

Application Number:	P/LBC/2025/01068
Webpage:	https://planning.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/
Site address:	Benville Bridge Benville Lane, Corscombe, Rampisham Dorset
Proposal:	Masonry repairs and scour protection works
Applicant name:	Mr James Statham
Case Officer:	Warren Lever
Ward Member(s):	Cllr Kippax

1. This application has been brought to committee as the structure to which the application relates is owned by Dorset Council.
2. **Summary of recommendation:** Grant subject to conditions
3. **Key planning issues**

Issue	Conclusion
Impact on heritage assets	Less than substantial harm that would be outweighed by public benefit through securing the long-term structural integrity of the asset.

4. **Description of site**

Benville Bridge in Corscombe, Dorset, is a Grade II listed structure, recognised for its architectural and historical significance. Built in the early 19th century, this single-span brick arch bridge features distinctive brick parapet walls with stone coping. Its heritage value lies in its well-preserved design and the historical iron plaque warning against damage, reflecting the legal and social context of its time. The bridge is a testament to the engineering and craftsmanship of the period, contributing to the local historical landscape.

Benville Bridge carries the road over a tributary of the River Frome and is situated on the parish border between Corscombe and East Chelborough. The site is located between the Hamlet of Benville and the village of Evershot. The bridge is a single span semi-circular brick arch springing from brick abutments with projecting sandstone keystones, brickwork spandrels and parapets, finished with stone copings. To each abutment corner are built stonework, quarter round cutwaters. The structure has a cast iron plaque on the downstream headwall's road face, which after thefts was last replaced with a replica during works in 2018. The bridge was given grade II listed status in December 1983 (see above). The list entry does not mention the stone cutwaters however they still form part of the listing as the official entry is solely for identification purposes.

The significance of this site is derived from its architectural interest, design and materials, its historic use and location, and that it makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the local area. This bridge holds unique value as part of Dorset's historical rural

infrastructure, embodying the craftsmanship, materials, and aesthetics of its age.

5. Description of development

The proposal seeks repairs to the bridges structure through repointing, brick repair, crack stitching and a scour/relay of the road surface over the span.

6. Background and relevant planning history

WD/D/17/002953 - Decision: GRA - Decision Date: 13/02/2018

Repairs proposed to eroded brickwork and parapet

7. List of constraints

Grade II Listed BENVILLE BRIDGE HE Reference: 1290253 (*statutory duty to preserve or enhance the significance of heritage assets under the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990*).

National Landscapes Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB); Dorset

National Landscapes Chalk Valley and Downland; Upper Frome Valley

8. Consultations

All consultee responses can be viewed in full on the website.

Consultees

1. East Chelborough Parish Council – no comments received

2. Corscombe Parish Council - The Parish Council supports this application. The work is warranted and needs to be carried out to preserve the bridge

3. Yetminster Ward – Cllr. Chris Kippax - The work outlined seems entirely necessary and appropriate

Representations received - None

9. Duties

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 - includes a general duty to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses when considering whether to grant listed building consent.

Clause 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) requires Local Planning Authorities to seek to further the purposes of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of National Landscape (formerly known as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty)

10. Relevant policies

West Dorset and Weymouth and Portland Local Plan 2015

ENV 4 Historic Environment

Material considerations

Emerging local plans:

Paragraph 49 of the NPPF provides that local planning authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to:

- the stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced its preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);
- the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant plan policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given); and
- the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the NPPF (the closer the policies in the emerging plan are to the policies of the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

The Dorset Council Local Plan

The Dorset Council Local Plan Options consultation took place between January and March 2021. Being at a very early stage of preparation, the relevant policies in the draft plan should be accorded very limited weight in decision making.

National Planning Policy Framework (as amended 2025)

- Section 15 'Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment'- In National Landscapes (formerly known as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty), paragraph 189 requires great weight to be given to conserving and enhancing the landscape and scenic beauty. Decisions in Heritage Coast areas should be consistent with the special character of the area and the importance of its conservation (para 191). Paragraphs 192-195 set out how biodiversity is to be protected and encourage net gains for biodiversity.
- Section 16 'Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment'- Paragraph 212 says that when considering designated heritage assets, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation, irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance. The effect of an application on the significance of non-designated heritage assets should also be taken into account (para 216).

Other material considerations

National Planning Practice Guidance

HE: Conservation Principles 2008

HE Good Practice advice Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision Taking.

HE Principles of Repair for Historic Buildings

All of Dorset:

Dorset AONB Landscape Character Assessment

11. Human rights

Article 6 - right to a fair trial.

Article 8 - right to respect for private and family life and home.

The first protocol of Article 1 protection of property.

This recommendation is based on adopted development plan policies, the application of which does not prejudice the human rights of the applicant or any third party.

12. Public Sector Equalities Duty

As set out in the Equalities Act 2010, all public bodies, in discharging their functions must have “due regard” to this duty. There are 3 main aims: -

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics where these are different from the needs of other people
- Encouraging people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where participation is disproportionately low.

Whilst there is no absolute requirement to fully remove any disadvantage the Duty is to have “regard to” and remove or minimise disadvantage and in considering the merits of this planning application the planning authority has taken into consideration the requirements of the Public Sector Equalities Duty. The proposal will not impact on people with protected characteristics.

