

## **SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK DESIGN REVIEW PANEL**

Date of meeting:	18/07/18
Site:	Street Record, Mill Drove, Seaford, East Sussex
Proposal:	Installation of a new footbridge
Planning reference:	SDNP/15/04268/PRE
Panel members sitting:	Graham Morrison (Chair) Lap Chan William Hardie Kim Wilkie
SDNPA officers in attendance:	Mark Waller Gutierrez (Design Officer) Ruth Childs (Landscape Officer) Vicki Colwell (Major Planning Projects Officer) Nat Belderson (Link Officer) Natacha Bricks-Yonow (Support Services Officer) Sergio Chapman-Salas (Apprentice Planner) Ben Terry (Design Officer)
SDNPA Planning Committee in attendance:	None
Item presented by:	Trevor Wilson (Network Rail) Laura Langridge (Knight Architects) Bart Halaczek (Knight Architects)
Declarations of interest:	None

The Panel's response to your scheme will be placed on the Planning Authority's website where it can be viewed by the public.

The SDNPA operate a transparent service, whereby pre-application and application details, although not actively publicised will be placed on the online planning register. This is unless the applicant gives reasons why the enquiry is commercially sensitive.



## COMMENTS

	Notes
<b>1.0 Discussion/Questions with applicants</b>	<p><b>1. The Panel asked to know more about what is happening below the path, around the two mounds and the pylons, what can be seen underneath, and if it is a big concrete beam either side.</b> The Applicant explained there are two edge beams. There is a 70mm tarmac surfacing on a steel deck. The columns are cruciform shaped and the intention is to have the top part of it is flat faced to be lighter.</p> <p><b>2. The Panel asked about the bottom part of the pylons.</b> The Applicants explained that the columns need to sit above the ground and that those concrete bases will be hidden by the vegetation. <b>The Panel noted that pylons had a classic column aspect.</b> The Applicant answered that it was the idea of the bridge, that the columns are minimised and orientated to be visually minimised, more slender. The bases stick out of the ground by 200mm but will be covered by grass / plants. <b>The Panel asked if the columns will be painted steel or Cor-ten (weathering steel)?</b> The Applicant answered that they liked the idea, as it would be low maintenance but it would not work in a marine environment, due to corrosion.</p> <p><b>3. The Panel asked about the soil type existing in the underlying layer and if it was chalk.</b> The Applicant said that yes it is, as it was part of the flooding banks of river.</p> <p><b>4. The Panel noted that there is an opportunity to do something structured using the soil type of the hinterland.</b></p> <p><b>5. The Panel asked about the issue of the fence (on the south facing aspect of the bridge) and if it would protect the users from the sand and the wind.</b></p> <p><b>6. The Panel noted that the choice of black was interesting and asked if the applicant has also considered using a bleached out colour, more similar to the landscape colour.</b> The Applicant said that they did, but that black was their current preferred choice. This was because the black created a contrast, which was more unique and had more of an impact.</p>



