



Suite S8 | The Catalyst | University of York |
East Campus | Baird Lane | Heslington | YO10 5GA
01904 623034 | post@ppiy.co.uk | www.ppiy.co.uk

DPI/P2475/21/4 Aldwark Bridge Toll Review Application

Proof of Evidence on Heritage

Prepared by Graham Saxton BSc (Hons) MRICS BCAS

on behalf of Aldwark Toll Bridge LLP



3690/GRS/ EP
16 MAR 2022

Architects | Surveyors | Conservation Specialists



Directors
Mark Druery Dip Arch RIBA IMAPS
Graham Saxton BSc (Hons) MRICS

Consultant
Stephen Young Dip Arch RIBA



CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION.....	p. 2
2. QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE.....	p. 2
3. SCOPE OF EVIDENCE.....	p. 3
4. LEGISLATION AND POLICY FOR LISTED BUILDINGS.....	p. 3
5. HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE OF ALDWARK TOLL BRIDGE.....	p. 4
6. OVERVIEW OF ACTIONS TO ACQUIRE LBC.....	p. 5
7. PROPOSED WORKS AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT.....	p. 6
8. RESPONSES TO OBJECTIONS	p. 8
9. CONCLUSION.....	p. 10

APPENDICES:

- (i) Consultation with Historic England
 - a. Pre-application advice letter dated 30 March 2021
 - b. Response to LBC application dated 13 August 2021
 - c. Response dated 03 March 2022 after submission of Heritage Statement by PPIY Architects+
- (ii) Heritage Statement and Impact Assessment by PPIY Architects+
INCLUDING APPENDICES:
 - 1. List of toll bridges in the UK
 - 2. E-mail from previous Structural Engineer Richard Gibson overseeing the 2000 refurbishment works
 - 3. 2005 proof of evidence by Richard Gibson with Contract Documents and Addendum attached

REFERENCES:

- The National Planning Policy Framework (2021)
- The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
- Principles of selection for listed buildings (DCMS 2018)
- Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance for the sustainable management of the Historic Environment (Historic England 2008)
- Aldwark Bridge Act 1772
- Transport Charges &c. (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1954
- Grade II listing ID 1150281
- Gibson Design Consultancy:
Refurbishment of the Bridge, Contract Documents 2000
Proof of Evidence, 2005
Addendum to Proof of Evidence, 2005

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 PPIY Architects+ have been appointed by the current owners of Aldwark Bridge, Aldwark Toll Bridge LLP, to prepare a Heritage Statement to accompany a listed building application for proposed repairs to the bridge and liaise with the Local Authority conservation officers and Historic England in the application process as required.
- 1.2 PPIY Architects+ were further commissioned as specialist conservation consultants to advise on the heritage aspect of the object of this inquiry and to provide evidence in support of the application to increase the Aldwark Bridge toll charges.
- 1.3 Aldwark bridge is Grade II listed with main elements of the structure currently in a poor condition and in a continuing state of deterioration. A substantial amount of work is required to safeguard the structure so that this can be enjoyed safely by its users in the years to come without compromising the appearance and heritage significance of the asset.

2. QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

- 2.1 This proof of evidence has been prepared by Graham Saxton BSc (Hons) MRICS BCAS, a Chartered Surveyor accredited in the RICS Building Conservation Accreditation Scheme and a director of PPIY Architects+.
- 2.2 I have been working in the conservation sector since 2004. I have received my degree in Building Surveying from Leeds Metropolitan University in 2010, graduating with first class honours. I have extensive experience of conducting condition surveys for listed and historic buildings and I am appointed inspecting surveyor to a large number of churches in the North of England. I have also been involved in preparing specifications and drawings for undertaking repair works to listed structures and overseeing works to heritage assets.
- 2.3 PPIY Architects+ have a diverse portfolio of work which include repairs to bridges and wrought iron structures. Of note: Pickering Station iron truss roof replacement; the restoration of Richmond Station, including the iron truss roof; and numerous railway bridges on heritage railways. Most recently PPIY Architects+ have been providing heritage consultancy on Kexby Old Bridge, a scheduled Ancient Monument and Grade II* Listed Building. All these structures involved obtaining Listed Building Consents, preparing work schedules and drawings, as well as overseeing projects on site.
- 2.4 Declaration: The evidence which has been prepared and provided in this proof of evidence is true and has been prepared and is given in accordance with the guidance of my professional institution, the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, and I confirm that the opinions expressed are my true and professional opinions.

3. SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

- 3.1 This proof of evidence has been prepared following the submission of a revised Case of Statement relating to the application of the current owner of Aldwark Toll Bridge to the Secretary of State for Transport, for an Order to increase the tolls and as agreed at the previous inquiry meeting held on 25 October 2021. The notification period for the revised submission started on 29 November 2021.
- 3.2 This evidence explores the necessity for the proposed repairs at Aldwark Bridge and the impact these works will have on the actual listed structure and on its setting.
- 3.3 It also explains the requirement in law for obtaining Listed Building consent in relation to proposed works to the structure.
- 3.4 This document avoids, wherever possible, repetition of previously submitted material. As such it should be read in conjunction with the associated Heritage Statement (Appendix B).
- 3.5 This proof of evidence should be read alongside the rest of proofs of evidence submitted for this inquiry.

4. LEGISLATION AND POLICY FOR LISTED BUILDINGS

- 4.1 Aldwark Bridge is a Grade II Listed Building and as such it comes under the legislative framework of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2021) and, in particular, under the relevant section 16 for Protecting and enhancing the historic environment, most pertinent of which are the paragraphs 189, 190, 194, 195, 197, 199, 200 and 202.
- 4.2 Listed Building is one type of statutory heritage designation. According to the definition from Historic England, the Government's statutory advisor on the historic environment in England, "*a building is listed when it is of special architectural or historic interest considered to be of national importance and therefore worth protecting*".
- 4.3 Buildings can be listed under Section 1 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as long as they fulfil certain criteria and the general principles as set out in the DCMS publication "Principles of selection for listed buildings" (2018). The listing provides an enhanced and formal protection framework for managing change to these buildings through the process of Listed Building Consent in the planning system, which can authorise works which show a desirability to preserve the building, its setting and its intrinsic heritage values (Planning Act 1990, Section 16, subsection 2).
- 4.4 Historic England's publication 2008 "Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance for the sustainable management of the Historic Environment" asserts that "*every conservation decision should be based on an understanding of its likely impact on the significance of the fabric and other aspects of the place concerned*" (paragraph 24, p. 14).
- 4.5 Significance is defined as a set of cultural and natural heritage values that are intrinsic to a place and, in the case of designated heritage assets, these need to be

sustained, where “sustain” takes the meaning of “preserve and/ or enhance” (Historic England 2008, paragraph 25, p. 14 and NPPF 2021, paragraphs 189 and 190).

- 4.6 According to Sections 7 and 8 of the Planning Act 1990, any works that may affect the special character of a Listed Building should first be submitted for authorisation by the local planning authority in the form of a Listed Building Consent application. As part of this application process, Historic England and other Amenity Groups are consulted for further input before a decision can be reached for granting or refusing consent.
- 4.7 Under section 10, subsection 4 of the Planning Act 1990 and Paragraph 194 of NPPF 2021, it is a requirement that Listed Building Consent (LBC) applications are accompanied by a Heritage Significance statement “*proportionate to the asset’s importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance*”.
- 4.8 LBC applications are considered in relation to the impact of the proposal on the significance of the designated heritage asset with a presumption in favour of conservation and with the view to avoid any harm or loss to this significance (NPPF 2021, paragraphs 199-200).
- 4.9 Although there is no legal duty imposed on owners of listed buildings to care for and maintain their building, there are provisions in the Planning Act 1990 under Chapter V “Prevention and deterioration of damage” to enforce the law in favour of preserving the building when it is evident that “*reasonable steps are not being taken for properly preserving a listed building*”.
- 4.10 Notwithstanding the above, Aldwark Bridge was built as a toll bridge with the Aldwark Bridge Act 1772 and under Section 6 of the Transport Charges & c. (miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1954. Any application and subsequently decision on the review of the toll charges should therefore take into account the expected costs for the proper maintenance of the bridge structure.

5. HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE OF ALDWARK BRIDGE

- 5.1 Aldwark Bridge was built as a toll bridge under the Aldwark Bridge Act 1772 to replace a ferry service at the very same point of the River Ure. Its central section spanning the river had to be rebuilt after it was washed away by a destructive flood towards the end of C19. The bridge surviving nowadays has retained almost all of its original features with some C20 and more recent interventions, notably a major refurbishment scheme having taken place in 2000.
- 5.2 The bridge was listed in 1988 as Grade II and the listing entry reads as follows:
GREAT OUSEBURN
BOAT LANE
Aldwark Bridge
II
Tollbridge. Mid C18, part replaced in late C19. Iron-framed bridge with timber decking, and one surviving brick arch on sandstone cutwater; flood arches red brick in loose English garden wall bond with sandstone dressings; sandstone and brick abutment walls and piers on Aldwark bank. Flat 4-span bridge on tall slender columns flanked by semi-circular brick arches between pilaster piers with round-

arched recessed panels. Arch on Aldwark side is skewed and spans part of river. Arcades of semi-circular flood arches between pilaster piers and with flat, tooled coping, on each bank. Arcade on Aldwark bank terminates in splayed walls with flat coping, ramped up from piers with flat caps. Bridge statute approved in 1768; centre part washed away in flood of 1880.

Listing NGR: SE 46708 62177¹

5.3 PPIY Architects+ have provided a Heritage Statement to accompany the LBC application for the proposed works at Aldwark Bridge and its significance is described to a greater extent in that document (Refer Appendix B). This briefly comprises the following:

- Historical and evidential value, where the location has been used as a river crossing since the Roman times.
- Distinct appearance through a mixture of materials representing two separate building phases: the two approaches constructed of brick flood arches dating from the original C18 and a later C19 rebuilding phase of metal (mainly wrought with some cast iron & steel) and timber spanning the river.
- Uniqueness as one of only eight privately owned toll bridges in the UK and one of less than twenty remaining toll bridges in the country altogether.
- Contextual association with Aldwark Conservation Area and Aldwark Manor.
- Inseparable and recognisable feature of the natural river landscape and local setting.
- Strong socio-economical values as a significant connection between the local communities living either side of the natural river.

5.4 In a pre-application consultation with Historic England (HE), the significance was described by HE as follows:

“Aldwark Bridge is a particularly interesting example of a privately owned toll bridge still in operation. While elements of the bridge date to the mid-later 18th century, the iron-framed central section with timber deck forms a later 19th century addition. The resultant bridge structure makes for a very characterful arrangement which is both instantly recognisable and well regarded. The traditional construction methods used, materials palette and appearance all make an important contribution to the significance of this bridge.”

5.5 In the recent years it became evident that the bridge has been suffering from years of neglect and lack of maintenance and that repair works were necessary in due course to keep the bridge in safe use and sustain its heritage values as a Listed Building.

5.6 The listed status imposes a requirement to the owner of the bridge to apply for Listed Building Consent to the responsible Local Planning Authority (LPA) for any works that may have an impact on the significance of the designated heritage asset. In this

¹ As sourced from the website <https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/101150281-aldwark-bridge-aldwark#.Yaon6Pn7SM8>

case, there are two LPAs responsible for deciding on granting LBC for works to the bridge: the Harrogate Borough Council and the Hambleton District Council with their border lying in the middle of the bridge.

