

The Garden Bridge

FAQs from Coin Street Community Builders (CSCB)

27 April 2016

CONSULTATION

Who is responsible for consulting locally about the Garden Bridge?

The planning applicants are TfL and the Garden Bridge Trust. This is not a scheme CSCB has devised. TfL and GBT were responsible for their own consultation processes. However, we arranged for Garden Bridge Trust to present its proposals at the South Bank Forum (twice) and offered the gallery@oxo as a consultation venue.

AGREEING TO THE BRIDGE

Why did you agree to allow the bridge to land on your site?

We are the leaseholder of the site proposed for the 'south landing building' but, under the lease, we cannot permit development. The freehold belongs to the London Borough of Lambeth, so they would need to decide whether CSCB can allow the proposed development.

Lambeth has recently issued proposed heads of terms that would permit construction of the Garden Bridge. We will consider these proposals but we will not give our consent to the Garden Bridge unless we are satisfied with:

- the construction plan
- the design and uses of the south landing building
- arrangements for the long-term management and maintenance of the bridge and south landing building
- pedestrian and vehicular access and servicing, including waste disposal
- arrangements in respect of the management and maintenance of the public realm in the vicinity of the bridge.

Apart from the planning process, we are determined to use our position as landowner to keep any disruption to a minimum and ensure that any development delivers the promised benefits – such as remaining free to members of the public. If we are satisfied on the matters above, we would secure Garden Bridge Trust undertakings through a sub-lease: that's why it is important we keep control of the land.

What was the rationale behind the decision by CSCB board members regarding the Garden Bridge?

We've approached the Garden Bridge project in the same way we deal with any potential development that might have an impact on our community – by considering the opportunities, challenges and threats it creates to our overall vision for our neighbourhood.

Board members considered very carefully the issues involved with this proposal and reached the view that *if it is properly managed and maintained* the bridge would be beneficial to London and the local area, but that *if it is not* then it would be a liability.

We saw the positive aspects of the proposal to be:

- Improved pedestrian access – a clear understanding that London's population is growing as are the numbers of people working in and visiting central London. Our board believes that improved pedestrian access and movement across the Thames and central London is essential and that the proposed bridge could contribute to that.
- Extending the public realm – we believe that the proposed bridge would provide additional and attractive public realm that is car free and opens up new views of the river and London.

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- Infrastructure investment – acceptance that, if new investment in the infrastructure of central London is supported by national, regional and local government (the elected bodies), it would be inappropriate for CSCB to seek to block it. In these circumstances, our priority is to retain control through continued ownership of the land and active involvement in the decision making. Not to be a bystander. As with any large investment in our area there are positive and negative aspects which we weighed in the balance and our response to Lambeth's planning committee reflects this.
- Employment and training opportunities – together with other areas of public realm in the neighbourhood, such as Jubilee Gardens and Bernie Spain Gardens, the proposed bridge could support our desire to develop employment and training opportunities in horticulture and public realm management for people growing up in our area.

Can CSCB say no to the Garden Bridge project?

We recognise that those opposed to the Garden Bridge would rather we said 'no' on the basis that it should not get public money or that Lambeth and Westminster Councils and the Mayor of London are wrong to grant it planning consent. We do not think that it would be appropriate for us to usurp the investment and planning decisions of elected bodies in this way.

However, we believe that we have both a right and duty to ensure that the scheme only goes ahead if we can be satisfied that the promised benefits are delivered for the community we serve and its impacts mitigated.

FINANCIAL BENEFIT

Is Coin Street benefitting financially from the bridge landing on your leased land?

No, quite the contrary. Our income from site activities would be affected during construction and there would be increased management and maintenance costs once the bridge was opened to the public. Overall we do not believe there will be any financial benefit to Coin Street from the proposed arrangements.

Will CSCB benefit from the Garden Bridge 106 money?

It is proposed that the Garden Bridge Trust will have to contribute £250k (index linked) towards managing and maintaining the area around the south landing building. This would be paid to Lambeth and distributed to various bodies including CSCB against invoices detailing the *additional* costs associated with provision of services.

COMMERCIAL SPACE

What's happening to the 'commercial space' which is part of the landing building?

We have told the Garden Bridge Trust that we would not permit use of the ground floor of the landing building for commercial uses. If built, we would retain 350sqm of space for a continuing programme of 'pop up' events and uses similar to activities that take place currently on the site and which both create interest and help to meet the costs of managing and maintaining the riverside walkway and Bernie Spain Gardens. The rest of the south landing building would be used for stairs, lifts, staffed toilets and essential ancillary uses. Contrary to information out there, there are no plans for a restaurant, café or supermarket.

