

**KIRKLEES METROPOLITAN COUNCIL
INVESTMENT & REGENERATION SERVICE**

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) – SECTION 16

DELEGATED DECISION TO DETERMINE APPLICATIONS FOR LISTED BUILDING CONSENT

Reference No:	2024/65/91206/W
Site Address:	Huddersfield Railway Station, St George's Square, Huddersfield, HD1 1JB
Description:	Listed Building Consent for alterations to existing station entrance to improve accessibility (within a Conservation Area)
Recommending Officer:	Sue Brooks

DECISION – CONSENT GRANTED

I hereby authorise the approval of this application for the reasons set out in the officer's report and recommendation annexed below in respect of the above matter.

Helen Bower

AUTHORISED OFFICER

Date: 19-Jun-2024

Officer Report

Site Description

Huddersfield Railway Station is a substantial Grade I Listed Building in a prominent location on St George's Square, within the Huddersfield Town Centre Conservation Area. This fine neo-classical building was designed by James Pritchett of York and was constructed between 1846 and 1850. The main station building comprises a large, central two storey block with an attic floor, and on the façade facing the square is a five-bay portico with a large pediment set onto large columns, along with a further three bays to either side. The building is constructed in ashlar sandstone with fine detailing and timber sash windows.

The station is accessed from St Georges Square via a short flight of stone steps to the front and sides of the portico, and a stone ramp on the left-hand side, set against the main building.

Description of Proposal

The proposal is for alterations to the station entrance to improve accessibility to the building. Improvements include:

- handrails to the steps on each side of the portico and an additional handrail to the ramped access,
- tactile paving to the top and bottom landings of the stepped access to the station,
- increased external lighting to the entrance area, with the existing wall mounted globe lighting units restored.
- additional access signage - post mounted on the station forecourt and wall mounted signage fixed to the portico columns.

History of negotiations / amendments received

The Agent was asked the following questions, and the responses are below:

- Can the ramp handrail be fixed to the existing brackets to avoid further fixings into the wall of the building?
 - Response – this may be possible subject to loadings and details. To allow details to be provided, a condition will be applied requiring handrail details to be submitted for approval.
- How are the tactile strips secured in place?
 - These are secured by small fixings drilled into the stonework.

- Tactile strips with a brass finish were suggested instead of a stainless-steel finish.
 - This was agreed.
- Can the number of new external lights on the façade be reduced to reduce the impact on its architectural interest?
 - These will be reduced from four to two, with the new lights set behind the portico columns where they are less prominent rather than on the face of the building. If calculations show that the light level is insufficient, a variation of condition application will be submitted.

Relevant Planning History

2009/91992 – Planning Permission for erection of facade lighting (Listed Building within a Conservation Area) - Conditional Full Permission

2009/91993 - Listed Building Consent for erection of facade lighting (within a Conservation Area) - Consent Granted

Access Considerations

None.

Climate Change Emergency

On 12th November 2019, the Council adopted a target for achieving 'net zero' carbon emissions by 2038, with an accompanying carbon budget set by the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research. National Planning Policy includes a requirement to promote carbon reduction and enhance resilience to climate change through the planning system and these principles have been incorporated into the formulation of Local Plan policies. The Local Plan pre-dates the declaration of a climate emergency and the net zero carbon target, however it includes a series of policies which are used to assess the suitability of planning applications in the context of climate change. When determining planning applications, the Council will use the relevant Local Plan policies and guidance documents to embed the climate change agenda.

The proposed alterations are for access improvements to Huddersfield Station. Overall, the proposal has no impact on climate change, however new light fittings will be installed for safety. Although these will slightly increase energy usage, low energy fittings will be specified, and the new lighting is limited to two fittings. It is felt that there is a slight impact on climate change, but this is outweighed by the public benefits of creating a safe environment.

