

Application Name: Goods Platform c.280m to the North-East of Chippenham Railway Station

Number: 472128
Type: New
Heritage Category: Listing

Address:

The former goods platform is situated c.280m to the north-east of Chippenham Railway Station, on the south side of the railway line.

County	District	District Type	Parish
	Wiltshire	Unitary Authority	Chippenham

Recommendation: Reject

Assessment

Context

English Heritage has received an application requesting that we assess a mid-C19 goods platform at Chippenham Railway Station for designation as a listed building. The platform is subject to a current planning application which will result in its demolition to facilitate the laying out of a new car park. It lies marginally outside the Chippenham Conservation Area. Chippenham Railway Station is listed at Grade II.

History and Details

The Great Western Railway was founded in 1832 and incorporated by Act of Parliament in 1835, with the aim of constructing a railway line from London to Bristol; Isambard Kingdom Brunel was appointed company engineer. The line from London to Bristol opened in eight separate stages from 1838, opening throughout in 1841, the same year that Chippenham Railway Station opened. The station, however, was substantially rebuilt in 1856-58 to meet the increased volume of rail traffic following the opening of the first section of the Wiltshire, Somerset and Weymouth Railway from Chippenham to Westbury in 1848; the line was completed through to Weymouth in 1857. At the same time, the increased growth in freight traffic also necessitated the construction of a goods yard and goods shed some 200m to the north-east of the station; it is, therefore, believed that the goods platform was also constructed at this time. The early to mid-C20 growth in freight traffic resulted in the platform being extended at its north-east end. In the 1960s, however, following a review of train services, especially freight workings, goods traffic at Chippenham began to decline and by the 1970s the platform had been taken out of railway use.

The platform, which is situated on the south-east side of the main line, has brick walls and copings with a C20 extension in concrete blockwork and a surface composed of brick and earth patching. It is rectangular on plan with ramps to its south-east and south-west sides. The north-east end of the platform has now been partially demolished and recent ground disturbance in this area makes it difficult to ascertain where it terminated.

Assessment

As set out in the Principles of Selection for Listing Buildings (March 2010), although most buildings pre-dating 1840 are strong candidates for listing, progressively greater selection is required for post-1840 buildings due to the greatly increased number of buildings erected and the much larger numbers that have survived. Further guidance on the designation of railway structures is laid out in the English Heritage Listing Selection Guide for Transport Buildings (April 2011), which states that goods yards need to be assessed as a whole rather than as individual structures. Furthermore, in response to Network Rail announcing their proposal to electrify the Great Western main line, an extensive survey of the route has been undertaken by English Heritage, in conjunction with Network Rail and Alan Baxter Associates, to identify those heritage assets which warrant further assessment for designation. In view of this, the goods platform at Chippenham Railway Station does not meet the criteria for designation for the following principal reasons:

- * Architectural interest: the platform is a utilitarian structure, being of a design that is common throughout the railway network.
- * Historic interest: being constructed after the opening of the Great Western Railway in 1841, it does not have any inherent historic interest with Isambard Kingdom Brunel.
- * Selectivity and rarity: the platform was not identified as one of the structures requiring further investigation by English Heritage prior to the electrification of the Great Western Main Line. Government guidance is clear that, in cases of mass-produced or frequently encountered structures, a selection of the best and most representative examples is the approach to follow.
- * Engineering interest: it exhibits no innovative engineering or pioneering use of materials.
- * Group value: it does not comprise part of a particularly well-preserved goods yard group, particularly as the goods shed has now been demolished.

Conclusion

Although the placement of this goods platform on the Great Western main line affords it some interest, it does not, however, meet the criteria for listing in a national context.