

Installation Of Protective Barrier Along The Land To The South Of Albert Dock At Stevedore Place, Leith

Design Statement

December 2020

LDN Architects





Existing Bollards and Chain fence



Dockside viewed from East

OWNERSHIP

Forth Ports, is the harbour authority for the Forth and Tay estuaries and owns and operates the Port of Leith which includes Albert Dock.

INTRODUCTION & JUSTIFICATION

Forth Ports propose to replace the metal chain links between the existing bollards located to the south of Albert Dock and north of the residential development at Stevedore Place, Leith, with panels comprising vertical railings. The works are required to take place as a matter of urgency for reasons of health and safety. Recently, a young child had to be rescued from Albert Dock basin having accessed it from the Dock edge at Stevedore Place. Fortunately, the child was saved by a local resident using a lifebuoy located at the quayside and a member of the public who entered the Dock to retrieve the child.

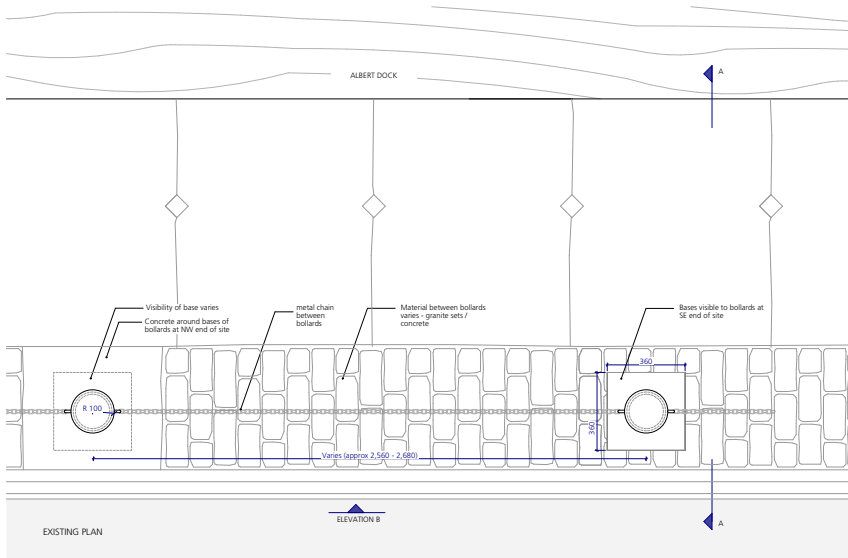
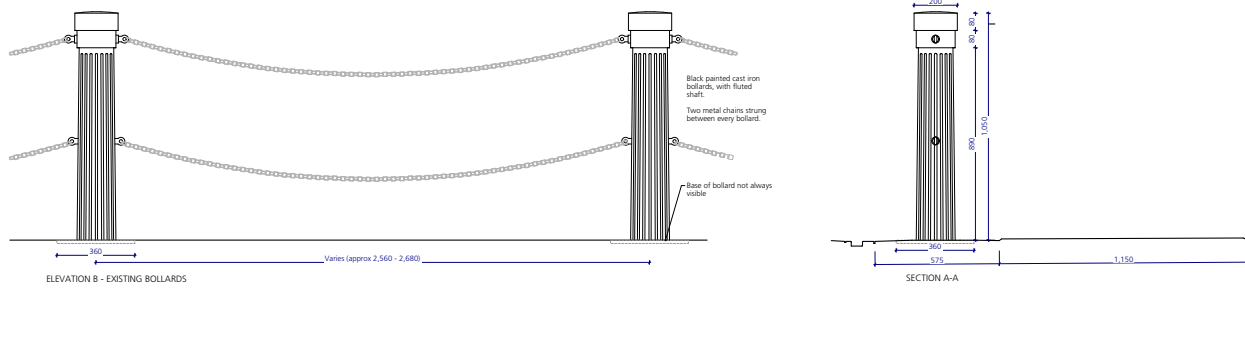
Forth Ports have a high level of commitment to health and safety across their business, taking its obligations and statutory requirements extremely seriously. It implements a 'Safety F1rst' culture at all levels across the business, which aims to protect employees, customers and visitors and is the first port group to be awarded ISO health and safety standard ISO 45001. Having reviewed the recent incident and assessed the risk, Forth Ports propose to undertake works from an urgent safety perspective to prevent the risk of any further incidents happening again.

The proposed vertical railing panels, which will be attached to existing eyelets on the bollards and can be removed without causing damage to the Listed Structure, comprise the intervention which Forth Ports consider to have least impact on Albert Dock and the surrounding area considered necessary to address the immediate requirement to improve safety along the Dock edge at Stevedore Place.