13. Assessment

The proposed works aim to preserve the historic, architectural, and cultural significance of Benville Bridge, a Grade II listed structure. Within certain areas of the restoration scheme a greater level of detail would be required to determine scope and extent but these could be dealt with by condition. The scope of work is detailed for the application and it proposes the following areas below.

Repair Type 1 – Repairs to Significantly Spalled Bricks and Repointing There are a total of 30 spalled bricks which range from limited surface spalling to a more significant loss of brick.

Repointing seeks to carefully remove deteriorated mortar and repointing with a lime-based mortar matching composition, texture, and colour to ensure compatibility with existing masonry and structural integrity. That said there is limited information regarding techniques for raking out, mortar preparation, protection of mortar and final colour/finish. It is suggested that a more detailed mortar and works specification is provided for this element of the repairs by condition (see conditions suggested). Natural Hydraulic Lime (NHL) 3.5 is specified which should be suitable for bridge structures. It is recommended

the applicant to take caution in choosing NHL mortars, as even within the 3.5 range there are variations of strength. The Conservation Team would also point to work by Historic England on non-hydraulic and hydraulic mortars in which modern versions have found to possess an increasing strength beyond those of historic lime mortars historicengland.org.uk/content/docs/research/hydraulic-lime-production-bcd18pdf/. In some cases, using lower strength NHL mixes, hot limes or pozzolanic additives with a non-hydraulic lime may be a more favourable option. If required this can be adjusted through the attached condition.

The proposal sets out that where a brick is significantly spalled, it is likely to cause accelerated decay of the surrounding brickwork. The proposal mentions bricks that are significantly spalled yet it sets a specification of 10mm over 25% of the brick face. This in terms of historic structures is not significant spalling and will include some bricks with minor erosion and minor spalling. This would mean that many historic bricks which only have a small element of spalling, not leading to accelerated decay and are still providing suitably functional role, could be removed. In line with repair of historic brickwork it is suggested that this element is modified in the specification to closer site assessment and that seeks to determine a less invasive assessment of brick replacement. Replacement should be minimal, using reclaimed or locally sourced materials to closely match the original in quality and appearance. Preservation of as much of the original fabric as possible remains a priority. Therefore, a condition for an agreed brick match is suggested for inclusion.

Repair Type 2 – Repairs to Longitudinal Cracks in Arch Barrell. Helibar Repairs: In areas where structural integrity has been compromised due to joint failure, Helibar systems will be installed to reinforce the affected joints and cracks. This involves embedding stainless steel Helibars into existing mortar joints within the masonry, secured with appropriate grout that complements the original material. This technique provides robust yet discreet structural support while preserving the bridge's historic character. As presented within the application it is unclear how many Helibars are proposed and the exact locations shown on elevational drawings. A condition is recommended to secure further details regarding this matter.

Repair Type 3 – Scour Protection – this refers to some top level scour work which would not be deep enough to impact the historic elements or structure of the bridge.

Repair Type 4 – Carriageway Realignment - this refers to some carriageway alignment work which would not impact the historic elements or structure of the bridge.

The approach seeks to adhere to the principles of minimal intervention and reversibility, ensuring the bridge's original features and materials are retained wherever feasible. All work should be undertaken by experienced conservation specialists with expertise in maintaining and repairing listed structures, ensuring compliance with heritage conservation guidelines.

14. Conclusion

The proposed repairs to the Grade II listed Benville Bridge are important to preserve its historic significance and ensure its continued use. Paragraph 212 of the NPPF states

that, when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The intervention would result in less than substantial harm as it would lead to the loss of some historic fabric and the insertion of stainless steel Helibars. Paragraph 215 of the NPPF states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. Paragraph 213 of the NPPF states that "...any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset, should require clear and convincing justification." The public benefits of the proposal would result through sustaining the structural integrity of the bridge, and this would outweigh the identified harm.

In accordance with Section 16 of the 2025 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), specifically paragraphs 210, 212 and 215, the repairs will sustain and enhance the bridge's heritage value while maintaining its structural integrity. There are some areas where information is required to further explain the proposals, and this is set out within the response and the suggested conditions. . It is considered that the proposal would comply with Policy ENV 4 of the Local Plan and the NPPF.

15. Recommendation: Grant listed building consent subject to the following conditions:

1. The work to which this listed building consent relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date on which the consent is granted.

Reason: This condition is required to be imposed by reason of Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended).

2. The works hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:
PP-13781669v1 Location Plan
BS0102-701-01 General Arrangements

Reason: To preserve the architectural and historical qualities of the building.

3. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in strict accordance with the schedule of works/conclusions set out within the submitted Design, Access & Heritage Statement produced by James Statham dated February 2025.

Reason: To preserve the special interest of and to prevent harm to the designated heritage asset.

4. Prior to their installation detailed drawings and specification for conservation focused brick replacement, Helibar number and suggested positions shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority and agreed in writing. Thereafter, the development shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed details.

Reason: To preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the heritage asset.

5. Prior to its first use on site, a full mortar specification for preparation, repointing, mortar finish/colour and aftercare works shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Work shall proceed in accordance with the approved specification only.

Reason: in the interests of preserving the character and appearance of the listed building.

6. Prior to its first use on site, samples of replacement brick and mortar finish shall be submitted to and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, the work shall proceed only in accordance with such materials as have been agreed.

Reason: In the interests of preserving the character and appearance of the listed building.