



## Bath Heritage Watchdog

contact@bathheritagewatchdog.org

APPLICATION NUMBER: 12/04317/LBA

ADDRESS: 9 Brunel Square

PROPOSAL: Installation of new restaurant within a finished new build shell.

CASE OFFICER: Geoff Webber

DATE: 16 October 2012

COMMENT: OBJECTION

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Bath Heritage Watchdog objects to this application

Bath Spa Station, c1840 forms an important part of the original and internationally significant Great Western Railway, one of the earliest established railway companies in England. The masterpiece is constructed to a design by the engineer and architect Isambard Kingdom Brunel, widely perceived as one of the most important transport engineers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is listed Grade II\* and is within the Bath Conservation Area and World Heritage Site.

As this is effectively a new structure our main concern relates to the external aspects of this application and the impact on the Grade II\* listed structures and setting. Our comment therefore makes no reference to the internal aspects of the application and should not be construed as support or otherwise.

### ROOF PLANT

Although it is accepted that there will be a requirement for some roof based plant, it will be highly visible to visitors arriving at the station. For some this will be one of the first views of the city on arrival. This area is also clearly visible from the Beechen Cliff viewpoint. We therefore consider that the plant should be boxed in or concealed in some way to lessen the impact.

## SIGNAGE

We maintain our objection to the use of illumination in the conservation area. In particular in this area we are concerned that with the number of different businesses in the area all wishing to impose their corporate identity that the overall effect will be detrimental to this sensitive location and will detract from the beauty of Brunel's original design for the station.

In addition we feel that with recent reports relating to issues with electricity provision in the coming years that sustainability needs to be a strong consideration and that illuminated signage being unnecessary should not be permitted.

Brunel Square will be sufficiently illuminated to allow the various businesses to be highly visible and we therefore do not believe that additional illuminated signage is necessary. In addition this unit is at a high level, consists predominantly of glass and will create unnecessarily high levels of light spill to the area. This is something which English Heritage has already raised in relation to a corresponding application.

In this particular case the design of the signage itself is considered restrained and acceptable and could be supportable with the removal of the illumination.

There is some confusion as to the precise materials to be used. References to '*brass*', '*brass sheet soldered construction*' and '*antique aged brass effect*' are non-committal in the least. We have no objection to brass/bronze signs but the materials need to be clarified and a condition for approval of the material by a conservation officer.

## SUMMARY

We remain concerned that no overall SPD has been created for this area to cover the shopfronts, signage, A boards, illumination, outdoor seating and associated clutter. We are now facing ad hoc applications with each company proposing their own corporate identity and potentially could end up with an area of substantial cumulative illumination in varying colours and design. There should be a standardised design to which all have to adhere. We are also disappointed that there has been no pre-application advice sought from the Local Authority's specialist conservation officers.

The works, by virtue of unnecessary illumination are considered to be detrimental to the special architectural and historic interest and character of the Grade II\* listed complex, the setting of adjacent listed buildings and the conservation area contrary to S16 and S72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Section 12 'Conserving & Enhancing the Historic Environment of the NPPF and Local Plan Policies BH2, BH6 and BH17 and should be refused in its current format.