

Jarrow Metro Station Prior Approval Assessment

Nexus Metro Flow

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Prior Approval Assessment has been prepared by Nexus, in order to accompany an application seeking 'prior approval' for a replacement Metro station at Jarrow, in South Tyneside.
 - 1.2 The proposed works form part of Nexus' Metro Flow Project, which involves the dualling of the three single track sections from Pelaw to Bede. The divested Network Rail track that runs alongside the Metro line in this location will be utilised and upgraded to create the dual tracked sections, creating more network capacity for trains to run more frequently. In order to accommodate freight traffic on the Metro system, track lowers are required in overbridge locations throughout the project area.
 - 1.3 This includes Jarrow Metro Station, which has two separate adjacent platforms either side of the Metro Line, which are connected by a footbridge.
 - 1.4 The key change is the need to adjust or lower the platforms at the station so that they are compliant with platform train interface requirements of the Rail Vehicle Accessibility Requirements (RVAR) legislation of a 65mm gap and a 50mm step. During detailed design this may result in alterations to the other existing buildings and the possible reconstruction of canopy structures to ensure compliance with standards.
 - 1.5 In order to accommodate the track lowers through the station, minor alterations are needed to the existing platform edge and level. Due to the platform construction this may mean that the platform slab needs to be reconstructed. However, the final appearance will be very similar to the existing platform.
 - 1.6 This Prior Approval Assessment considers the acceptability of this proposal in the context of the relevant planning regulations.
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2.0

Legislative Context

2.1 This Prior Approval Assessment has been prepared in the context of the requirements of Part 18 Class A of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) ('the GPDO').

2.2 A Certificate of Lawful Proposed Use or Development was issued by the Council to Nexus in December 2020 (ref. ST/0476/20/CLP) in respect of the Metro railway between Pelaw and Jarrow ('CLOPUD').

2.3 This application was described as follows:

"Application for a Lawful Development Certificate for proposed use or development in relation to the dual tracking of the metro railway (development to pre-existing light and heavy rail network) between Pelaw and Jarrow Stations (the Metro Flow Project, as detailed within the submitted Supporting Technical Note) and all associated development."

2.4 The certificate confirms the use of Part 18 Class A of the GPDO is appropriate for the subject development based upon the provisions of the Tyneside Metropolitan Railway Act 1973, The Railways Clauses Consolidation Act 1845, and the North-Eastern Railway Companies (Pelaw and Other Branches) Act 1865. In terms of the requirements of Part 18 Class A, these Acts collectively confirm that the branch line is an existing railway, owned by Nexus and that the owner has all necessary powers to construct a railway (including stations) between Pelaw and Jarrow.

2.5 The information submitted by Nexus also confirmed that the subject development does not warrant screening for the purposes of the relevant Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations in reliance of Article 3(12) of the GPDO.

*The subject Prior Approval Assessment therefore seeks to address the requirements of the GPDO that imposes conditions upon the reliance of Part 18 Class A in certain circumstances as follows: mitted development comprises:*A.1 *Development is not permitted by Class A if it consists of or includes—*

(a)the erection, construction, alteration or extension of any building, bridge, aqueduct, pier or dam; or

(b)the formation, laying out or alteration of a means of access to any highway used by vehicular traffic,

unless the prior approval of the appropriate authority to the detailed plans and specifications is first obtained.

2.6 The vast majority of the project development does not amount to any of these categories of development. On a pre-cautionary basis, the works at Jarrow Station are being treated as amounting to the construction of a "building" as a form of structure albeit the form of works will be largely similar and not expected to be materially greater in extent to that which exists presently. In reality the works that could amount to a building will lower in height when construction is completed. Nonetheless, prior approval of South Tyneside

Council is being sought so as to be consistent with Nexus' approach to the treatment of other project works.

2.7 Where the conditions in A.1 are engaged the GPDO goes on to explain that:

A.2 The prior approval referred to in paragraph A.1 is not to be refused by the appropriate authority nor are conditions to be imposed unless they are satisfied that—

(a) the development (other than the provision of or works carried out to a dam) ought to be and could reasonably be carried out elsewhere on the land; or

(b) the design or external appearance of any building, bridge, aqueduct, pier or dam would injure the amenity of the neighbourhood and is reasonably capable of modification to avoid such injury.

2.8 The two key considerations in preparing this Prior Approval Assessment are therefore those set out at condition A.2, namely whether the development could reasonably be carried out elsewhere on the land, or the design or external appearance of the building would injure the amenity of the neighbourhood and is reasonably capable of modification to avoid such injury.

