THE APPLICATION

Public Consultation

8.1 A site notice was displayed and letters were sent to 85 occupants of adjoining and nearby properties on Hornsey Lane, Fitzwarren Gardens and Archway Road. The initial public consultation of the application therefore expired on 19th February 2015. It is the Council's practice to continue to consider representations made up until the date of a decision. A total of 7 no. objections had been received from the public with regard to the application. The issues raised can be summarised as follows (with the paragraph that provides responses to each issue indicated in brackets):

- Objection to the harm to the architectural and historic appearance of the bridge and disruption of views from the bridge. (10.3-10.8)
- Concern that alternative designs had not been adequately explored and that insufficient expert advice had been sought. (10.10)
- Concern over whether the proposals will be effective in their aim of stopping suicides occurring from the bridge. (10.10)
- Concern that the proposals won't stop suicide or save lives, only relocate the suicide attempt. (10.10 & 10.11)
- Concern over the lack of public consultation prior to the submission of the application. (8.11)

8.2 Following revised drawings a site notice and press advert were displayed and letters were sent to occupants of nearby properties on 29/07/2015, the public consultation of the application therefore expired on 27/08/2015. A total of 4 no. objections had been received from the public with regard to the additional consultation. The issues raised can be summarised as follows (with the paragraph that provides responses to each issue indicated in brackets):

- Objection to the harm to the architectural and historic appearance of the bridge and disruption of views from the bridge. (10.3-10.8)
- Concern that the proposals won't stop suicide or save lives, only relocate the suicide attempt. (10.10 & 10.11)

8.3 Due to a typing error in the press advert another site notice and press advert were displayed 27/8/2015. The public consultation of the application therefore expired on 24/09/2015. Any further representations received will be updated at the committee.

Internal Consultees

8.5 **Highways:** No comments.

8.6 **Traffic and Engineering:** No comments.

8.7 **Transport Planning:** No comments.

External Consultees

- 8.6 **Victorian Society:** Objection to the harm to the architectural and historic appearance of the bridge and concern that alternative designs had not been adequately explored.
- 8.7 **Better Archway Forum:** Objection to the harm to the architectural and historic appearance of the bridge and concern that alternative designs had not been adequately explored.
- 8.8 **Highgate Society:** Objection to the harm to the architectural and historic appearance of the bridge and concern that alternative designs had not been adequately explored.
- 8.9 **Historic England:** The revised proposals present a more effective solution for Archway Bridge and the removal of the caged elements is welcomed. We continue to accept that any viable scheme will inevitably cause harm to the significance of the listed bridge. However we consider the level of harm to be 'less than substantial' and therefore Paragraph 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) continues to apply to this case. We note that a strong 'wider public benefit' argument could be made to outweigh this harm

The letter also raised the following issues:

- Concern over spikes to the external face of central and flank plinths;
- Concern over fixing method of fence to the flank plinths;
- Concern over existing modern mesh to the balustrade; and
- Requirement for the installation of a sample section of fence.

The existing spikes to the external face of the central plinth are proposed to be removed. The extended spikes to the flank piers are justified in order for the anti-suicide measures to be effective. A reversible fixing method to the end plinths can be secured by condition unless it is not structurally possible. The modern mesh to the railings is proposed to be removed. The installation of a sample section of fence will be required by condition.

Historic England has instructed that the application is determined in accordance with national and local planning policy, and in consultation with the Design and Conservation Team. They have written the necessary draft letter of authorisation and referred the case to National Planning Casework Unit. Subject to the Secretary of State not directing reference of the application to him, they will return the letter of authorisation after which a formal decision could be issued.

- 8.10 **London Borough of Haringey:** Response awaited.

TFL CONSULTATION:

- 8.11 TfL carried out its own informal consultation on the initial proposals, the results of which are:

Members of the public	
Support	32
Concerned about appearance	3
Lack of statistical evidence	2
Ineffective measures	1

9. RELEVANT POLICIES

Details of all relevant policies and guidance notes are attached in Appendix 2. This report considers the proposal against the following development plan documents.

National Guidance

- 9.1 The National Planning Policy Framework 2012 and Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) seek to secure positive growth in a way that effectively balances economic, environmental and social progress for this and future generations. The NPPF and PPG are material considerations and have been taken into account as part of the assessment of these proposals.
- 9.2 The Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide to PPS5 Planning for the Historic Environment (2010) was withdrawn on 27 March 2015. This guidance had remained in place as guidance to Section 12 (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment) of the NPPF. However, the intended replacement has not yet been published by Historic England.

