



# Bath Heritage Watchdog

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APPLICATION NUMBER: 17/03055/LBA

ADDRESS: Green Park Station

PROPOSAL: External alterations for bird proofing measures including installation of netting and upstands/bird prevention spikes

CASE OFFICER: Laura Batham

DATE: 13 July 2017

COMMENT: STRONG OBJECTION

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Bath Heritage Watchdog objects to this application.

We accept that there is a general problem with pigeons and gulls throughout Bath and this clearly affects Green Park Station as much as anywhere else. However, members walk through and use the station on a daily basis and we believe that the issues listed within the Design & Access Statement are considerably overstated.

The Design & Access Statement specifically mentions:

- Walkways affected by excrement as are hatches for disabled or mother and child parking
- Bikes have not been collected for several months due to fouling
- Stalls are affected with excrement issues due to unproofed lighting and general bird flights
- Feathers are noted throughout from birds on site

The following photos were taken at random on 4<sup>th</sup> July:-



Neither of these photos shows a problem as severe as is being alleged, though we do appreciate that there are issues. However closer inspection indicates that much of the excrement is old and not slippery, and indicates a lack of maintenance over a period of time rather than a significant current problem. We also do not believe that a bit of fouling would cause a bike owner to abandon a bike for an extended period of time when a packet of wipes is available cheaply from the store. There were three bikes in the stand at the time of our spot inspection (11:30 on 10 July) and none had any signs of fouling.

We believe there needs to be a holistic approach to solving the issues rather than simply encasing the building in unsightly netting and spikes.

There is an overall lack of maintenance and cleaning of the station. The unsightly netting that has been erected for some time (and for which we are unable to find an application or consent) clearly exhibits the accrual of detritus both from the birds but also from general sources (see below).



This is detracting from the architecture of the station. The netting, and the interior, of the station have not been cleaned properly for a long time and probably not since the netting has been put up. We are therefore unhappy for additional netting being used with the prospect of that being similarly neglected.

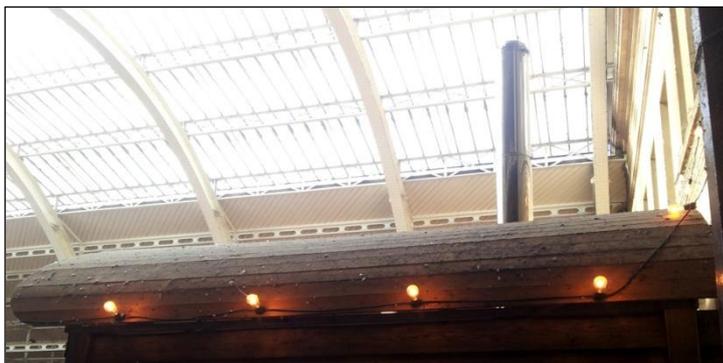


The photo on the left shows a view into the roof which, although in need of cleaning, lets in light and air. As the photos of the netting above show, installing netting actually darkens areas which will make the station less light without achieving the desired result, and creates a maintenance requirement which nobody is currently addressing. Bizarrely, netting now seems to be proposed to cover the metalwork at the end of the train shed, which will not only reduce the light but will be totally inadequate because birds will simply fly in beneath whatever is installed.



The end of the train shed was originally glazed (the glass was lost during the war and not replaced). If anything has to be used to block off this end section it should be glass, which will maximise the light available in the roofed area while posing as a barrier to birds.

Pigeons will clearly be attracted to the station for shelter, particularly in bad weather. The station is open and therefore it will be impossible to stop birds from entering, but they are also attracted to food. There are numerous food outlets within the station, both permanent and mobile, and this is no doubt increasing the problem. Tables not cleared quickly and crumbs on the ground will always attract the birds. No amount of higher level netting is going to change that.



unauthorised) pizza pod is exhibiting a large amount of dirt and detritus on its roof, despite this being easily reached to be cleaned (see above).

The increase in pods, signage, lighting, bicycle stands, etc to the whole station (including the brasserie) (all of which are unauthorised and have been reported to the Enforcement Team on more than one occasion) are adding to the problem by creating extra ledges and perching points. Indeed the most recent (and also



However a close-up picture of what is to be cleaned shows that this isn't a pigeon problem. These are clumps of spider eggs taking advantage of the warmth from the pizza oven to make ideal incubation characteristics for the offspring.

It is also noted that nothing in the planning documentation explains how a hot flue can be so close to the proposed netting without creating a fire risk. Significantly, the planning documentation uses a photograph that was taken before the pizza pod was installed.

One of the “existing” pictures shows damaged spikes on columns. This damage was probably caused by the unauthorised installing of advertising to the columns, which we reported to Enforcement because of that damage, and they have since been removed.



On the station building, the desire to replace anti-roost bird wire with spikes suggests it is either an unnecessary luxury or else there is a trades description problem with the wire currently installed. Closer inspection suggests that the wire would have worked if unauthorised additions had not created perches above the wire.



More significantly the unauthorised replacement of the original stalls with pitched fabric roofs with the current (unauthorised and reported to Enforcement) wooden shed structures has created perching surfaces where there were none before. These will remain beneath the proposed netting as a classic example of a lack of foresight.



A look around the areas of the station which would not be protected by the proposed netting reveals a number of cheap and cheerful additions which are used as perches. These pictures are a small sample of the problem. When the proposed solution is clearly not a complete solution, we have to wonder why bother?

No details are given regarding the fixings for the proposed netting, nor how this is to be achieved above and around things that should not have been placed there without planning permission. Ideally we would like to be able to view the netting and fixings proposed, where have been provided elsewhere.

We consider that all these issues also need addressing as part of this process. If consent is to be given to proposals which will cause harm to the character and appreciation of the station, we believe there needs to be some significant public benefit to offset this; something that has not so far been recognised by the applicants.

Specifically we would make the following comments:-

The proposed installation of 'transparent' netting to the high level steam vents to prevent bird ingress (which appears to have been assumed because there is no indication that the birds do enter through that route) is pointless as the station is to remain open at the end therefore it will not prevent the birds from entering beneath the protection. It will also be highly detrimental to the historical architecture and how it is viewed.

Consideration should be given to new lights rather than putting spikes on the existing. The existing have been in place for many years and are clearly past their best. Surely a design could be sourced that is not only impossible for birds to alight on but are also sympathetic to the station. The other additional lights around the pizza pod are unauthorised and should be removed.

Although a certain amount of spikes could be considered acceptable, the number that would be required to 'bird proof' the station would be highly detrimental, especially if they are not cleaned on a regular basis. There also needs to be some clarification of the spikes to be used. The text describes stainless steel spikes and the picture of the proposed spikes describes them as plastic. Similar spikes are installed in The Corridor, and they don't appear to be effective in preventing pigeons perching there anyway.

In summary, we consider the proposals in this application are excessive and not clearly or well thought out. They would be extremely harmful to the station with little overall benefit. We would recommend that the application is withdrawn and the specialist advice of the Conservation Team sought.