

PRICES STREET CONSULTATION SUMMARY



The council is working with Better Bankside, the Kirkaldy Testing Museum and the developers of the Bankside Hilton to improve the environment in Prices Street following the completion of the construction of the new hotel. Consultation was carried out from 23 October to 28 November 2014, with proposals to landscape the highway and install planters, street trees, seating, and a special entrance treatment incorporating artwork for the grade II* listed Kirkaldy Testing Works.

This note summarises the reasons for investing in the project, the method of consultation, a detailed response to comments made, and next steps for the project.

Why invest in improvements at Prices Street?

The proposal to make further improvements to Prices Street has arisen from several key opportunities:

1. **The need to create new and improved open spaces** to provide for the large numbers of new residents and workers moving into the area. By upgrading the public realm we are better able to provide for our communities and meet their expectations. Open space improvements will include street trees and planting will help contribute to improved air quality, sustainable urban drainage, and a high quality amenity and social space for the enjoyment of local residents, workers and visitors. The council has carried out extensive consultation on a programme of public realm improvement works across Bankside called the "Bankside Urban Forest". One of the key project proposals to come out of the consultation process was to make further improvements to Great Suffolk Street as a key spine which links Bankside and the Elephant and Castle.
2. **Protect and enhance the setting of the II* listed Kirkaldy Testing Works**, and provide level disabled access to the rear entrance. The Kirkaldy Testing Works opened at 99 Southwark Street in 1874 and for years was a cutting edge institution for materials testing around the world. Key engineering projects which the works helped develop include the Sydney Harbour and Hammersmith bridges. The site is listed for both the building and also the testing machine which is located in the ground floor and basement. The listing was upgraded from II to II* in 2014 to reflect the national importance and international significance of the site. The Kirkaldy Museum Trust was set up in 1983 with a Board of Directors to manage its activities and a small group of volunteers who show visitors round on monthly open days. The Trust is currently developing a new business plan which will help open up the hidden gem with more regular opening times. The works museum currently has no disabled access, and this project will help create a level access into the rear entrance, with a special heritage feature with artwork lettering to enhance the setting of the historic site. The wider improvements to Prices Street will also improve access to and awareness about the trust, increasing footfall and revenue, and making a strong connection between the new hotel and the attraction.
3. **Maximise the opportunity presented by the redevelopment of the Bankside Hilton site** along the south side of Prices Street, and improve connections to the new hotel and conference centre. The redevelopment of the site will increase footfall to the area, with visitors to both the hotel and conference centre accessing the site from local public transport nodes at Southwark tube, Blackfriars station, Waterloo, and London Bridge. Improving the public realm

and pedestrian environment will mitigate the impact of increased footfall on the area, and promote sustainable modes of travel.

What improvements are being proposed?

The proposed environmental improvements form part of the Bankside Urban Forest initiative to maximise the quality of public realm and open space in SE1, and introduce as much greening as possible. The Bankside Hilton is planned to open in September 2015 and funds have been set aside from the project to improve the landscaping of the public realm around the building, including the streetscape along Great Suffolk Street, Bear Lane and Prices Street.

This proposal builds on consultation carried out as part of the traffic and design study for Great Suffolk Street in 2011-13 which highlighted the potential to close Prices Street to vehicular traffic and led to improvements to the junction of Great Suffolk Street, Dolben Street and Bear Lane.

Following on from previous consultation, this proposal seeks to pedestrianise Prices Street and install new trees, planting, high quality yorkstone paving, cycle stands, a new lighting scheme, and provide at grade disabled access to the rear of the grade II* Kirkaldy Testing Museum. Some new seating is proposed, and these would be fixed individual chairs to avoid potential anti-social behaviour and prevent rough sleeping, skateboarding and congregation by groups of people. Similar individual chairs have previously been successfully installed at the junction of Great Suffolk Street and Southwark Bridge Road.

How did we consult you on the detailed designs?

- We held a public consultation event in the Kirkaldy Testing Museum at 99 Southwark Street on Wednesday 26 November at 5.30-7.30pm. We exhibited plans and photos of the project which were left in the museum for display.
- We wrote to all residents in the area who would be directly affected by the scheme and asked for their comments between 23 October to 28 November 2014.
- We exhibited posters, leaflets, and adverts to advertise the consultation and seek all comments on the plans
- We set up a project webpage so that people could download the plans easily.

What comments were made on the detailed design and how have they affected the design?