Development Plan

- 9.3 The Development Plan is comprised of the London Plan 2015, Islington Core Strategy 2011, Development Management Policies 2013, Finsbury Local Plan 2013 and Site Allocations 2013. The policies of the Development Plan are considered relevant to this application and are listed at Appendix 2 to this report.

Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) / Document (SPD)

- 9.4 The SPGs and/ or SPDs which are considered relevant are listed in Appendix 2.

10. ASSESSMENT

- 10.1 The main issues arising from this proposal relate to:

- principle of the development;
- the impact on the 'special architectural and historic interest' of the listed bridge; and
- other matters.

Principle of the Development

- 10.2 Since its completion in 1900 Archway Bridge has been used by people to commit suicide and to attempt suicide and has gained the unfortunate alternative name of 'Suicide Bridge'. This is a cause of great distress to the individuals involved, their families and the local community. In addition suicide attempts which are prevented by the emergency services also cause distress and TfL has also explained that this results in the closure of the A1 to traffic which leads to disruption of the road network. Proposals to deter and prevent suicides being committed from the bridge are therefore acceptable in principle.

Impact on the 'special architectural and historic interest' of the listed bridge

- 10.3 The proposal as first submitted was to increase the height of the original cast iron parapet by erecting a 2.54 metre stainless steel catenary fence of stretched cables for the full width of the bridge above the parapet. The top of the proposed fence would be

4.54 metres above the pavement. This fence would be supported by 60x60 mm stainless steel stanchions clamped with steel straps off the original cast iron parapet piers. In order to enclose the central lamp standard above the centre pier a stainless steel welded mesh cage was proposed with the top of cage being 3.23 metres above the original parapet height. (Height above the pavement, 5.77 metres) The catenary fence of stretched cables would be fixed to the cage in order to fully enclose the centre pier.

- 10.4 The application has been revised and it is now proposed to erect a 2.83m high fence set back from the inner face of the existing balustrade to the bridge. To prevent climbing of the fence it will consist of 8mm vertical stainless steel vertical rods at 108mm spacing supported by 60x60mm stanchions with a recessive matt finish. Each span of vertical rods will be welded together and independently fixed to the stanchions to allow temporary removal for maintenance and cleaning of the original parapet. The stanchions will be clamped with steel straps to the original cast iron parapet piers and the installations will be reversible.
- 10.5 For additional security 6 stretched catenary cables are proposed to be erected above the fence curving inwards for 350mm to a height of 3.14m. At the stone caps to the end piers the terminal frames will be fixed by steel straps requiring fixings into the masonry. At each extremity of the bridge, there are cages with padlocked access gates to prevent access to the bridge ledges located outside the parapets. It is intended to enhance these protection measures by extending the height of the cage and the addition of painted steel spikes. These will be screened by existing vegetation.
- 10.6 It is considered that the revised proposals are an improvement on the initial proposal. They appear to be more effective as the vertical steel cables cannot be climbed while causing less harm to the appearance of the bridge. The height of the fencing has been lowered and set back from the inner face of the balustrade, and the caging to the central lantern omitted. When viewed from the south (and north) the fencing should be hard to perceive, thus reducing its visual impact. The vertical steel cables will allow views across London as well as to the original balustrade which will be more visible as the existing wire mesh obscuring the decorative detailing can be removed. The proposals also allow for the removal of the existing steel spikes to the external face of the central plinth.

The NPPF states the following:

132. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, battlefields, grade I and II listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.*

134. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

- 10.7 Islington's DM Policy 2.3 (Heritage) C. Listed buildings states:

- i. The significance of Islington's listed buildings is required to be conserved or enhanced. Appropriate repair and reuse of listed buildings will be encouraged.*
- ii. The significance of a listed building can be harmed by inappropriate repair, alteration or extension. Proposals to repair, alter or extend a listed building must be justified and appropriate. Consequently a high level of professional skill and craftsmanship will be required. Proposals to repair, alter or extend a listed building which harm its significance will not be permitted unless there is a clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a listed building will be strongly resisted.*

10.8 Objections have been received regarding the harm of the proposal to the appearance of the bridge and the disruption of views from the bridge. It is considered that the level of harm is less than substantial harm and has now been minimised as much as possible. There is clear and convincing justification for the proposals and the harm is outweighed by the public benefit of deterring and preventing suicide attempts at Archway Bridge. The proposals therefore comply with Development Management Policy DM 2.3 and Core Strategy policies CS8 and CS9 .

