

**Govia Thameslink
Railway Passenger
Benefit Fund Project**

**Gravesend Station
CIS**

2021021

**Design and Access Statement
including Heritage Assessment**



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Report:	Design and Access Statement	Job no.		
Client:	Govia Thameslink Railway Limited			
Date:	06 October 2021			
Document version	Prepared by	Checked by	Approved by	
Draft				
Issue				

Gravesham Borough Council

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 This Design and Access Statement including Heritage Assessment ('DAS') has been prepared by Ruth Jackson Planning ('RJP') on behalf of Govia Thameslink Railway Limited ('GTR') in support of an application for Listed Building Consent ('LBC') at Gravesend Railway Station.

1.2 Passenger benefit fund scheme

1.2.1 GTR is in the process of delivering a programme of improvements to railway stations on the Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern networks through the £15 million Passenger Benefit Fund ('PBF') scheme.

1.2.2 The primary objective of the PBF scheme is to provide tangible improvements for passengers on the GTR network. GTR has engaged with rail user groups to identify the improvements the package will fund across the networks.

1.3 Summary of works proposed

1.3.1 It is proposed to install a new train information display on platform 2 of Gravesend railway station. The display will be mounted on a new post which will be installed adjacent to the car park.

1.3.2 The following plans are submitted with this application:

- Site Location Plan
- Existing and proposed block plans
- Existing and proposed elevational plans.

1.4 Document structure

1.4.1 The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

- Site and surrounding area
- Assessment of heritage significance
- Proposed development
- Design principles
- Access
- Assessment

2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

- 2.1.1 Gravesend Railway Station is a Grade II listed structure, as per the Historic England listings. There are two separate listings, one for the downside station building (listing number 1341495) and one for the upside station building (listing number 1057649). Gordon Biddle 'Britain's Historic Railway Buildings a Gazetteer of Structures and Sites' describes the buildings as follows:

"The main front is colonnaded in five bays, with Tuscan columns and a balustraded parapet. Flanking two-storey blocks in dark red brick have ashlar cornices and dressings, particularly well-executed around the tripartite ground-floor windows. On the platform elevation they are round-headed. The theme is repeated more modestly on the opposite side: no colonnade and balustrade, but the same general style. Both platforms have generous awnings on prominent foliated brackets, although the characteristic SER valancing has unfortunately been shaved off."

- 2.1.2 The single storey entrance is fronted by four columns, above which is the Gravesend Station sign and a balustraded parapet.
- 2.1.3 The proposed works are located in closer proximity to the downside station building but the assessment of impact has considered both listed buildings.



Figure 1: Gravesend Station (Google Streetview image)

- 2.1.4 The surrounding area is a highly urbanised location to the south of the River Thames. Gravesend is a substantial settlement to the east of Dartford.
- 2.1.5 The station is located to the north of Rathmore Road. The station car park is located to the north west of the station buildings.
- 2.1.6 The station is located in an area characterised by fairly high density development, with surrounding uses including low-rise employment premises and residential properties. Uses to the north of the railway line are predominantly retail, including the Thamesgate Shopping Centre and a Tesco Express. Gravesend Community Square is located to the south east of the station.

2.2 Relevant designations

- 2.2.1 The railway station is not subject to any relevant specific policy allocations in the adopted Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014). It is located within a cross rail safeguarding area policy (CS11), the town centre boundary policy (CS08) and an opportunity area policy (CS03-CS06).

2.2.2 Gravesend railway station is a Grade II Listed Building. The station building is located approximately 80m north of the Darnley Road Conservation Area boundary. The site is also located to the west of King's Street and Upper Windmill Street Conservation Areas.

3.0 ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 This section provides an assessment of the heritage significance of Gravesend Station.

The station buildings were listed in 1975 at Grade II.

3.1.2 The station was first constructed in 1849 by the South Eastern Railway (SER) as part of the opening of the brand new North Kent Line. As set out in 2.1.1 above, the station building was constructed using yellow brickwork, frescoed with stone lining. The structure comprises a pair of two-storey-high towers flanking a single-storey central building which is now the entrance to the station.

3.1.3 It was designed by the architect Samuel Beazley, who was commissioned to design all stations between Dartford and Gravesend. He also designed theatres across the world, including (amongst others) St James's Theatre in London, the City of London Theatre and the Theatre Royal in Birmingham.

3.2 Railway development in Britain

3.2.1 Historic England identifies four distinct phases of railway development in the Victorian era in Britain. These are:

- The pioneering first phase, which extends from the opening of the Stockton to Darlington and Liverpool and Manchester Railways (1825 and 1830 respectively) to the completion of the Great Western Railway (London to Bristol) (1841).