The overall consultation response was very positive and we had a number of representations supporting the initiative. There were no objections to the scheme. We received a number of very helpful comments on the design. The list below includes all those comments which sought further detail. A response is made in italics below to address how we have taken these comments into account.

1. York stone is an appropriate and welcome material for paving here and acceptable to the council, laying it in a wide space "wall to wall" will not contribute greatly to achieving an interesting or appealing space.

Officer response: Noted, the design has been amended to provide a mixed pattern of paving which will create a more distinctive place.

2. The proposal is fine in principle, but insufficient trees are planned to be really effective. Whilst forest trees or London planes would be too large for the tree boxes but suggest good sized alder or wild cherry, for example, should be considered: twice as many as proposed and with additional shrub planting to supplement them and define sub-areas of the space.

Officer response: Noted, the design has been amended to provide additional tree planting, and also a ground level planter which will act as a sustainable urban drainage system and allow rainwater from the street to filter into the bed and soakaway into the groundwater. The planter is being kindly paid for and managed on behalf of the community by Better Bankside.

3. The arrangements for drainage are not altogether clear. I would expect to see gutters with appropriate channels and falls somewhere. These, well designed, could add interest to the floorscape.

Officer response: Noted, the design has been updated to provide a detailed drainage system using the levels of the street to create a surface channel which feeds into a long drain – this is designed to meet the requirements of the council's streetscape design guide

4. 6m high lighting columns down the street are not appropriate to the pedestrian function, either in terms of its scale or its use. What is currently proposed is standard street lighting, not pedestrian area lighting.

Officer response: The lighting design has been amended to change the provision from a vehicle street to a pedestrian environment with low columns.

5. Trees in Prices St are very welcome but they would be equally welcome in Gt Suffolk St where, despite the Bankside Urban Forest project, there is just one.

Officer response: Unfortunately the amount of utilities along the side of the road along Great Suffolk Street prevents further tree planting around the Bankside Hilton.

6. Street lighting is needed on both Prices St and Gt Suffolk St but this seems to be overlooked

Officer response: The street lighting along Great Suffolk Street has been assessed and provides a good level of coverage which meets all of the councils standards. We will be replacing a column outside the hotel on Great Suffolk Street with a new column and light head.

7. I am incredibly pleased to see there is no taxi rank provision on Bear Lane as previously proposed, it's a tiny street that should not have a higher level of traffic

Officer response: Noted, planning permission was granted in 2015 for a special taxi drop off facility for the hotel on Great Suffolk Street.

8. Is there not any retail/A3 provision in the hotel facing Price's St? I thought there was supposed to be.

Officer response: Yes the hotel will have a new café / restaurant along Prices Street which is open to the public and has an entrance directly off Prices Street. The facility will animate the frontage along Prices Street and bring life to the street.

9. One thing I'm concerned about given the layout of the servicing yard is the viability of getting the large trucks into the covered service area. My understanding is that service traffic will be entering from Bear Lane and progressing through to exit on Great Suffolk Street. From my perspective this is certainly optimal to the alternative. I'm just unsure as to large vehicles will be physically able to make the relatively tight turn into yard from Bear Lane, especially in the context of the new calming measure which forces vehicles to the left side of the road just before the turn would be required.

Officer response: Noted, the original planning permission for the hotel provides vehicle tracking which demonstrates how large service vehicles will access the servicing bay off Bear Lane.

10. It is noted that the existing setts outside the Kirkaldy Testing Museum will need to be replaced as they cannot be lifted and re-pointed to create successful disabled access. English Heritage

would maintain that a basalt or granite sett as a harder-wearing igneous stone is a more appropriate replacement material than Yorkstone as this would provide a like-for-like match for what is currently there, and it will help to distinguish the entrance from the Yorkstone flags elsewhere.

Officer response: Noted, the design has been amended to provide granite setts to match the existing setts outside the grade II listed building.*

What happens next?

The designs have now been amended to ensure all of the comments made as outlined above have been taken into account.

Traffic orders will now be advertised and made to formalise the road closure of Prices Street to motorised vehicles.

The next stages are to appoint a contractor who can build the scheme to the highest quality, for the best price, and with causing minimal inconvenience for local residents during the construction period.

Enabling works will commence in June 2015, and the project will be constructed between July and October 2015. The hotel is planned to open in September 2015, and the Great Suffolk Street works will be open to the public from this time.

How can I continue to be updated on this project?

For any queries about the project please do get in touch

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