Consultation Responses

Historic England has been consulted due to the Grade I listed status of the building and they have provided the following comments:

- Whilst the main portico is an incredibly significant aspect of the Grade I listed building, the improved access would provide a public benefit and contributes to the wider public realm improvements to St George's Square. The rails are restricted to the sides of the portico and do not include railings on its front facing side which would limit the visual impact of the proposal. Therefore, Historic England are supportive of this aspect of the scheme to improve the safety and accessibility of the building.
- The tactile surfacing raises a minor concern. The replacement of the modern stone paving at the base of the steps is not of concern however the proposed stainless-steel finish of the tactile finish at the top raises some concerns over how this might appear. It is assumed that the intention of the tactile floor finish is to feel the difference in floor texture underfoot as opposed to a visual warning of oncoming stairs. Therefore, if the finish could be changed to improve visual coherence this would somewhat alleviate these minor concerns.
- To ensure that the proposed railings, tactile paving, lamps and signage are not visually incongruous additions we would recommend that the details of their materiality and appearance are conditioned and are to the satisfaction of the local authority.

Overall, Historic England are supportive of the principle of the proposal.

The officer report has been compiled by the Senior Conservation and Design Officer.

Representations

The application has been publicised with a site notice and a press notice. No representations have been received.

Date site notice expired: 01/06/2024

Publicity expiry date: 15/06/2024

Policies

The building is Grade I listed and therefore Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) applies.

This requires the Local Planning Authority to 'have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of a special architectural or historic importance which it possesses'.

Kirklees Local Plan

The statutory Development Plan for Kirklees is the Local Plan (adopted 27th February 2019). The following policies are considered relevant to this application:

- LP 1-Achieving Sustainable Development
- LP 2 – Place Shaping
- LP 24 – Design
- LP 35 – Historic Environment

National Policies and Guidance

National planning policy and guidance is set out in National Policy Statements, primarily the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published 20 December 2023, the Planning Practice Guidance Suite (PPGS) first launched 6th March 2014 together with Circulars, Ministerial Statements and associated technical guidance.

- Chapter 2 Achieving sustainable development
- Chapter 12 Achieving well-designed places
- Chapter 16 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Assessment

Huddersfield Railway Station is Grade I listed and one of the busiest railway stations on the TransPennine route. An audit has been carried out to assess whether the accessibility can be improved for passengers entering and exiting the station, and the following interventions are proposed and are designed to respect the significance of the building while improving the passenger experience.

The elements of the proposal are assessed below.

Handrails

Stone steps lead up to the station entrance from St Georges Square. Due to the topography, there are four steps at the southern end of the portico and five steps at the northern end. Passengers approach the station from the town centre, taxi rank and bus station to the south, from St George's Square to the west, and from the station car park and drop off point on the north side. Currently, the only handrail is on the ramp at the southern side of the

entrance, and many people who approach from the north are unaware that this is in place.

There is an existing 950mm high handrail at each side of the ramp, one of which is free-standing on posts and the other is fixed to the wall of the station building. The application proposes to add handrails to both sides at a height of 600mm to comply with British Standards, with a new upper handrail on the freestanding structure to prevent over-reaching.

The proposed new ramp handrails fixed to the existing posts are in the same material and colour, with the same detailing as the existing traditional handrails so that they blend in well. As the rails are fixed to a modern structure, the impact on the significance of the building is negligible and this is therefore acceptable.

A 600mm high handrail is also proposed to the wall of the station building alongside the ramp and below the existing handrail, which is secured with 9 brackets. Brackets for the new handrail are proposed into the ashlar stonework, which will cause harm to the building fabric by securing additional fixings into the masonry. It was suggested that the existing handrail brackets could be adapted to support the new rail to reduce interventions into the masonry, and therefore a condition has been applied requiring details to be submitted for approval to allow the fixing details to be designed. The principle of providing a further handrail on this side is acceptable as it is a necessary intervention to provide safe access and the design matches the existing.

Along with improvements to the ramped access, a pair of new handrails on posts is proposed on each side of the portico to provide safer access via the steps, with rails at 1m high and 600mm high. Situated on each side of the entrance, the visual impact is low with minimal impact on the aesthetics of the station entrance. The option to install handrails at the front of the entrance was discounted as this would have a greater impact on the significance and visual appearance of the building. The provision of additional handrails is justified by ensuring safe and easy access to the busy station where it has been established that people who struggle to negotiate steps have found access difficult. The slight harm has been mitigated by fixing the posts into the steps rather than the columns and designing the posts and rails to match the existing on the ramp to provide a consistent approach.

Tactile paving

Tactile surface finishes are proposed to the top and bottom landings of the stepped access to the station to warn people with visual impairments of the

steps. These have been designed to minimise the impact on the architecture and this is detailed below.