6. OVERVIEW OF ACTIONS TO ACQUIRE LISTED BUILDING CONSENT

- 6.1 With the new ownership by Alwark Toll Bridge LLP, Mason Clark Associates (MCA) (Hull) were appointed to survey the condition of the bridge in January 2020, when the necessary works were identified and prioritised according to the available funds of the new owner. These were to be focused on repairs to the timber decking and metal structure of the central bridge section.
- 6.2 After an initial pre-application consultation with Historic England, MCA submitted in July 2021 an LBC application to Hambleton District Council for required repair works to the bridge (Ref. 21/01722/LBC).
- 6.3 The above application could not be considered by the LPA until a heritage statement was provided assessing the impact of the proposed works on the significance of Aldwark Bridge. It was also realised that an additional LBC application should be submitted to Harrogate Borough Council, as the west half of the bridge lies within their jurisdiction.
- 6.4 At the time there were some concerns raised by Historic England regarding the proposed cleaning methods to be applied to the historic metalwork and the extent of the timber deck replacement, as well as proposed replacement of rivet fixings with bolts (Appendix 1). At this point PPIY Architects+ were appointed to assist with the LBC process.
- 6.5 PPIY Architects+ visited the site on 07 December 2021 and were able to confirm the need for the proposed repairs, although the extent of the timber boards to be replaced was still to be assessed. It was agreed with MCA that any rivet fixings in need of replacement would only be replaced on a like for like basis.
- 6.6 PPIY Architects+ with MCA attempted to arrange a site meeting with both LPA officers and the HE case officer at the end of January 2022 to assess the condition of the timber and metalwork and agree a repair strategy. This was to coincide with the provision of special access equipment to the bridge to enable a more detailed condition survey to be undertaken. HE declined to attend because of Covid restrictions being in place. A second meeting was attempted in short notice when the restrictions had been lifted, but this was unsuccessful due to other commitments of the HE officer.
- 6.7 Further communication with the structural engineer Richard Gibson who had overseen the major refurbishment works to the bridge in 2000, revealed that during those works the timber decking had been fully replaced from pitch pine to Opepe C27 and the metalwork cleaned and fully recoated, while all but the principle cross beams had been replaced with new steel sections. All this information had been supplied as proof of evidence for the application for the review of the toll charges in 2005 (Refer Appendix 3 of the Heritage Statement). It is understood that no Listed Building Consent was obtained for the 2000 replacement of the decking and metal sections,

although discussions about the repair works had been undertaken with the officers from both LPAs.

- 6.8 Since the 2000 works were completed, only limited localised repairs have been undertaken. These include: the replacement of individual boards from the top layer; tightening of the fixings where loose; and replacement where fixings have been lost. The previous structural engineer Mr Gibson who had specified the current timber decking had expected it to require full replacement in 2025 (Refer Appendix 3 of Heritage Statement: Estimate of Year 2025, paragraph 6.0).
- 6.9 The above information was used as a basis to assess significance and the impact of the proposed works in the Heritage Statement that PPIY Architects+ submitted to both LPAs as part of the LBC application on 02 March 2022. Advice received from Historic England dated 3 March 2022 supports the current repair proposals for the metalworks and timber deck. The LPAs decision to grant LBC for the proposed works is unlikely to be refused given the support received from Historic England. A decision on the current application is now pending.
- 6.10 The author of this evidence is highly confident that Listed Building Consent for the proposed works will be successful for the reasons laid out in section 7 below and in the Heritage Statement and Impact Assessment (Refer Appendix B), which fully satisfy the requirements laid out for works to Listed Buildings in the NPPF 2021.

7. PROPOSED WORKS AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 **Timber decking works:** Replacement of all grade C27 Opepe timberwork dated from the 2000 refurbishment with new hardwood grade D50 to match existing sizes.

Assessed impact: There will be no harm to the historic fabric of the bridge by this alteration. The existing timber will be a full replacement of the timber installed during the 2000 refurbishment works.

The existing timber is in a very poor condition and has in most cases reached the end of its life.

The new timber as proposed will be of greater strength and will suit better the structural requirements of the bridge and will enhance its appearance. This will add to the aesthetic value of the Listed Structure and hence to its significance.

This proposed work should be considered under Historic England's conservation policy for periodic renewal, which is desirable when no harm is caused to the heritage values of the designated asset, as is in this case.

- 7.2 **Metal frame works:** Cleaning and recoating of all metal surfaces with a new protective paint system.

