
Site Address:	Light Railway, Sea Front, Hayling Island		
Proposal:	Extension of existing railway platform to east and revisions to existing track layout.		
Application No:	APP/15/00624	Expiry Date:	07/09/2015
Applicant:	Mr Haddock	Team:	Team 2
Agent:	Mr Robinson	Case Officer:	Steve Weaver
Ward:	Hayling West		

Recommendation: **GRANT PERMISSION**

1 Site Description

- 1.1 The application site comprises an area of land lying at the western terminus of the Hayling Seaside Railway, which traverses the largely open coastal land of Beachlands at the southern end of Hayling Island. The Railway was initially developed in the early years of the 21st Century as a tourism attraction and has established itself since that time with a depot at Central Beachlands, and a number of halts running between the Central Beachlands area and the car park at the eastern terminus of the Railway at Eastoke Corner.
- 1.2 The western terminus of the Railway adjoins the Funland Amusement Park, with the existing depot building for the Railway sited within part of the much larger car park serving that leisure hub. Running from the depot building at present, five track runs lead in an easterly direction before gradually converging into a single track some 40m east of the depot. The area of land the subject of multiple track runs forms part of the operational land of the Railway and is fenced off with post and wire fencing. To the south of the multiple tracks a concrete block passenger platform projects eastward from the depot building by 12.8m - it is set 600mm above ground level, with a 1.1m high white picket-style fence to its south and east edges. (The platform continues inside the building and beyond to the west also).
- 1.3 Whilst the main Funland site lies within the defined urban area boundary, the depot and track layout to the east lie just outside this. Furthermore the tracks heading east fall within the Beachlands SSSI. The depot building and platform and tracks to the west lie within land owned by Funland Amusement Park; the tracks heading east lie on land owned by Havant Borough Council.

2 Planning History

93/58041/000

Miniature railway from central Beachlands to Eastoke Car Park with associated ground works, level crossings, platforms and train shed at central Beachlands. Refused 7/3/96; allowed on appeal 17/1/97.

03/58041/001

Revisions to Beachlands Railway development approved under Planning Permission 93/58041/000 to incorporate:-(i) increase in height of the four platforms approved from 35cm above rail height to 55cm above rail height, (ii) extension in length of approved platform at Eastoke Corner terminus from 22m plus sloping end to 33.25m plus sloping end, (iii) revisions to track layout at Central Beachlands terminus

and enclosure of additional areas of land adjacent to north and east with modified fence design, and (iv) provision of three additional foot crossing points over railway opposite Alexandra Avenue, Webb Lane and Seagrove Avenue with associated signage. Permitted 14/3/03.

APP/14/00627

Construction of a new depot building (incorporating part of the existing car park) and alterations to track layout. Permitted 24/10/14 - track layout implemented.

3 Proposal

- 3.1 The Railway's existing depot building lies on land leased from Funland Amusement Park, which is understood to be expiring in the near future. With a replacement depot building approved under APP/14/00627 and due to be commenced imminently at the Eastoke Corner terminus, this will render the existing depot building surplus to requirement - and in any event, with the lease arrangements under review, it is anticipated that the building and associated platform within and to the west of it will be removed from this location. The re-establishment of the base of operations for the Railway at Eastoke Corner means that the complex track array at the application site will also be surplus to requirement, with only a pair of tracks required for the engines to run around (instead of the 5 sets of tracks at present).
- 3.2 Anticipating the removal of the existing depot building at Central Beachlands, the continued operation of this western terminus as a halt for the Railway requires an extension to the existing platform to cater for trains and carriages who will no longer be able to use that part of the platform lying within and to the west of the existing depot. This application therefore seeks permission for the existing platform east of the depot building to be extended by the 24m lost by the removal of the depot building - i.e. projecting a total of 37m east of the existing depot. A new disabled access ramp is to be provided to the extended platform. The construction of the platform is proposed to match that of the existing concrete platform, with an extension of the picket fencing around its southern and eastern sides.

4 Policy Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework 2012

Havant Borough Local Plan (Core Strategy) March 2011

CS11	(Protecting and Enhancing the Special Environment and Heritage of Havant Borough)
CS16	(High Quality Design)
CS17	(Concentration and Distribution of Development within the Urban Areas)
CS5	(Tourism)
CS6	(Regeneration of the Borough)
DM10	(Pollution)
DM8	(Conservation, Protection and Enhancement of Existing Natural Features)

Havant Borough Local Plan (Allocations) July 2014

AL1	(Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development)
AL2	(Urban Area Boundaries and Undeveloped Gaps between Settlements)

Havant Borough Townscape, Landscape and Seascape Character Assessment 2007

Hayling Seafront Masterplan

Listed Building Grade: Not applicable.

Conservation Area: Not applicable.

5 Statutory and Non Statutory Consultations

Coastal Engineering

No comment

Environment Agency

No comment - site lies within Flood Zone 1

Natural England

Original comments: The Application proposes an extension to the existing platform. The extension will resort to a permanent net loss of Sinah Common SSSI habitat. The Applicant needs to show how they will intend to mitigate the loss of SSSI land in the place of a new development platform.