Mechanically fixed stainless steel tactile corduroy rods are proposed to the top of the entrance steps, fixed to the stone paving between the portico columns. Although this will require fixings into the stonework, small holes would be drilled into the stonework which could be infilled in the future. This avoids the need to cut into or remove sections of the stone entrance platform. Historic England raised a minor concern with the visual appearance of the stainless-steel strips and therefore a brass finish is recommended to blend in more with the stonework. A condition has been applied accordingly.

New tactile stone paving is proposed around the perimeter of the portico at the bottom of the steps, with a strip of existing paving removed and replaced. The proposed stone is sourced from the local Johnsons Wellfield quarry to match the existing paving, with tactile surfacing routed into the stone. This paving is part of the public realm and is outside the curtilage of the station. The impact on the setting of the station is low, and the public benefit of providing this safety improvement outweighs any harm.

External lighting

Improved external lighting is proposed to the entrance area, with the existing wall mounted globe lighting units restored, and two additional lights fixed to the front elevation of the station to improve visibility and safety where the level of illumination is poor at the sides of the portico, particularly for the access ramp and northern steps. Four new lights were originally proposed and following negotiations this was reduced to two lights set behind the portico columns at each side of the entrance.

The three existing globe light fittings are not historic, which is evidenced by marks on the walls indicating the position of previous fixings. However, they are traditional in design and their like for like replacement is accepted. The two proposed light fittings replicate the existing and are placed symmetrically on the façade, with one fixed to each pilaster on the main building behind the portico columns where they have no impact on the most visible ashlar elevations. Proposed fixing methods are the same as the existing fittings.

The provision of additional lighting at each side of the portico is accepted as this will improve safety, and the design and position ensure that the impact on this elevation is low.

Signage

Additional access signage is proposed, with a post mounted sign on the station forecourt and wall mounted signage fixed to the rear of the portico columns.

The post mounted signage directs passengers to the ramped access on the station forecourt at the northern side of the entrance and is not within the curtilage of the building. This is a small intervention which is justified as there are no existing posts in this location to fix a sign and a post avoids fixing a sign onto visible elevations. It causes no harm to significance.

Adhesive wall mounted signs are proposed to the rear of the portico columns, directing passengers exiting the station to the ramp. These are located to the rear of the columns where they are not visible from wider aspects and are reversible as there are no mechanical fixings.

Repairs

Along with the works above, repairs to the stone entrance steps are proposed. This includes re-pointing open joints using a lime mortar mix, with the replacement of missing and dislodged metal recessed nosing studs.

Some areas of the steps have been coated with an anti-slip surface which is coming away from the stonework. The details were clarified, and repairs to the existing coating, like for like replacement or careful removal to expose the stone are all acceptable as there will be no additional harm to significance.

Summary

The highly prominent façade of the Grade I listed station building makes a huge contribution to its significance, and therefore any alterations and interventions to this elevation need to be very carefully considered and executed, with convincing justification.

The accessibility of this busy station access has been carefully assessed and it is evident improvements need to be made. The proposed works have been carefully considered to minimise the harm to the significance of the building by sensitive design, carefully locating the interventions, and ensuring reversibility. The proposal is therefore acceptable.

Consultation responses

Historic England has been consulted due to the Grade I listed status of the building and they have provided the following comments:

- Whilst the main portico is an incredibly significant aspect of the Grade I listed building, the improved access would provide a public benefit and contributes to the wider public realm improvements to St George's Square. The rails are restricted to the sides of the portico and do not include railings on its front facing side which would limit the visual impact of the proposal. Therefore, Historic England are supportive of this aspect of the scheme to improve the safety and accessibility of the building.
- The tactile surfacing raises a minor concern. The replacement of the modern stone paving at the base of the steps is not of concern however the proposed stainless-steel finish of the tactile finish at the top raises some concerns over how this might appear. It is assumed that the intention of the tactile floor finish is to feel the difference in floor texture underfoot as opposed to a visual warning of oncoming stairs. Therefore, if the finish could be changed to improve visual coherence this would somewhat alleviate these minor concerns.
- To ensure that the proposed railings, tactile paving, lamps and signage are not visually incongruous additions we would recommend that the details of their materiality and appearance are conditioned and are to the satisfaction of the local authority.
- Overall, Historic England are supportive of the principle of the proposal.