Assessed impact: There may be minor impact on the original metalwork (wrought iron elements) due to the cleaning process, however this is to be minimal as every care will be taken to apply the gentlest cleaning method possible according to the degree and extent of defect of the surface to be treated. Where sandblasting is to be used, this will be limited to areas where it is absolutely necessary. The grade and

pressure will be adjusted accordingly to remove all the build-up of rust and dirt sufficient to provide a sound surface to enable the new coating to adhere successfully.

The new applied paint system will match the existing finish of the painted surfaces (which is believed to have matched the finishes used previously). The new coating will in turn provide a much-needed protection to all the historic and later metal work. This will provide an enhanced appearance which will complement the significance of this listed asset.

This proposed work comes under Historic England's conservation policies of maintenance and repair, which is desirable provided that repair proposals are designed to avoid or minimise harm.

7.3 Ongoing maintenance

The historic brickwork of the approach arches was constructed using soft lime mortars. This enables water penetrating the structure to evaporate through the joints, rather than through the brick faces. This means that the joints are designed to be sacrificial and require repointing periodically. If an inappropriate mortar mix is used, as too often is the case, water will inevitably find its way through the brick faces. This will erode the brick rather than the mortar. Modern cement mortars should therefore never be used for this type of structure.

The MCA inspection report of 2020, followed by the most recent 2022 report highlighted areas of the arched brick masonry approaches which require repairs.

Decayed bricks require replacement or repair, depending on the degree and extent of their erosion. Weathered open jointing requires repointing in a lime mortar.

Further defects identified in the masonry include cracks which require stitching, vegetation growth in need of removal and hollow areas which require consolidation.

Ongoing repairs are to be expected to this type and age of structure. The intention is that a certain amount of the income from the tolls is to be allocated yearly towards the maintenance of these arches. This approach will address the repairs according to priority of urgency (Refer Proof of Evidence by MCA Engineer James Taylor), along with other items of maintenance which are identified in the Proof of Evidence submitted by the MCA Quantity Surveyor John Mitchell.

A method for the above repairs will have to be established and agreed with the responsible LPAs and Historic England. This would then allow the repairs to be executed according to the approved methodology on a phased programme without any other consents required.

7.4 Impact on the setting

The setting consists of the natural river landscape and the heritage context of the Aldwark conservation area including Aldwark Manor. The impact of the proposed works on the setting will only be positive. Enhanced views of this listed structure will be provided from both banks, the bridge approaches and from a distance. The bridge will no longer read as a neglected part of infrastructure but as a valued historic heritage asset that is being looked after and adorns its setting.

8. RESPONSE TO OBJECTIONS

No objections have been received relating to Heritage.

9. CONCLUSION

Aldwark Bridge is a mixed material structure of two main distinct building phases: two approaches from West and East of arched masonry in red brick dating from the original bridge of C18; and the span over the river being a later C19 phase, constructed from wrought and cast-iron frame and parapets with a double layered timber decking. Modern interventions include the approaches being metaled and parapeted with concrete posts and timber rails.

The bridge is Grade II listed with a range of heritage values which can be assigned to it, while it is also highly valued within the local community.

The bridge underwent a major refurbishment scheme in 2000 which included:

- the full timber decking replacement from pitch pine to Opepe keeping the existing timber dimensions.
- all but the main below deck wrought iron cross beams were replaced with new steel sections and
- all metalwork was cleaned as necessary and recoated with a new protective paint system.

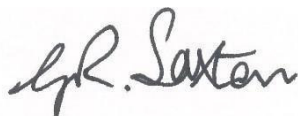
Since the 2000 refurbishment only occasional maintenance work has been undertaken on an ad hoc basis.

The structure is now in a poor condition after several years of neglect and lack of maintenance. Urgent works are required in due course to the central metal and timber span to maintain integrity and safeguard the use of the bridge.

The impact of proposed works has been considered against the significance of the listed building and its setting and has been found minimal and of beneficial character.

The conclusions have been communicated with a Heritage Statement supporting an application for Listed Building Consent to the two Local Authorities, Hambleton District Council and Harrogate Borough Council. Any original concerns raised by Historic England have now been lifted and the proposals are fully supported.

A decision on the relevant application is currently pending, but I am highly confident that the necessary permission will be granted.



Graham Saxton BSc(Hons) MRICS BCAS