2.9 The next sections of this report consider an initial analysis of the planning, visual and design context to the subject site (Section 3) followed by the provision of supporting information as consideration of the conditions in A.2 (addressed at Sections 4 and 5 of this Assessment) respectively.

3.0

Planning and Design Context

3.1

In the context of the requirements of Condition A.2, this Section considers the characteristics of the prior approval site from a planning and design perspective following a site visit and desk-based review. This is not an assessment of the planning policy context as the considerations do not amount to a determination of national or local plan policy.

3.2

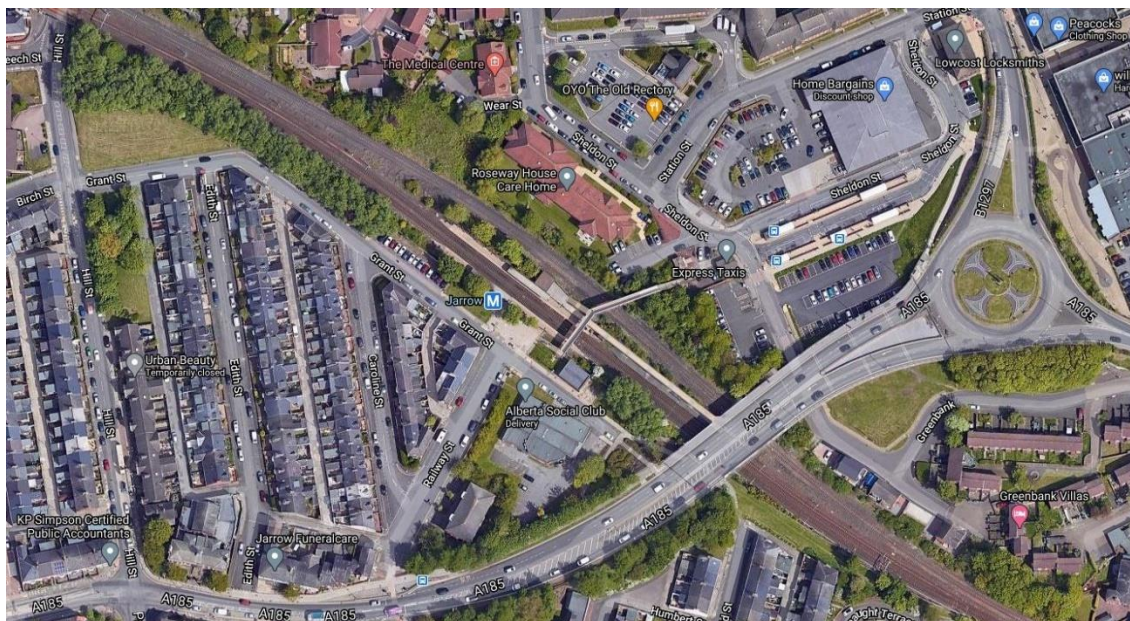
Wider context for the project development is set out in supporting statements that supported the CLOPUD application and which remain up to date and relevant to this determination. In particular that supporting information explains the requirements for the project and in that context the works at Jarrow Station.

The Subject Site and the Prior Approval Proposals

3.3

The prior approval site – hereafter referred to as ‘the site’ – is located on Grant Street/Railway Street within Jarrow Town Centre. The site comprises the existing Jarrow Metro Station which provides frequent Metro services across the wider Tyne and Wear conurbation, including in an easterly direction toward South Shields and a westerly direction toward Newcastle Upon Tyne, with a separate connection to Sunderland.

Figure 3.3 Jarrow Metro Station Platforms 1 and 2, and the surrounding area



Source: Google Earth

3.4

Jarrow Metro Station consists of a dual line section of track with platforms either side and with ramps providing step-free access. As outlined above, the subject application proposes to lower the platforms by up to 300 mm below the present levels. The platforms currently include seating, shelters for waiting and ticket machines. The station also includes cycle parking and a small car park. All of these features would be reinstated.

3.5

Both platforms were constructed as part of the original Metro line works in the 1980s and are efficient and functional in terms of their design.

Figure 3.5 Platforms 1&2, Jarrow Metro Station



The Surrounding Area

3.6

The subject site is located within Jarrow Town Centre, and is therefore bounded by a variety of uses, as follows:

- To the north by a band of mature trees, with a residential development comprising Roseway House Care Home, and also the Palmer Community Hospital and associated parking areas beyond this;
- To the south residential developments exist on Grant Street as well as the Alberta Social Club on Grant Street/Railway Street.