Comments following provision of mitigation plan: No objection, no conditions requested: This application is within the Sinah Common Site of Special Scientific Interest SSSI. However, given the nature and scale of this proposal, Natural England is satisfied that there is not likely to be an adverse effect on this site as a result of the proposal being carried out in strict accordance with the details of the application as submitted - Additional information was provided to mitigate the loss of SSSI land in the place of a new development platform. We therefore advise your authority that this SSSI does not represent a constraint in determining this application.

Landscape Team

No landscape objection to the proposed revisions to the track layout provided that the finished amended railway halt will not have any building materials stored on site (as is currently the case).

Officer comment: This is a matter to be controlled by the Council's lease for the Railway as a whole; the 93/58041/000 appeal permission imposes no restrictions on outside storage of materials and it would not be reasonable to impose such a restriction on this more minor application to extend an existing platform only.

Public Spaces Development Manager

No comments received

Property Services Manager

The railway track is currently subject to a licence from Havant Borough Council, which expires on 3rd May 2027. The licence states that the area that is subject to the licence adjoining Central Beachlands has a width of no more than 10m to allow the provision of a platform and fencing for the western terminus.

If the proposed works extend beyond this 10m threshold then the Council will need to authorise the extension by way of varying the licence. I cannot see any issues with doing this in principle.

Consultant Ecologist

Further information required: The application site falls within part of Sinah Warren Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), a nationally-important nature conservation site.

There needs to be a quantitative and qualitative assessment, by a suitably-qualified ecologist, of the impact to the SSSI (and any flora and fauna supported by it) and details of how any such impacts will be avoided, mitigated and compensated. This requirement is clearly set out in the consultation response from Natural England, the statutory body charged with protecting SSSIs, dated July 2015. Any works within a SSSI require assent from Natural England and there must be no net loss of habitat, necessitating that any short-term loss is adequately compensated for.

Officer comment: The need for mitigation has been dealt with by the provision of a plan showing land to be returned to SSSI. Natural England have subsequently confirmed that they have no objection to the application.

6 Community Involvement

This application was publicised in accordance with the Council's Code of Practice for Publicity of Planning Applications approved at minute 207/6/92 (as amended), as a result of which the following publicity was undertaken:

Number of neighbour notification letters sent: 26

Number of site notices: 2

Statutory advertisement: Not applicable.

Number of representations received: 1

Summary:

- 6.1 I am concerned about the intrusive impact and encroachment on the SSSI. The platform and particularly the proposed picket fencing will irrevocably change the remaining open space landscape on the seafront impinging on the broad coastal views.

Comment: The impact of the development on the SSSI is considered at 7.14-7.15 below; the impact of the development on the character of the area is discussed at 7.7-7.9 below. The nearest residential properties on the Sea Front lie a minimum of 150m from the development site - the form of development comprising a 600mm platform with 1.1m high picket fencing above.

7 Planning Considerations

- 7.1 Having regard to the relevant policies of the development plan it is considered that the main issues arising from this application are:

- (i) Principle of development
- (ii) Effect on the character and appearance of the area
- (iii) Appropriateness of design
- (iv) Effect on nearby properties
- (v) Environmental effects

- (i) Principle of development

- 7.2 The application site lies just beyond the Central Beachlands environs, and as such falls just beyond the urban area boundary defined by the Local Plan. The site of the

extended platform also falls within the Beachlands SSSI. Relevant policies of the development plan are supportive of the safeguarding and improvement of existing tourist facilities in the Borough, and in particular in South Hayling Island. Set against these tourism and economic benefits however there is also the need for new development to respect the key landscape issues of the Borough and natural environmental designations.

- 7.3 At a more detailed level, the Hayling Seafront Masterplan has been adopted as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. This identifies the Central Beachlands location as one of the major 'hubs' or focal points where various recreational activities are located or clustered. Looking to the future, the Masterplan identifies a strategy for the Beachlands hub whereby it continues to provide visitor and leisure related facilities in a redeveloped format; with the western terminus of the Railway still a feature of the area.
- 7.4 Also of relevance to this site are the findings of the Havant Borough Townscape, Landscape and Seascape Character Assessment 2007, which was undertaken as a background document for the Local Plan's preparation. This picks up key issues for the South Hayling area, which include the poor quality of recreation and tourism development in the open coastal plain, the avoidance of development south of the Sea Front which would erode the open character of the coastal plain, and the need to cluster tourism and recreation facilities.
- 7.5 The application site in this case directly adjoins the existing tourist/visitor attraction hub at Central Beachlands, and its related car park, which visually dominate the landscape at this point. The extended platform will project from an existing Railway facility (which it will largely replace) and adjoin the railway tracks which are an established feature in the landscape now.
- 7.6 Subject to the detailed consideration of the development management issues set out below, it is considered that the proposals to improve the passenger platform facilities at the western terminus of the Hayling Seaside Railway, in the light of the impending decommissioning and removal of the existing depot building, are appropriate in principle as they will support the longer term operation of an established visitor attraction for the Beachlands/Sea Front area in an appropriate hub location close to other key tourism and recreation facilities.

