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Our Ref: TP/LNE/23/066

02 October 2023

Dear Sir/Madam,

Prior Approval under Part 18 to Schedule 2 of the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 – Access For All Project, Palmers Green

Please find enclosed the necessary plans and specifications relating to the installation of lifts and new staircases and access ramps to provide step-free access at Palmers Green railway station.

This project is part of a programme developed by the Department for Transport (DfT), Mobility and Inclusion Unit. The work is being managed by Network Rail on behalf of the DfT, who provide the funding, have chosen the station and have defined the scope of the works.

The Department for Transport (DfT) has specified that the objective of the project is to achieve an unobstructed and obstacle free 'accessible route' from at least one of the station entrances to each platform and between platforms served by passenger trains.

The DfT measures an 'accessible route' as one sufficient for a manually self-propelled wheelchair user to negotiate. Where reasonably practicable, the works are designed to comply with the "Code of Practice for Train and Station services for disabled passengers" and all relevant safety and technical standards.

Because of its high level of patronage Palmers Green station has been identified as a station where the provision of lifts is justified.

The proposed works at Palmers Green Station have been designed to create an inclusive station for passengers by creating accessible step free access from the station entrance on Aldermans Hill to the two platforms and between them.

The existing station has two operational platforms: Platform 1 which is typically for Southbound trains towards London and Finsbury Park; and Platform 2 for Northbound trains towards Hertford and Stevenage. Both have a single stairwell from the existing station building with a secondary access point to Platform 2 via the car park access road. The station building is located on an overbridge consisting of concourse, ticket office and coffee shop. The station building is connected to the platforms via two staircases.

The stairs to platform 1 consist of two flights of stairs made up of 14 risers on the lower flight and 16 risers on the upper flight with an intermediate landing approximately 1.8m deep. The stairs to platform 2 consist of two flights of stairs with 15 risers on the lower flights and 16 risers on the upper flight with an intermediate landing approximately 1.7m deep.

The station has 57 parking spaces which includes 4 designated blue badge parking spaces (though not compliant to current standards). The car park is accessed via a non-compliant ramp down from the overbridge and Aldermans Hill. Historic drawings indicate that the ramp is constructed from a reinforced concrete U section with compacted fill over-laid by pavement surfacing layers. At the top of the ramp historic drawings indicate construction changes to a concrete plinth, though ground investigation works were unable to confirm where this transition occurred.

There is an alternative gated access route from the station car park using a stepped access, linking directly with platform 2. However, this access route is only open Monday – Friday at 16:00 & 20:00 when congestion occurs at the station. It should be noted that this access gate can be opened for booked assisted travel by contacting Great Northern's assisted travel help line.

Platform 1 has a canopy of an approximate length of 45m with two platform buildings to the rear of the platform. The first platform building is of brick construction and includes a small independent cafe, male and female toilets and a storeroom.

Platform 2 is located adjacent to the station car park and has a station canopy covering approximately 13m length closest to the platform access stairs. The building on this platform is constructed using a combination of construction techniques. One elevation is of brick cavity wall construction and remaining elevation are of timber frame construction. Historical drawings indicate that this building was a waiting shelter; however, it is currently used as a store and its construction is both brick cavity and timber frame though the building is not currently believed to be in operation.

The key design elements that make up the proposed development of Palmers Green Station include the following key elements:

- . *Two 16 person lifts, one to each platform and associated Lift Motor Rooms*
- . *Two raised, covered walkways from the existing station building to upper lift lobbies*
- . *Reconfiguration of the existing station building and platform buildings to create a step free access route from station building to platforms*
- . *Relocation of existing stores*
- . *Canopies to walkways and platforms*

The two existing platforms will be provided with a Network Rail standard lift and step free walkways to enable inclusive access to all users. Network Rail compliant station services including CCTV and lighting will be implemented to minimise the potential for crime and anti-social behaviour and maximise the safety of all users. To each walkway, resting places are provided to meet the needs of disabled / older people increasing inclusivity of the development for all.