- The second phase (1841 to 1850), which marked the heroic age of railway building and speculative 'railway mania' and laid the foundations for many inter-city lines still in use today.
- The third phase (1850s to 1870s), in which the network was consolidated.
- The fourth phase (1870s to 1914), in which the network was completed.¹

3.2.2 Gravesend Station was first built in the heroic second phase of railway building (1849).

3.2.3 As set out in the Transport Listing Selection Guide, *"[t]he 1840s saw a massive expansion in the network and while the Italianate style was initially favoured, many designs were eclectic and realised in a variety of styles. Great care should be taken in seeking out work of this date because it is often hidden by later alterations and extensions"*.²

3.3 Heritage listing

3.3.1 The heritage list entry for Gravesend Station does not specify the reasons for its heritage listing, however, it does contain brief descriptions of the architecture. As set out above, there are separate entries for each of two structures at Gravesend Station. The listings are set out as follows:

Gravesend Railway Station (Up Side) - List Entry Number: 1057649

¹ Historic England, *Infrastructure: Transport Listing Selection Guide*, accessed 11 March 2021, pp. 2-3, <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/dlsg-transport-buildings/heag120-infrastructure-transport-lsg/>

² Historic England, *Infrastructure: Transport Listing Selection Guide*, Ibid., p. 8.

"Built in 1849. This consists of a central portion of 1 storey stock brick with a cornice and colonnade of 4 columns, now boxed in and 3-light sashes behind. This portion has a room with a 3-light bow window looking on to the platform.

The central block is flanked by 2 2-storey stock brick pavilions with stuccoed cornices. 1 sash to each and a 3-light sash window on the ground floor, on the left hand side incorporating a door. Each of these pavilions is in turn flanked by a recessed portion of 2 storeys stock brick with 1 sash and a round-headed doorcase with fanlight."

Gravesend Railway Station (Downside) - List Entry Number: 1341495

"Mid C19. 1 storey stock brick. Hipped slate roof and cornice. 5 sashes with glazing bars intact. To the left is an extension of 1 storey with a colonnade of 4 cast iron columns and 2 further sashes."

3.4 Heritage significance

3.4.1 We now assess the proposal against Historic England's Conservation Principles. The document sets out a method for thinking systematically and consistently about the heritage values that can be ascribed to a place, and groups how historic places are valued into the following four categories:

- ***"Evidential value: the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity.***
- ***Historical value: the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present - it tends to be illustrative or associative.***

- **Aesthetic value:** *the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place.*
- **Communal value:** *the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory.”*

3.4.2 The proposal has been assessed against the above categories, and the heritage significance of the station is considered to derive from its:

- **Historic value** and status, owing to its prominence as the town's main train station since the mid nineteenth century;
- **Aesthetic value** owing to the station's special architectural interest, particularly its listed structures; and
- **Communal value** owing to its status as an operational travel hub that has served the local community for well over a century.

4.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

4.1.1 This section provides a summary of the proposed improvement works at the station.

Full details of the proposals are set out in the accompanying plans.

4.1.2 The proposals are minor in scale and are contained within the railway station curtilage.

4.1.3 Details of the proposals are set out below:

4.2 New Customer Information System (CIS) display screen adjacent to south façade of the station entrance building

4.2.1 The new screen will be a QFM01-Display, and the specifications of the display are shown in the submitted "Gallows Top Section Detail" (Drawing No - 24659Z-A) The screen has a landscape orientation and will be mounted on a new post which will be installed on Platform 2, adjacent to the car park. A visualisation of the proposed monitor in situ is shown in submitted proposed elevation plan 6300.14(02)03.

4.2.2 The proposed works are on the 'Downside' platform, and will be visible from the listed Downside listed station building, albeit at an oblique angle. It will also be visible from the rear of the 'Upside' listed station building. The proposal will be viewed in the context of existing platform structures such as signage, fencing, cameras and lighting.

5.0 DESIGN PRINCIPLES

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 This section sets out the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the proposed works and demonstrates the steps taken to appraise the context of the proposals, and how the design of the development takes this context into account.

5.2 Design principles

- 5.2.1 The proposed works are located on an operational platform within the station. The key design principle for the CIS monitor is functional: to provide accurate train arrival and departure information in a convenient location visible to passengers entering the platform area, while minimising impact on the listed building. The works are utilitarian in nature and minor in scale.
- 5.2.2 The monitor will not obscure the station building's unique architectural features as described in the heritage list entry and there will be no impact on the fabric of the listed building – the monitor is to be placed on a standalone post on the platform, and will be viewed in the context of the existing features on the station, including the existing station sign, fencing, the footbridge, light and camera pole.
- 5.2.3 The functional design principle reflects the operational requirements of a modern railway. Installing the monitor in its proposed location will not have a physical impact on the fabric of the listed building.