CONSULTATION

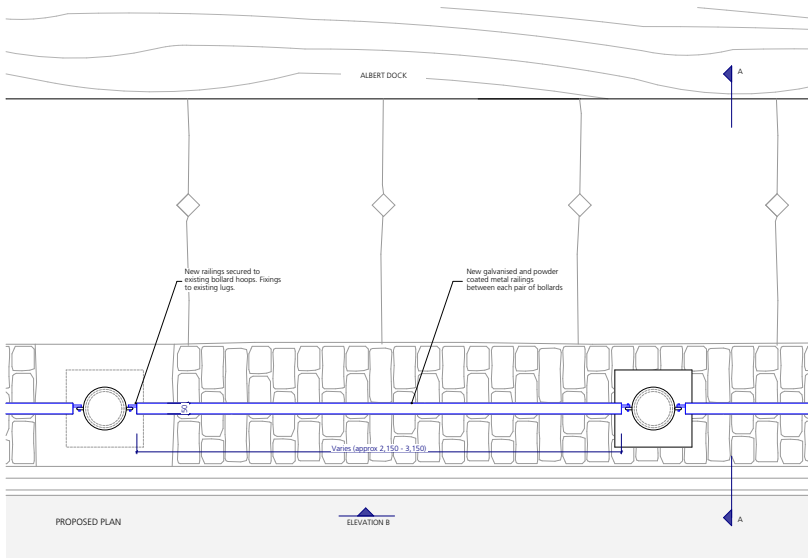
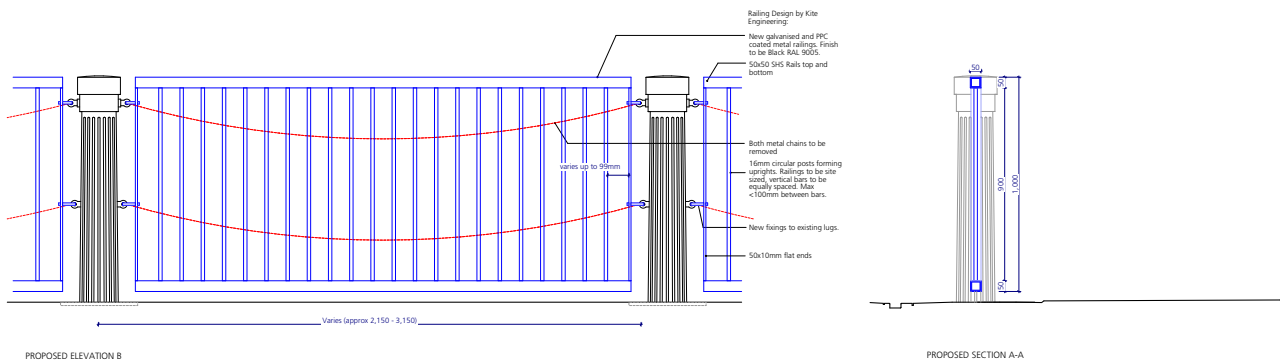
Following the incident at Albert Dock, Forth Ports undertook an urgent health and safety review of their assets to which the public have access to in and around the Port of Leith. The extent of the risk was considered and subsequently Forth Ports wrote to all residents of the adjacent Stevedore Place development to advise them of the proposed works. A copy of this letter was seen by the Planning Authority. Forth Ports subsequently advised the Council of the urgent need for the works and confirmed that applications for Listed Building Consent and Planning Permission would be submitted.

The proposed development is defined as a local development and there is no statutory requirement to undertake pre-application consultation.



Existing Bollards | 1:10

Existing Bollards and Chain Fencing



Proposed Railings between Bollards | 1:10

Proposed Railings retaining existing Bollards

PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

In addition to the Historic Environment Policy for Scotland, the following City of Edinburgh Planning Policies are relevant:

DES 1: Design Quality & Context
DES 3: Development Design
DES 4: Layout Design.
DES 10: Waterside Development
ENV 3: Listed Buildings – Setting
ENV 4: Listed Buildings – Alterations and Extensions
ENV 6: Conservation Areas – Development
Leith Conservation Area Character Appraisal

DESIGN CONTEXT

The dockside of Albert Dock along which it is proposed to install the new safety barrier lies within the Leith Conservation Area and Albert Dock, including its “...stone flagged and setted quayside with bollards, railway tracks and three travelling cranes...”, is Category B Listed as being of special architectural and historical interest by Historic Environment Scotland.

The historically open nature of the dockside prevalent in the area has been changed in recent years by the construction of a new housing development on Stevedore Place which is located approximately 4 metres back from the dockside. It is separated from the dock edge by small fenced-in gardens which have direct gated access to the dockside and a bollard and chain barrier which is set approximately 1 metre back from the dock edge. The bollards and chains are typical of many throughout the Conservation Area which protect dockside edges and are set in a 600 millimetre wide strip, comprising old concrete and setts. The bollard centres vary between 2-3 metres and the dock edge is formed of large stone blocks with square stone locking pegs between each. Railway tracks for the travelling cranes are visible set into the concrete surface between the housing and bollard and chain barrier

The dockside pathway is approximately 150 metres long. It is not intended for vehicle use and is used primarily by pedestrians as a route along the dock edge as well as by residents of the new housing

DESIGN PROPOSALS

The proposed new protective barrier is intended to improve the safety of the dock edge because of the proximity of the housing development and the potentially fatal risk of children gaining access to the dock edge without supervision, as occurred recently.