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What guarantee can you give us that you will not change the types of uses for the south landing building?

In our negotiations with the Garden Bridge Trust, we have made clear that, if permitted by the freehold owner (Lambeth), we would only grant consent for those parts of the scheme that we regard as essential to the construction or beneficial to the effective operation of the proposed bridge.

We require the ground floor 'flexible space' to continue a mix of 'pop up' events and activities that contribute to the costs of managing our public realm.

USE OF PUBLIC MONEY

It is a waste of public money, isn't it?

Everyone has their own personal opinion on where public money should be spent. If the allocation of public money was up to us, we would prioritise investment in other things, such as housing. But those decisions are not ours to make, they are for elected bodies at national, regional and local levels.

Our concern is ongoing maintenance and management to ensure the bridge does not become a liability for us and other local stakeholders. We need to be satisfied that any disruption caused by building and operating it is kept to a minimum and that the development delivers the potential benefits it promises for our community – including free access to the public.

MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE

With 3.5m additional visitors to the area, how will you cope with the increased litter etc.

Our attention is focused on the operation, maintenance and management of the bridge and surrounding land both during construction and beyond. We have outlined our concerns to the Garden Bridge Trust and Lambeth Council and these are reflected in the conditions attached to the planning consent.

Who will cover the cost of the maintenance, currently estimated at £3m annually?

The Garden Bridge Trust will be responsible for covering the costs of the maintenance and operation of the bridge. We expect a contribution to the additional costs of managing the public realm in the vicinity of the bridge; and a commitment to collaborate in respect of neighbouring land and security.

LEASE

What are the lease arrangements between Lambeth, CSCB and GBT?

No lease arrangements have been agreed yet. Lambeth has recently issued proposed heads of terms that would permit construction of the Garden Bridge. We will consider these proposals but we will not give our consent to the proposals unless we are satisfied with:

- the construction plan
- the design and uses of the south landing building
- arrangements for the long-term management and maintenance of the bridge and south landing building
- pedestrian and vehicular access and servicing, including waste disposal
- arrangements in respect of the management and maintenance of the public realm in the vicinity of the bridge.

Will CSCB support any other local group proposal for ACV?

- CSCB has no intention to dispose of the site. Our priority is to retain control of the land. Any sub-lease to the Trust would require the consent of the freehold owner (Lambeth).

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LOSS OF TREES

Will the Garden Bridge Trust be removing trees on the riverside walkway?

For CSCB the loss of the 'avenue' of blue and white LED-lit trees is a significant downside to the scheme. We understand the logic of the design of the landing building and do not see how the existing 'avenue' could be retained if the garden bridge was built. In our response to the planning application we asked Lambeth to explore the potential for the scheme to provide replacement trees in the vicinity of the landing building. We said that the blue and white LED lighting was an unique feature of this stretch of riverside and replacement of this characteristic feature of the conservation area should be part of any arrangement. We recognise that 270 trees (and over 100,000 perennials) would be planted on the Garden Bridge.

FUTURE PLANS

Do you have any long term plans to change the use of other parts of land on lease to CSCB from Lambeth?

We have plans to re-landscape Bernie Spain Gardens so that it is at least the quality of Jubilee Gardens. We started consulting on an outline brief for these improvements in January 2016.

FACTS

1. CSCB is long leaseholder of the site proposed for the 'south landing building', the freehold of which lies within the London Borough of Lambeth.
2. Both the City of Westminster and the London Borough of Lambeth have granted planning permission for the Garden Bridge subject to a substantial number of conditions.
3. The Bridge is estimated to cost £175m. It has the support of The Mayor of London and Her Majesty's Treasury with a commitment of £60m, £20m of which will be treated as a loan. 77% of the cost of the bridge will be raised privately.
4. The Garden Bridge Trust is a UK registered charity that has been established to fundraise for and deliver the Garden Bridge. The Trust will also be responsible for the maintenance and operation of the bridge in the future. www.gardenbridge.london
5. To date CSCB has ensured that:
 - The riverside walkway would remain open during the construction period
 - Bernie Spain Gardens and Gabriel's Wharf will not be used for access during construction
 - The south landing building would include *staffed* toilets
 - At least 50% of waste would be removed via the north bank.