Other Matters

10.9 The applicants have also agreed to review the anti-suicide signage on the bridge in conjunction with the Samaritans. They have also agreed to work with the Council and the London Borough of Haringey in ensuring CCTV surveillance of the bridge. These measures are secured by Condition 4.

10.10 Alternative designs have been adequately explored, sufficient expert advice has been sought, consultation has taken place and the proposals appear to be as effective as possible in their aim. While no anti-suicide measures are likely to be 100% successful in preventing suicides other similar schemes (for example to the Clifton Suspension Bridge) have shown that such measures have a significant impact on reducing the incidence of suicide at a particular location because the measures give the emergency services a greater chance of intervening if someone decides to try and jump from the bridge.

10.11 While it is possible that the proposals may disperse suicide attempts elsewhere it will be for others to consider similar solutions to those sites just as TfL has considered solutions for this site. As stated above the measures will allow the Emergency Services a greater opportunity to intervene if someone appears to be distressed and to ensure that potential suicides are directed to appropriate care and support.

11. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Summary

11.1 It is proposed to erect a 2.83m high fence set back from the inner face of the existing balustrade to the bridge. To prevent climbing of the fence it will consist of 8mm vertical stainless steel vertical rods at 108mm spacing supported by 60x60mm stanchions with a recessive matt finish. Each span of vertical rods will be welded together and independently fixed to the stanchions to allow temporary removal for maintenance and cleaning of the original parapet. The stanchions will be clamped with steel straps to the original cast iron parapet piers and the installations will be reversible.

11.2 While the proposals will cause some visual harm to the heritage asset the harm is considered to be less than substantial and outweighed by the significant public benefit.

The proposals will not unacceptably harm the significance of the heritage asset and therefore comply with national and local policy.

Conclusion

11.3 It is recommended that listed building consent be granted subject to conditions as set out in Appendix 1 - RECOMMENDATIONS.

APPENDIX 1 – RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION A

That the Committee resolve to GRANT listed building consent subject to **conditions** to secure the following:

List of Conditions:

1	<p>The works hereby permitted shall be begun not later than three years from the date of this consent.</p> <p>REASON: To comply with the provisions of Section 18(1)(a) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (Chapter 5).</p>
2	<p>All new external and internal works and finishes and works of making good to the retained fabric, shall match the existing adjacent work with regard to the methods used and to material, colour, texture and profile, unless shown otherwise on the drawings or other documentation hereby approved or required by any condition(s) attached to this consent.</p> <p>REASON: In order to conserve the significance of the heritage asset.</p>
3	<p>The following shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the relevant works commencing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- In situ installation of a sample section of fencing- Justification for the extended spikes to the flank piers- Details for a reversible fixing method that can be used to the end plinths or demonstration that that it is not possible <p>REASON: In order to conserve the significance of the heritage asset.</p>
4	<p>The following, which help weigh in favour of the approved scheme, shall be undertaken within three months of works commencing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Removal of the modern mesh to the existing balustrade- Removal of the existing spikes placed to the external face of the central plinth- Agreed plan submitted for CCTV surveillance of the bridge in conjunction with Council and the London Borough of Haringey- Review undertaken of the anti-suicide signage on the bridge in conjunction with the Samaritans. <p>REASON: In order to conserve the significance of the heritage asset.</p>

APPENDIX 2: RELEVANT POLICIES

This appendix lists all relevant development plan policies and guidance notes pertinent to the determination of this planning application.

1 National Guidance

The National Planning Policy Framework 2012 and Planning Policy Guidance seek to secure positive growth in a way that effectively balances economic, environmental and social progress for this and future generations. The NPPF and PPG are material considerations and has been taken into account as part of the assessment of these proposals.

2. Development Plan

The Development Plan is comprised of the London Plan 2015, Islington Core Strategy 2011, Development Management Policies 2013, Finsbury Local Plan 2013 and Site Allocations 2013. The following policies of the Development Plan are considered relevant to this application:

A) The London Plan 2015 - Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London

Policy 7.4 – Local Character
Policy 7.8 Heritage assets and archaeology

B) Islington Core Strategy 2011

Strategic Policies

Policy CS8 – Enhancing Islington’s character
Policy CS9 (Protecting and Enhancing Islington’s Built and Historic Environment)

C) Development Management Policies June 2013

Design and Heritage

DM2.3 Heritage

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4. SPD/SPGs

Islington Urban Design Guide
Conservation Area Design Guidelines