The lift shafts are approx. 8m high and will be constructed with a steel frame and clad in brick slips to match as close as reasonably possible the bonding, size, colour, texture and mortar of that of the existing station building. The lift itself will be 2.6m long by 2m wide and will be able to accommodate 16 people. The external cavity wall skin to the Lift Motor Rooms at platform level will also be brick to match the existing buildings. The steel frame walkways will be externally clad with steel sheeting to the lower section and glazing to the upper to provide daylight and create clearer sightlines. To avoid potential overlooking onto adjacent residential properties to the rear of platform one, opaque glazing will be provided as appropriate. The walkway to platform 2 lift will be approx. 25m in length.

It is proposed that both up and lower lift lobby areas and associated access routes to the existing station are to be covered with a simple half segment GRP canopy.

Modifications to the internal layout of the existing station building and platform kiosk will be required to create the new access routes. The works proposed are minimal with the proposed layout intended to be easy to navigate with wayfinding signage included as part of proposals. A maintenance access route to electrical cabinets is also to be provided as part of the works along the East elevation of the existing station building with suitable illuminated bollards, security gate, fence and doors to be installed.

The existing staircases are proposed to be reprofiled to allow for a sufficient landing area at the top of each staircase to provide an access route into the lift lobbies whilst providing compliant stepped access to each platform. They will also contain new colour compliant handrails across the full flight of stairs are to be installed, along with new corduroy tactile strips at the foot and head of stairs and coloured compliant stair nosings applied.

Although not forming part of the prior approval application, it is also necessary to modify the existing kerb lines adjacent to the proposed designated disabled bays. The existing kerb is to be removed and dropped kerb installed along with vehicle bollards to stop vehicles impeding the footpath. Remarking of designated disabled bays is proposed to provide 4 compliant parallel designated disabled bays. It is also proposed that 3 compliant standard bays are constructed within the existing central island to maintain the existing number of car parking provision in the car park. As part of these works it will require alterations to existing kerb lines, excavation of materials and surface construction. A retaining wall of approximately 1m high is proposed to the rear of platform 2 to support new footpath alongside the proposed designated disabled parking bays. A new fence is proposed on the edge of the retaining wall, matching that of the existing fence along the rear of the platform.

Please find enclosed the following plans:

Drawing 151995-MMD-00-ZZ-DR-S-0200 Proposed General Arrangement Plan
 Drawing 151995-MMD-00-ZZ-DR-S-0210 Walkway Deck Plan
 Drawing 151995-MMD-00-ZZ-DR-S-0211 Platform & Foundation Plan Plat.1
 Drawing 151995-MMD-00-ZZ-DR-S-0212 Platform & Foundation Plan Plat.2
 Drawing 151995-MMD-00-ZZ-DR-S-0213 Platform 1 sections
 Drawing 151995-MMD-00-ZZ-DR-S-0214 Platform 2 sections
 Drawing 151995-MMD-00-ZZ-DR-S-0215 Lift Sections
 Drawing 151995-MMD-00-ZZ-DR-S-0250 3D elevations
 Red Line Boundary (Location) Plan (1:1250)
 Extract of 1845 Act (section 16) & 1865 Act (cover and reference to the 1845 Act)

The works are “permitted” under Part 18 to Schedule 2 of the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) order 2015 (works under local or private acts or orders), subject to the caveat given below.

I would draw your attention to the provisions of Part 18a which states that permitted development applies when it is “authorised by (a) a local or private Act of Parliament (i.e. the original Act of Parliament that allowed the construction of the railway).....which designates specifically the nature of the development and the land upon which it may be carried out.” Development is not permitted (for specific items identified, such as buildings or bridges) ...”unless the Prior Approval of the appropriate authority to the detailed plans and specifications is first obtained”. However the Prior Approval is...”not to be refused...nor are conditions to be imposed unless they are reasonably satisfied that - (a) the development....ought to be and could reasonably be carried out elsewhere on the land; or (b) the design or external appearance of any.....bridge or building....would injure the amenity *of the neighbourhood and is reasonably capable of modification to avoid such injury.*”

The original Act specifying this stretch of railway states that the railway undertaker can, from time to time, alter, repair, or discontinue the before mentioned works or any of them and substitute others in their stead, and do all other acts necessary for making, maintaining altering, repairing or using the railway. This “general power” is provided for in Section 16 of the 1845 Railway Clauses Consolidation Act, and it is this Act which is incorporated in all railway Acts since 1845. These powers apply to land within the Limits Of Deviation of the relevant act, irrespective of whether the land is in in railway ownership.