3.7

The site is located within an area characterised by a mix of land uses, including commercial, residential and community facilities. There is no clear design or visual vernacular or character tying together the various buildings and uses in the vicinity.

Summary

- 3.8 The subject site comprises the existing Jarrow Metro Station, which dates from the 1980s and is split across separate platforms to the east and west of Station Road. The station is functional in terms of design. The subject application proposes to demolish both Platform 1 and 2 at Jarrow Metro Station and reinstate them, in situ, at a level 300 mm below the present platforms.
- 3.9 The site and the wider surrounding area are relatively unconstrained from a townscape and visual impact perspective, with no statutory listed buildings or conservation area within the vicinity, and there is no clear design or visual vernacular or character typifying the various buildings and uses in the area.
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Reasonable Alternative Locations

- 4.1 Condition A.2(a) set out within the provisions of Part 18 Class A of the GPDO confirms that prior approval for the new platform should not be refused by the local planning authority unless they are satisfied that the development ought to be and could reasonably be carried out elsewhere on the land.
 - 4.2 In light of the site context described at Section 3, there is no realistic alternative to the redevelopment and lowering of Platforms 1 and 2 will not change the station footprint.
 - 4.3 Through their extensive and ongoing feasibility work as part of Metro flow, Nexus has carefully considered whether any reasonable alternatives exist to the proposed development. However, it was concluded that the opportunity to provide a consolidated platform serving both train lines in a single location in place of Platform 1&2 is not preferable from an operational and cost point of view. As an example, this would still require track lowers and would be significantly more invasive, disruptive and costly giving rise to much greater construction activity. The option of creating a new station along the line would similarly be expected to give rise to much greater impacts and has been discounted as a feasible option.
 - 4.4 Being situated in exactly the same location as the present platforms, within the confines of the train line itself, the prior approval proposals across both platforms would minimise any detrimental impact upon residential amenity and maintain the same functional and operational characteristics of the current facilities.
 - 4.5 On this basis, it is considered that it would not be feasible and in any event is not reasonable for the proposed platforms to be developed elsewhere on the operational land of Nexus.
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5.0

Assessment of Amenity effects

5.1

In accordance with Condition A.2(b) of Part 18 Class A of the GPDO, this Section considers whether the design and appearance of the proposal would injure the amenity of the neighbourhood.

5.2

The context for any assessment of amenity effects in this case is influenced by the following considerations and contentions:

- 1 There is a single feasible solution to meet the project requirements as set out in Section 4 (above) – namely lowering of the existing platforms by their re-construction. This option also takes account of other options that would be significantly more disruptive in terms of construction activity by scale and duration;
- 2 The lowering of the platforms will result, during the operational phase, of development that will not be materially different in its appearance and location to that which presently exists save that the platforms will appear lower in height;
- 3 The form of materials to be used will be consistent with those used elsewhere along the railway network and therefore will maintain the existing vernacular; and
- 4 Nexus operates a Responsible Contractor Policy and as such expects the construction phase to be managed in a manner that seeks to be considerate to surround properties and to minimise unnecessary impacts wherever possible.
- 5 No further assessment is made of construction effects

5.3

As such, Nexus concludes and therefore contends, without further assessment, that the platform lowers will not amount to any injury to amenity of the neighbourhood. Having regard to points 5.2.1 and 5.2.5 in particular, no further assessment of construction effects has been undertaken and noting that the consideration of Condition A.2 is principally concerned with the design and appearance of the operative development.

5.4

Nexus nonetheless sets out below, in the alternative and additionally, narrative in the form of a qualitative assessment of landscape and residential amenity impacts during the operative phase as further demonstration that no injury exists and/or that the impact of the design or appearance of the proposed development does not warrant amendment or mitigation.

Design and Appearance

Landscape and Visual Impact

5.5

As set out above, the site's immediate context is a built-up urban environment and includes car parking (associated with the Metro station), key road infrastructure and associated footways, and nearby residential properties to the south.

5.6

Within the immediate context of the Metro line, much of the track is lined with broadleaf trees and shrubs, which offer a degree of seasonal screening between the tracks and adjacent built form.

