

## **1.0 Delegated planning report**

Number: 23/0943/PDL  
Applicant Name: Mr C Field – Network Rail  
Proposal: Prior approval for the demolition of two existing buildings, proposed freestanding plant room, alterations to station canopies and extension of platform two  
Site Address: Great Western Railway  
St Davids Station  
Exeter  
EX4 4NT  
  
Registration Date: 27 July 2023  
Case Officer: Laura Dymond  
Ward Members: Cllrs D Moore, Read and Sparling

## **2.0 Summary of recommendation**

Prior approval granted

## **3.0 Description of site**

St David's Station is the main railway station in the city, located on Bonhay Road. The main station buildings are not listed or in the conservation area, but are locally listed.

## **4.0 Description of development**

Prior approval for the demolition of two existing buildings, proposed freestanding plant room, alterations to station canopies and extension of platform two.  
The demolition includes a red brick two storey building, and a group of temporary buildings.

## **5.0 Supporting information provided by applicant**

- Covering letters

The proposed demolition constitutes permitted development under the provision of Schedule 2, Part 11, Class B of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, as amended and the works do not trigger the requirement for the Local Planning Authority's prior approval in this instance.

The removal of the buildings is required at the station to facilitate the future railway project to extend the existing station platform. The platform and canopy works will be subject to a prior approval application. In advance of the demolition taking place, we will construct a new plant room at the side of the existing station building which will accommodate some of the electrical equipment which is currently within the red brick building.

There are very limited opportunities to add railway capacity to the existing station due to the position of adjoining railway infrastructure. The only way of adding capacity (by accommodating longer trains) within the station footprint is by extending platform 2. It cannot be extended to the north due to the existing level crossing and the associated signalling infrastructure and therefore the only way of extending is to the south which requires the removal of buildings and alterations to the station canopies.

- Written Scheme of Investigation and Photographic recording of the two storey brick building.

## 6.0 Relevant planning history

Reference	Proposal	Decision	Decision Date
16/1570/SO	Request for Environmental Impact Assessment Screening - Upgrade of existing facilities at St David's Depot, Exeter	REC	19.12.2016
16/0490/ADV	ATM surround sign	PER	19.04.2016
13/3226/CAC	Demolition of Permanent Way Inspectors Office (White House)	REF	02.07.2013

## 7.0 Consultations

ECC Heritage Officer

In a pre application meeting the Council's Heritage Officer acknowledged a formal application would not be required to demolish under Part 11 of the GPDO, they suggested Network Rail carry out a historic recording of the two storey building, by a qualified heritage consultant.

## 8.0 Representations

Three objections, one neutral comment received, issues raised:

- Loss of heritage building
- The station master's house may be neglected and under-used but even in this degraded condition it is fundamentally more attractive and dignified than much

of its surroundings, and certainly preferable to the depressing structures proposed for its replacement.

- The building or front section should be retained
- It is an important and unique part of the important historic principal train station.
- The structure in question is one of a pair of handsome gateway buildings to the north of the city and deserving of preservation.
- The proposed replacement buildings would degrade further the built environment of the locality. The building is an integral part of the transport history of the city with clear historic links to Brunel's station next door
- As for salvaging some of the bricks and rebuilding the façade elsewhere in the country - what is the purpose of that?

## **9.0 Relevant policies**

### Development Plan

NPPF

Exeter Local Development Framework Core Strategy  
CP17 – Design and local distinctiveness

Exeter Local Plan First Review 1995-2011  
E2 – St. David's Station  
T8 – Safeguarding former railway land and access to rail  
C3 – Buildings of local importance  
DG1 – Objectives of urban design

### Other material considerations

Exeter City Council Development Delivery DPD (Publication Version) 2015  
*This document represents a material consideration but has not been adopted and does not form part of the management plan*  
St David's Conservation Area Appraisal

## **10.0 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

The consideration of the application in accordance with Council procedures will ensure that views of all those interested are considered. All comments from interested parties have been considered and reported within this report in summary with full text available via the Council's website.

Any interference with property rights is in the public interest and in accordance with the Town and Country planning Act 1990 regime for controlling the development of land. This recommendation is based on the consideration of the proposal against adopted Development Plan policies, the application of which does not prejudice the Human Rights of the applicant or any third party.

## **11.0 Public sector equalities duty**

As set out in the Equality Act 2010, all public bodies, in discharging their functions, must have "due regard" to the need to:

- a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
- b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- c) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard in particular to the need to:

- a) removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- b) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of other persons who do not share it
- c) encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons 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 had due regard to the matters set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

## **12.0 Planning assessment**

This is not a planning application but a notification submitted by Network Rail for prior approval. Network Rail has substantial Permitted Development rights under Part 18 of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (GPDO). Part 18 allows development that has been authorised by a local

or private Act of Parliament which specifically allows the type of development proposed and specifies the land upon which it may be carried out.

The demolition of the buildings can occur under the Bristol and Exeter Railway Act 1836. This Act incorporates provisions which permit the original railway company and its successors in title (now Network Rail) to undertake future works.

As the plant room building is a free standing structure sited on operational land in connection with the movement of traffic by rail these works will be permitted development under Part 8 of the General Permitted Development Order.

The platform and canopy alterations are submitted under Part 18 Class A to Schedule 2 of the GPDO 2015 as permitted development. It does not require planning permission, but the Local Planning Authority (LPA) must give its approval prior to implementation of the scheme to the siting and appearance. Whilst the local authority has limited powers as to what can be considered as part of the application it is considered that the development requiring Prior Approval is acceptable within the relevant parts of the GPDO as the application cannot reasonably be carried out elsewhere; and the design and external appearance of the proposals would not harm the amenity of the area.

While the demolition of the brick building is regrettable, this does not require any consent from the Local Planning Authority. The plant room, and alterations to station canopies and extension of platform two will allow longer trains to use this platform and run more trains for the station. The proposals would therefore benefit the operations of the station, which makes an important contribution to public transport in the city.

### **13.0 Recommendation**

Prior approval granted.