The decision of the Court Of Appeal in *Emsley v North Eastern Railway Company* (1896) 1 Ch 418 confirmed that these powers are not restricted to the period of construction but can be invoked from “time to time”. The use of the original Act of Parliament as a means of using permitted development rights has also been upheld in a 2000 English Ministerial appeal decision, the reference number being APP/X/98/X5210/003059.

Therefore, the two tests to be applied are the siting of the lifts and its design in terms of its impact on the amenity of the area.

In relation to the first test, the lifts have obviously to be located at the station, but to locate these at the northern end of the station is uneconomic as it creates an additional footbridge which increases the maintenance burden on the taxpayer and also penalises mobility impaired passengers in forcing them to walk further. Equally the provision of

ramps instead of lifts would similarly involve further distances to walk, as well as being more visually intrusive and reduce the car park capacity of the station. It therefore makes economic sense to make judicious use of the existing station overbridge to run stairs and lifts off it.

Given the lifts are considered to be in the correct position and cannot reasonably be located elsewhere, it then turns on whether the design of lifts is injurious to the amenity of the neighbourhood.

Palmers Green Station sits on the edge of The Lakes Estate Conservation Area in Enfield. Whilst not listed, the existing station building, originally built in 1871, is noted as having historical significance as well as architectural value.

The character appraisal for the Lakes Estate Conservation Area (2010) comments that:

Alderman's Hill, despite its historic origins, preserves only two buildings pre-dating the 1902 sale of Old Park estate. The railway station of 1870-112 was the catalyst for the suburbanisation of Southgate and is one of a good surviving group of the same date on this line. It bridges the lines and has a gabled frontage with an original canopy over the central entrance. The station is of central importance to the development of the suburb and as such has historical significance as well architectural value. (Number 127, much altered and entirely surrounded by later development is outside the Conservation Area.)

The station is of central importance to the development of the suburb, but is currently inaccessible to a portion of the local population. By introducing the step free access routes, and providing resting places within walkways / lift lobbies, the needs of a wider variety of users will be met increasing the inclusivity of the station. Although permission has already been granted in principle (subject to the Prior Approval), the proposal is also entirely consistent with the emerging Enfield Local Plan Strategic Policy SC1 (Improving health and wellbeing of Enfield's diverse communities) in improving accessibility.

Preserving the original character of the building has been a key consideration when planning the works and has been achieved by leaving the front elevation completely untouched with all works taking place to the rear of the building. Working around the existing platform canopies, the new elements use materials and simple detailing to avoid detracting from the existing station identity. The character of the proposal is in keeping with the existing station building with a consistent and clear use of materials and detailing to provide a simple architectural identity.

The design principles are catered around the local community. The proposals are sympathetic to and have been informed by the local identity and character. The addition of lift shafts and walkways will be integrated into the site via the use of materials to match the existing. The lift structures will be viewed quite properly as modern additions to the existing station but do not detract from its character nor from the character of the Conservation Area.

There are no other matters of acknowledged importance that should preclude the grant of Prior Approval. The Prior Approval process under Part 18a is a rare and unusual piece of legislation and is not to be confused with the prior approval process for new agricultural buildings or telecommunications equipment (for example, there

are no prescribed forms for a Part 18 Prior Approval); however, it remains the case that the applicant can appeal against non-determination if no decision has been made within 8 weeks of submission.

For the purposes of Part 18a the enabling Act in this instance is the ***Great Northern Railway (Hornsey to Hertford) Act 1865***. This incorporates the Railway Clauses Consolidation Act 1845 and section 16 of this Act is also included for reference.

We therefore request the formal Prior Approval to the plans and specifications enclosed with respect to the change in appearance of Palmers Green station through the provision of lifts and walkways, in accordance with the provisions of Part 18a to Schedule 2 of the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015. **Please note that the decision notice should actually state that “Prior Approval is hereby granted” and *not* that Prior Approval is not required, as the legislation is clear that permission must be given for the decision to be lawful.**

Please note no fee is prescribed in cases of Prior Approval under Part 18 of the Order.

Please let me know if you require any further information.

Yours Faithfully

Tony Rivero
Town Planning Manager LNE