

THAMESLINK 2000

Summary of the Proof of Evidence on Blackfriars Station and Bridge

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NR/6/A

Town and Country Planning Act 1990
Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
Transport and Works Act 1992

Railtrack (Thameslink 2000) Order 1997
Railtrack (Thameslink 2000) (Variation) Order 1999

1. Inquiry into applications by Network Rail for the Thameslink 2000 railway project sites at:

11-15 Borough High Street, London SE1
2-4 Bedale Street, London SE1
7 Stoney Street, London SE1
16-26 Borough High Street and 7 Bedale Street, London SE1
Blackfriars Railway Bridge, London EC4
Blackfriars Station North, London EC4
Blackfriars Railway Bridge, London SE1 (includes proposed south bank station entrance)

2. Re-opened inquiry into applications made by Railtrack plc for orders under the Transport and Works Act 1992 and associated applications.

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1.0 The extent to which the proposed development would secure a high quality of design having regard to the advice in Annex A to PPG 1 and in particular:

- (i) whether the design of the proposed replacement for the station would be appropriate to its important townscape setting; and**
- (ii) the suitability of the design of the Blackfriars Station concourse in terms of passenger access and services)**

1.1 In accordance with the principle of sustainable development set out in PPS1 the proposals represent a high quality of development through good and inclusive design.

1.2 On the north bank the architecture of the proposed station entrance building has sought to develop a language of openness and accessibility for passengers and public alike, whilst respecting the dominance and architecture of Unilever House and the Black Friar Public House.

1.3 On the south bank the proposed new single storey station entrance building has been kept small and “jewel like” to respond to the more intimate and smaller feel of this area.

1.4 On the bridge the proposed platform roof design has been kept as low as possible across the entire width of the river in order to allow both St Paul’s Cathedral to maintain its pre-eminence over all relevant views from around the local environment, and also for the bridge itself and its enclosure to maintain an openness and transparency in order to reduce its impact on views up and down the river.

1.5 Passenger access into the proposed new north bank station is to be simplified and made clearer for the travelling public and visitors alike. The new entrance will provide views into the proposed new “cathedral-height” shared ticket hall space, the height giving a feeling of “entrance” into a

major London station. The main concourse will be provided with all the passenger facilities required in a modern state-of-the-art station complex and will be well designed. A single ventilation shaft rising within the entrance building will replace two ventilation shafts which formed part of the proposals considered at the first inquiry.

- 1.6 The high quality of the design responds to the setting of surrounding buildings and the townscape and will provide an opportunity to improve the character and quality of the Blackfriars area on both the north and the south banks as well as over the River Thames.

2.0 The extent to which the proposed developments are consistent with PPG 15, with particular regard to:

- (i) the desirability of preserving the listed south abutment or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses***
- (ii) the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the adjacent Whitefriars Conservation Area***
- (iii) the need for the scale and type of development proposed at this location to secure the future of the listed south abutment***

- 2.1 PPG 15 has been taken fully into account in the design proposals. All the elements of the abutment that are of any architectural interest are safeguarded.

- 2.2 To achieve the proposed new south bank ticket hall and concourse area it is necessary to divert the existing public River Walk from within the arched brickwork bridge structure. This will be done by diverting the Walk to the area underneath where the current southernmost span of the rail bridge rib arches meets the supporting embankment structure. This requires “opening up” the listed West Blackfriars and St Paul’s Railway bridge

abutment structure, hollowing out the central fill material and most of the eastern and southern flank brickwork walls. These works will also allow installation of a new staircase to platform level. The two existing monumental crests will be placed together, back-to-back, on the western side of the existing abutment.

2.3 William Filmer-Sanke deals with the impact of the proposals on the Whitefriars Conservation Area.

3.0 *The suitability of the revised design of the platform roof canopy across Blackfriars Bridge and its impacts on views of St Paul's Cathedral and on other views across and along the Thames.*

3.1 The proposed roof design has been modified from that submitted to the first inquiry, but shows the same basic architectural concept of repetitive modularised roof panel structure each separated from the next by glazed rooflights. The two outside faces of the bridge will be glazed with clear and un-coloured toughened safety glass, so that the overall degree of transparency will be increased from 91.75% to 94.6% as compared with the proposal before the first inquiry. The roof is as low as is possible given operational requirements.

3.2 Although there is some infringement of the St Paul's Heights limitations, the effect is similar to the design considered at the first inquiry. It has the same justification –namely providing all-weather protection for passengers – which was accepted by the Inspector following the first inquiry. Similarly, as regards views, the Inspector's conclusion that the design and transport benefits would outweigh the insignificant impact on the appreciation of St Paul's Cathedral remains valid. On views see also paragraph 7.1 below.

4.0 *The need for partial demolition of the rear abutment and the realignment of the Queen Victoria Street Footbridge, and the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.*

4.1 The need for partial demolition arises from the construction of a new passenger footbridge over Queen Victoria Street. It requires a partial reduction of an abutment wall which was not originally part of the public house but supported a railway bridge which has since been removed. The pedestrian bridge (which has been modified slightly since the first inquiry) is set away from the area of historic and architectural interest.

5.0 *The need for remodelling of the stone abutment in order to accommodate the widened bridge structure of the former West Blackfriars and St Paul's Railway Bridge, and the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.*

5.1 This is summarised at paragraph 2.2 above.

6.0 **Responses to CABE letter To Pascall + Watson dated 18 November 2003.**

6.1 By a letter dated 18 November 2003 CABE made detailed comments on the scheme. These are addressed in detail in section 7 of the main proof. CABE's criticisms are rebutted and the conclusion remained that the architecture proposed at Blackfriars Station is of very good quality, as is the detail put forward to date.

7.0 London View Management Framework Draft SPG

- 7.1 In April, the Mayor of London's office issued draft supplementary guidance about views. Four of the strategic assessment views could be affected by the proposals at Blackfriars Station. However, in no case will the proposals have any significant impact on any of these identified views.