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- 5.7 Based on the characteristics described within the National Character Areas NCA14: Tyne and Wear Lowlands it is considered there will be no adverse effects on the landscape character within the surrounding area due to the scale and minimal nature of the proposals. Changes to both the local landscape character type 'Urban' as well as the two landscape character areas the site falls within are considered to be negligible. The nature of the proposals to reinstate Platforms 1 and 2 at a lower level associated with the track lowering will therefore not be out of context within the local surroundings.
- 5.8 Views toward the site are limited to the immediate corridor of the metro line, as well as localised roads and footways, primarily around the A185 which allows elevated views to both platforms.
- 5.9 There are a small number of residential receptors within the immediate local area, however due to the minimal nature of the proposals which includes reinstatement of the existing canopies and lighting it is anticipated that there will be no perceived changes in view and therefore no effect on these receptors.
- 5.10 Local road and footpath users have uninterrupted views toward both Platforms 1 and 2 from the A185 Road. Given the transient nature of both pedestrians and vehicle users across the bridge, as well as the scale and nature of the proposals it is considered there will be no perceptible change in effect on these receptors.
- 5.11 As the proposals do not introduce features uncharacteristic of the existing urban environment and immediate surrounding of Jarrow Metro Station, it is deemed that there would be no effects on the landscape or visual receptors within the immediate surrounding area. The form and appearance of the new works will be consistent with other works and infrastructure at the Station and on the railway line and therefore the vernacular will be maintained.

Noise

- 5.12 Both redeveloped platforms would remain in their present position but would sit up to 300 mm lower than the current station buildings. All shelters, lighting, station facilities such as ticket machines, and Tannoy systems will remain as per the current arrangements. On this basis, the proposed development will not materially injure the amenity of the neighbourhood relative to the existing situation.

Lighting

- 5.13 The lighting of the proposed platforms will replicate that of the current platforms, albeit 300 mm lower in height. On this basis, there is unlikely to be any increase in light spill as a result of the proposals, and the amenity of nearby residents and the neighbourhood will not be materially altered.

Other

- 5.14 Nexus does not consider that the proposed platform works are capable of giving rise to any other potential effects arising by its design or appearance.
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Requirement for Modification

- 5.15 It is contended that the proposed works the subject of prior approval do not give rise to any injury or to any effects that warrant any change in the design or appearance of those works the reasons advanced above.
- 5.16 The following matters are also advanced to demonstrate that the development is being brought forward in a manner that further limits any adverse impact upon the amenity of the neighbourhood. These include the retention of existing vegetation surrounding the Metro line and platforms, and the selection of materials for the new platforms which tie into existing surfaces and are in keeping with the present design.

Conclusions

- 6.1 This Prior Approval Assessment has been prepared by Nexus, to consider the acceptability of proposals for the redevelopment of Jarrow Metro Station in the context of the relevant planning regulations.
 - 6.2 As part of the Metro Flow Project to dual the single-track element of Metro rail infrastructure between Bede and Pelaw, with associated track lowering works, Nexus is required to replace the present station platforms at Jarrow. The subject application proposes to demolish both Platform 1 and 2 at Jarrow Metro Station and reinstate them, in situ, at a level up to 300 mm below the present platforms.
 - 6.3 Following the approval of a Lawful Development Certificate in December 2020, these works comprise permitted development in accordance with Part 18 Class A of Schedule 2 of the GPDO subject to, on a pre-cautionary basis, an application seeking prior approval from the local planning authority.
 - 6.4 The two key considerations in the determination of this prior approval application are set out at Condition A.2 of the GPDO, namely whether the development could reasonably be carried out elsewhere on the land, or whether the design or external appearance of the building would injure the amenity of the neighbourhood and is reasonably capable of modification to avoid such injury.
 - 6.5 In this regard, being situated in exactly the same location as the present platforms, within the confines of the train line itself, the proposals across both platforms are plainly the only feasible option to meet the project requirements without giving rise to much greater construction effects and unnecessary disruption and project cost. This option is also implicitly therefore expected to give rise to the least harmful detrimental impact upon surrounding visual receptors and maintain the same functional and operational characteristics of the current facilities. For the reasons set out in Section 4 of this Report, it is considered that it would not be possible for the proposed platforms to be developed elsewhere on the land.
 - 6.6 As both platforms would remain in the same location as the present structures, there will be no material difference to the amenity of nearby residential properties as a result of noise or lighting for reasons set out in Section 5 of this Report.
 - 6.7 On this basis, it is not considered that the design and appearance of the proposed development would injure the amenity of the neighbourhood and/or does not warrant amendment to its design or appearance.
 - 6.8 In conclusion therefore, and in accordance with the provisions and conditions of Part 18 Class A of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended), prior approval should be issued by the local planning authority for the proposed works without the imposition of conditions.
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