6.0 ACCESS

- 6.1.1 This section explains the policy adopted with respect to access, including what alternative means of access have been considered (if applicable), and how policies relating to access in relevant local plan documents have been taken into account.
- 6.1.2 The key local planning policy assessing this application is the adopted development plan, Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014)]. The council also has some retained policies from Gravesham Local Plan First Review.
- 6.1.3 Policy CS11 on transport supports proposals which improve public transport provision and facilities in the Borough. The proposal has had regard to Policy CS11 which generally supports improving accessibility for all and improvements to rail facilities. The new monitor will support passengers using the rail facilities by providing train arrival and departure information at the station entrance, which will help to improve the overall experience of the station for rail passengers.

7.0 ASSESSMENT

7.1.1 This section provides a summary of relevant planning policy context with respect to heritage assets and an assessment of the proposals against this context.

7.2 National policy

7.2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021 sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how they should be applied.

7.2.2 Paragraph 194 of the NPPF states that, *"in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance."*

7.2.3 Paragraph 195 of the NPPF requires local planning authorities to, *"identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal."*

7.2.4 This DAS has set out a proportionate assessment of the significance of Gravesend Station and the contribution made by its setting.

7.2.5 Paragraph 197 states that, with regard to determining applications, *"local planning authorities should take account of:*

- a. *The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- b. *The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- c. *The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.”*

7.2.6 Paragraph 199 states, *“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.”*

7.2.7 Paragraph 200 states that, *“Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:*

- d. *Grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;*

7.2.8 Paragraph 202 states 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.”*

- 7.2.9 The proposed CIS monitor will improve the train arrival and departure information available to passengers. The proposed monitor will not have a physical impact on the Grade II listed building. It is proposed for installation on the platform within the station, and will not affect any part of the listed building facade.
- 7.2.10 The new monitor will have a minor visual impact on the listed building's setting. However, it will not obscure the station building's special architectural features as described in the heritage list entry, particularly the original forebuilding, as the proposed installation is on a platform within the station. The platform where the monitor will be installed is operational, and does not contain any of the features described in the listing.
- 7.2.11 There will be no impact on nearby listed buildings due to the location and scale of the proposal.
- 7.2.12 The station building is located approximately 80m north of the Darnley Road Conservation Area boundary. The site is also located to the west of King's Street and Upper Windmill Street Conservation Areas. The proposed monitor is not visible from either Conservation Area and has no impact on their setting.
- 7.2.13 Therefore, the installation of the monitor is considered to lead to no harm to the heritage significance of the listed station buildings, and offers public benefit through the improvement of passenger information in a convenient location. The proposal therefore accords with paragraph 202 of the NPPF.

7.3 Local policy

7.3.1 Policy CS20 of the adopted development plan states that *“Proposals and initiatives will be supported which preserve and, where appropriate, enhance the significance of the Borough’s heritage assets, their setting where it contributes to the significance of the asset and their interpretation and enjoyment, especially where these contribute to the distinct identity of the Borough.”*

7.3.2 The installation of the proposed monitor will not impact the setting of the heritage asset in this context. It will not impact the key features of the asset, and will be viewed as a standard, minor feature associated with the majority of operational railway platforms. The visual change and physical impact will be small in scale and are considered to be outweighed by the public benefits of the proposal. As such, the proposed development is considered to comply with Policy CS20.

8.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1.1 This DAS has been prepared by RJP and reviewed by BB Heritage Studio on behalf of GTR in support of an application for LBC at Gravesend Railway Station.
- 8.1.2 The report has provided an assessment of significance of the Grade II listed station building. Both the high historic and architectural value justify its Grade II listing. The special architectural interest of the station is considered to be derived from the original station buildings, particularly its frontage and its setting.
- 8.1.3 The proposed works comprise a new screen, which will be a QFM01 display. The screen has a landscape orientation and will be mounted on a new post which will be installed on Platform 2, adjacent to the car park. A visualisation of the proposed monitor in situ is shown in submitted proposed elevation plan 6300.14(02)03.
- 8.1.4 The works have been assessed as leading to no physical and visual impact on the exterior of the Grade II listed station buildings. There will be no impact on nearby listed buildings due to the location and scale of the proposal. There will be no impact on local Conservation Areas for the same reasons.
- 8.1.5 The proposal has been assessed as leading to no harm to the significance of the listed building. Notwithstanding this, should the authority consider harm to exist, it would be outweighed by the public benefits of the proposed works in improving the train arrival and departure information available to railway users and therefore accords with paragraph 202 of the NPPF.