	<p><b>7. The Panel noted that the mesh material could be associated with prisons and compounds and asked if the applicant consider a more vertical mesh.</b>  The Applicant answered that they did not consider vertical mesh but that they have picked a high quality material and that the material of connectors can be changed if needed.  <b>The Panel then decided to retract their concern.</b></p> <p><b>8. The Panel asked about the gabion baskets and the material they would be filled with and if the Applicant has considered using flint or chalk. The Panel noted that there are different materials to consider.</b>  The Applicant answered that they looked into the flint but they haven't looked into the chalk yet: they will do.</p> <p><b>9. The Panel asked how the fences and the gabion baskets are being integrated in the design.</b>  The Applicant said that the gabions would be part of the composition of the embankment. With regard to the fence, this is currently outside of the red line boundary.</p> <p><b>10. The Panel asked about the transition between the gabion, the embankment, the timber colour and the mesh side.</b>  The Applicant answered that the timber is facing the rail sides while the mesh faces the landscape sides.</p> <p><b>11. The Panel noted that during the last DRP (Oct 2017) about this application, there were some concerns regarding the need of a handrail and asked if the Applicant has investigated the handrails requirements.</b>  The Applicant answered that there was now clarity on this aspect as, according to the gradient, this will be a sloping walkway and not a ramp, therefore, it would fall outside such requirements.</p> <p><b>12. The Panel asked if there was resting places planned for wheelchairs.</b>  The Applicant answered that there will be provision every 20 to 25 metre.</p> <p><b>13. The Panel asked what the average incline will be.</b>  The Applicant answered the average incline will be 1:20.5 degrees.</p> <p><b>14. The Panel asked if the bridge will ever be closed?</b>  The Applicant answered that it would be open all the time.</p> <p><b>15. The Panel asked if there will be any lighting on the bridge.</b>  The Applicant answered that the footbridge would not be</p>
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	<p>lit as the path leading to it isn't.</p> <p><b>16. The Panel asked if the wood used was torched instead of painted.</b> The Applicant answered that it was torched.</p>
<b>2.0 Panel Summary</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Panel opened by saying that it considered this to be a wonderful project and wished to thank the designers and the applicant - Network Rail for following such an exemplary approach.</li> <li>2. The Panel welcomed the clarity of the presentation – though it was seemingly simple and effortless, it perfectly communicated the subtlety of the thinking behind the project. This is a project in which the simple purpose of safely crossing a railway line is transformed into an experience in which the wider landscape unfolds and the local archaeology is revealed. This will be wonderful walk rather than a railway crossing.</li> <li>3. Though the Panel felt this applicant team brings confidence and clarity to their judgements, it suggested that, as decisions have been taken at different times over quite a long design period, it would be beneficial to take an overall look at the project as a whole to make sure that everything is right as a single composition.</li> <li>4. The Panel supports the choice of timber and suggested looking at flints from the surrounding landscape to get the right tonality. It questioned the choice of the black charred timber and asked that this be reviewed in relation to prevailing tonality of the overall landscape.</li> <li>5. The Panel recommended, for example, the consideration of chalk as an option for the embankments so there would be a conversation between the chalk cliff landscape in the distance and the bridge as an artwork in the foreground. Chalk happens to be an easy material to work with. The Panel was not directly questioning the compositional choices made by the Applicant but would like to make sure that the Applicant is certain of their choices for the project and that alternative options have been considered.</li> <li>6. The Panel reiterated the comments (5 made on the previous DRP on the 18 Oct 2017.</li> </ol> <p><i>5-The Panel suggested that the composition relies on complex elements. They recommended that the Applicants consider carefully the approach to the bridge, the mix of solid and transparent materials and the length of the ramped inclined and the bridge. It was suggested that the applicants should think about continuity of the design.</i></p>



	<p><i>6-The applicants were advised to include as much of the gates and fence as possible within the remit of the bridge design. If the gates and fences don't match the quality of the bridge it could make a huge difference to the presentation of the site as a whole.</i></p> <p><i>7-The Panel suggested putting up interpretation materials to highlight points of interest and education, and recommended talking to the SDNPA staff on this matter.</i></p> <p><i>8-The Panel recommended that consideration be put in to the orientation of the bridge in relation to sunlight and the prevailing winds.</i></p> <p>7. The Panel suggested that the applicant consider the proposed bench to be made more comfortable, for example, by having a back on it that would offer wind protection, but with a degree of intervisibility so no one could 'lurk'.</p> <p>8. The Panel was surprised that there was no plant specialist or landscape specialist is yet appointed the project. The subtleties of what will grow should influence the choices of materials. The Panel encouraged planting appropriate to the setting rather than necessarily seeking aesthetically pretty plants.</p> <p>9. The Panel thanked Network Rail for its imagination and leadership in commissioning and directing this project. The Panel believes this project could become an enhancement of the landscape and has the making of a project that is not only appropriate to its setting but also exemplary by making it a true community benefit.</p>