(ii) Effect on the character and appearance of the area

- 7.7 The application site lies at the western terminus of the existing Railway route and adjoins an open car parking area to the west which serves the Funland Amusement Park to the immediate north west. To the immediate north and east the site forms part of the wider Beachlands landscape, which is largely open and undeveloped - albeit that the coastal plain as a whole features a range of visitor related facilities such as car parks, beach huts, access paths and the like. At a more detailed level the land to be directly affected by the extended platform is already enclosed by post and wire fencing, which protects the area of land where the railway tracks split from uncontrolled access by members of the public (given the safety issues that multiple tracks can give rise to).
- 7.8 Having regard to the Landscape Character Assessment's findings (referenced above) that careful consideration should be given to development which erodes the open character of the coastal plain, and the representation received, it is acknowledged that the development proposed will project a permanent feature further to the east than

currently exists. However, this area has already seen its open quality compromised by the introduction of the existing railway track and fencing; and at a maximum of 1.7m high (600mm platform with 1.1m high picket fencing above) the new platform extension will directly echo the character of the existing platform and will not appear overly dominant in views across the Beachlands area (which is dominated by the Amusement Park at this point). Furthermore, as part of the proposals it is intended that the currently complex track layout at the site will be revised such that a substantial area currently fenced off can be returned to its original open character.

- 7.9 Taken together, it is considered that the context for the site and the detailed nature of the proposals will ensure that the development will not adversely affect the character of the Beachlands coastal plain; and it is noted in this regard that the Landscape Officer has not objected to the application.

(iii) Appropriateness of design

- 7.10 The design and materials to be used for the extended platform directly follow that of the existing platform at the site, and this is considered an appropriate and sympathetic approach to take.
- 7.11 The extended platform also makes provision for ramped access to the platform for the mobility impaired, with a gradient of approximately 1:16. This is shallower than the normal 1:12 Building Regulations requirement and is welcomed.

(iv) Effect on nearby properties

- 7.12 The platform extension will serve the existing Railway terminus once the existing depot building is removed, and is not anticipated to give rise to any additional activity over and above that currently occurring at the site.
- 7.13 In terms of visual impact, as noted above the height of the platform should ensure that it is not an obtrusive feature in the landscape. In any event, the nearest residential properties (other than those tied to the Amusement Park) lie in excess of 150m from the site and in this regard it is not considered that the proposed works will give rise to any adverse impacts to residential amenity.

(v) Environmental Effects

- 7.14 The application site lies within a Site of Special Scientific Interest, in particular noted for its coastal flora. As originally submitted the application attracted objections from both Natural England and the Council's Consultant Ecologist, on the basis that an assessment had not been made of the loss of habitat that the development would give rise to, and any mitigation measures arising. However, further consultation has taken place with Natural England in the light of proposals discussed by the Railway with them at pre-application stage, whereby the rationalisation of the track layout will return an area of land measuring 192sqm to the SSSI habitat, with only 42sqm being used for the extended platform - a net gain to the SSSI of 150sqm.
- 7.15 On this basis Natural England have removed their objection to the scheme; the Consultant Ecologist has been advised of the mitigation measures. A condition will be required to ensure that the track removal occurs prior to the platform being brought into use in order to deliver the mitigation benefits.

8 Conclusion

- 8.1 It is concluded that the development of the extended platform as proposed for the Hayling Seaside Railway at the western terminus of the railway line is appropriate to the character and function of this part of the Beachlands area as a tourist/visitor destination hub, and that notwithstanding the objections raised by a third party, the development will appear appropriate to the character of the area and be of a suitable design. The development is not considered to give rise to any unacceptable impacts to the amenities of nearby properties, or ecological interests. It is therefore recommended that Planning Permission be granted.
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9 RECOMMENDATION:

That the Executive Head of Planning and Built Environment be authorised to **GRANT PERMISSION** for application APP/15/00624 subject to the following conditions:

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date on which this planning permission was granted.
Reason: To comply with Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

Existing Block Plan Drawing No. EBP01 Revision B
Proposed Block Plan Drawing No. PBP01 Revision B3
Existing Elevations Drawing No. EE01, 2, 3, 4
Existing Plan Drawing No. EP01
Proposed Plan and Elevations Drawing No. PP01/PE01, 2, 3, 4
New Layout of Platform and Rails dated 10 March 2015

Reason: - To ensure provision of a satisfactory development.
- 3 The materials to be used in the construction of the extended platform and picket fencing shall match in type, colour and texture those on the existing platform and picket fencing.
Reason: In the interests of the amenities of the area and having due regard to policy CS16 of the Havant Borough Local Plan (Core Strategy) 2011 and the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.
- 4 Unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority, the removal of existing tracks and fencing from SSSI land shall be carried out in strict accordance with the submitted 'New Layout of Platform and Rails' plan prior to the bringing into use of the platform extension hereby approved.
Reason: In order to mitigate the loss of SSSI habitat that the platform extension would otherwise give rise to, having due regard to Policies CS11 and DM8 of the Havant Borough Local Plan (Core Strategy) 2011 and the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.