The design of the new barrier, which will replace the chains between the bollards, consists of panels formed of a painted metal frame and upright balusters at approximately 100 millimetre centres. It has been developed by Kite Engineering on behalf of Forth Ports and is intended to address the health and safety issue with minimum visual impact on the character of the dockside and minimum physical impact on the Listed structures:

It is similar in appearance, height and scale to the railings of the adjacent housing development.

It is intended to be as visually plain, simple and transparent as possible whilst addressing the safety issue which is its primary purpose.

The vertical nature of the balusters, without intermediate horizontals, reduces the risk of children climbing the barrier whilst stopping them from passing through it.

The length of each panel will be sized on site to accommodate the variance in distance between bollard centres without visual change.

The new panels will be fixed in position using the eyelet lugs on the side of the existing bollards with no need to disturb historic dockside finishes with new footings.

The new metalwork will be painted black to match the predominant colour of dockside railings elsewhere in the dock area.

The barriers are removable in the future without damage to historic structures.

The proposals have been considered and respond in terms of the Edinburgh Local Development Plan (2016) as follows:

DES 1: Design Quality & Context

The Port of Leith which is an operational Port. Albert Dock forms part of the operational port estate and as such, it is necessary to ensure that appropriate health and safety measures are in place.

The proposals are of an appropriate design which will mitigate a very real health and safety risk, as demonstrated by the recent incident outlined in this Statement. Accordingly, the use of vertical balusters is proposed as these cannot be climbed upon.

The metalwork of the barrier panels will be painted black to match the existing bollards. This is the established and predominant colour for railings in the public realm of the Leith docks area.

The proposed panels are designed to be in keeping with the scale of the existing bollards; a higher boundary treatment would diminish the presence of the bollards and detract from the Listed structures and character of the surrounding area, whilst a smaller panel would not mitigate the health and safety risk.

The fence panels are designed to be fitted to the existing eyelets on the bollards, thus reducing the level of intervention required.

The proposal extends from the secure west end to secure east end of the housing development on Stevedore Place and is the necessary extent of development required to address health and safety risks.

The scale of the proposed development does not conflict with the scale and form of the residential development. Garden gates provide direct access from the dwellings to the Dock edge and the proposals provides a secure barrier between the Dock basin and the residential use.

DES 3: Development Design

As referred to in the response to DES 1, the Applicant has considered the existing features including Albert Dock and the adjacent residential development at Stevedore Place and the proposed design addresses the health and safety issue with minimum visual impact on the character of the dockside and minimum physical impact on the Listed structures.

DES 4: Layout Design

The Applicant has considered the surrounding context. The proposal will close off the dockside edge but will not impact on the character of the wider townscape and landscape or impact on existing eye-level views.

DES 10: Waterside Development

Albert Dock forms part of the operational port and therefore it is not appropriate to promote recreational use of the Dock basin. The proposed development is designed to mitigate a health and safety risk whilst ensuring the public frontage of the waterside is not diminished.

Public access to the water's edge is not reduced by the proposed development as there is an existing chain fence preventing access in the same location as the proposed new barrier.

The proposal will not impact on the conservation or landscape interests of the water environment. As noted above Albert Dock forms part of the operational port and therefore it is not appropriate to promote recreational use of the Dock basin

ENV 3: Listed Buildings – Setting

The policy seeks to ensure that proposals to listed buildings where these are not detrimental to the architectural character, appearance or historic interest of the building and or its setting. Albert Dock forms part of the operational Port of Leith and its function is intrinsic to its character, appearance and historic interest. The proposal addresses the safety issue with minimum visual impact on the character of the dockside and minimum physical impact on the Listed structures

ENV 4: Listed Buildings – Alterations and Extensions

The proposed fencing panels are justified on the grounds that they are required to address an identified health and safety risk.

There will be no damage to the listed structure as the barriers are removable in the future without damage to historic structures.

The proposed barriers are of a sympathetic engineered design and similar in scale and material to the listed structures.

The railings will be painted black to match the existing bollards.

ENV 6: Conservation Areas – Development

The site is within the Old Leith and Shore area of the Leith Conservation Area. The Character Area Appraisal does not specifically mention dockside edges but there are a variety of railings and protective barriers within the Conservation Area, most based on pragmatic engineered designs appropriate to a lively dock area. The proposed barriers are of a sympathetic engineered design and similar in scale and material to the listed structures. They will replace chain railings that already prevent access to the dockside edge and, in so doing, they will address the health and safety issues identified without obstructing views of and across Albert Dock.

The metalwork of the barrier panels will be painted black to match the existing bollards. This is the established and predominant colour for railings in the public realm of the Leith docks area.

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