Response

Tactile strips with a brass finish are recommended on the portico platform to reduce the visual impact as this is closer to the colour of the stone, rather than stainless-steel which has a brighter finish.

Conclusion

Paragraph 205 of the NPPF states that:

“When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.”

Paragraph 208 goes on to state that:

“Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed

against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.”

The façade of the Grade I listed Huddersfield Station building is highly significant and in a prominent location within the conservation area on St George’s Square. It is a busy station and it is important that safe and suitable access is provided for passengers. The proposed interventions lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the building, however these have been carefully considered to minimise any harm through their design, materials, fixings and positions, with the proposals largely reversible. The public benefits of providing improved accessibility and creating a safe environment outweighs the less than substantial harm and the proposal is therefore acceptable.

Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act requires that the Local Planning Authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

The proposed works have been carefully designed to be sympathetic to the character of the building. It is therefore felt that the architectural and historic interest of the listed building is preserved.

Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

The proposed works have been designed to be sympathetic to the character of the conservation area and are considered to preserve its character and appearance.

It is therefore concluded that the proposed development accords with the requirements of policies LP1, LP2, LP24 and LP35 of the Kirklees Local Plan, policies within Chapters 2, 12 and 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework and Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended).

This application has been assessed against relevant policies in the development plan and other material considerations. It is considered that the public benefits of the proposal outweigh the slight harm and is therefore recommended for approval.

Recommendation Grant Consent

Decision Authorisation - Delegated Powers

Application Number – 2024/91206

Officer Recommendation – Grant Consent

Conditions and Reasons:

1. The development shall be begun within three years of the date in which this consent is granted.

Reason: Pursuant to Section 18(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in complete accordance with the plans and specifications schedule listed in this decision notice except as may be specified in the conditions attached to this permission, which shall in all cases take precedence.

Reason: To ensure the satisfactory appearance of the development on completion to retain the significance of the designated heritage asset and to accord with Policy LP35 of the Kirklees Local Plan, as well as Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

3. Notwithstanding the information submitted, the proposed handrail adjacent to the ramp and below the existing wall-mounted handrail, shall be fixed to the existing handrail bracket unless otherwise approved by the Local Planning Authority. Design and fixing details shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to installation.

Reason: To ensure the satisfactory appearance of the development on completion to retain the significance of the designated heritage asset and to accord with Policy LP35 of the Kirklees Local Plan, as well as Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

4. The tactile corduroy metal strips on the portico entrance platform shall be in a brass-coloured finish unless otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the satisfactory appearance of the development on completion to retain the significance of the designated heritage asset and to accord with Policy LP35 of the Kirklees Local Plan, as well as Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

5. Notwithstanding the information submitted, bracket fixings and cable holes of the proposed external lights shall be kept to a minimum and no external cable runs shall be permitted.

Reason: To ensure the satisfactory appearance of the development on completion to retain the significance of the designated heritage asset and to

accord with Policy LP35 of the Kirklees Local Plan, as well as Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Plans and specifications schedule: -

Plan Type	Reference	Version	Date Received
Design, access and heritage support statement	BC.HUD.2023.00091.002		7 May 2024
Site plan	2023.00091.002 HUD-001		29 April 2024
Existing entrance plan	2023.00091.002 HUD-002		29 April 2024
Existing elevations	2023.00091.002 HUD-003		29 April 2024
Proposed access alterations	2023.00091.002 HUD-004	A	19 June 2024
Existing images and proposed lighting	2023.00091.002 HUD-005	A	19 June 2024
Proposed elevations	2023.00091.002 HUD-006	A	19 June 2024
Proposed handrails to south of entrance	2023.00091.002 HUD-007		29 April 2024
Proposed handrails to north of entrance	2023.00091.002 HUD-008		29 April 2024
Schedule of repairs	2023.00091.002 HUD-009		29 April 2024
Location Plan			29 April 2024

Pursuant to article 35 (2) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order 2015 and guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework, the Local Planning Authority have, where possible, made a pre-application advice service available, complied with the Kirklees Development Management Charter 2015 and otherwise actively engaged with the applicant in dealing with the application. Negotiations have taken place over the impact of the proposals on the character and significance of the listed

building. These discussions led to the submitted plans and information, along with recommended conditions, which accurately mirror those negotiations and are felt to be acceptable.

Report Dated:

19 June 2024