

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Abbey Ward

App Ref: PL/26/0578 Listed building consent (Alt/Ext)

Address: Reading Station, Station Approach, Reading, RG1 1LY

Proposal: Installation of a telecommunications cable within a Grade II listed building to provide fibre connectivity

Applicant: Mr Peter Griffin

Received date: 29/04/2026

Target Decision date: 24/06/2026

Case Officer: Nathalie Weekes

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application relates to the interior of Reading station, a Grade II listed building, the list entry for which reads:

STATION HILL 1. 5128 Main building of Reading General Station SU 7173 NE 1/363 SU 7173 12/363 21.1.76. II 2. 1865-67, architect Mr Lane (Chief Engineer of the GWR Co). Enlargement and remodelling of I K Brunel's original station of circa 1840. Italianate details. 2 storey symmetrical main building of buff brick from Coalbrookdale with Bath stone dressings, rusticated quoins. 10 bays wide, slight break to centre 4. Frieze, moulded cornice and blocking course, the projecting centre having console brackets to the cornice and the blocking course raised as solid pediment. The ground floor of the centre break has guilloche frieze and panelled pilasters with wreath caps flanking the windows and doorways. Cornices on console brackets over 1st floor windows, with triangular and segmental pediments over those in centre break. Canopy across ground floor. Hipped slate roof, chimneys removed. Pleasant central cupola, which has round headed lights and bracket eaves to pyramidal roof with finial. Canopy extends over ground floor extensions on both sides, about 12 bays to left and 7 to right.

The application is not located within a conservation area, however it is sited opposite the boundary of the Market Place / London Street conservation area.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Listed building consent is sought for the installation of a telecommunications cable to provide fibre connectivity within the main building main building of the station, to upgrade and maintain modern telecommunications services for the continued operation of the building.

A smaller fibre box is proposed to replace the existing unit. Use will be made of the existing infrastructure for routing the cabling, with minimal intervention in discreet areas and works will be reversible to enable the removal of the installations without causing harm to the historic fabric of the building.

Plans and documents considered

Location Plan

Images of proposed works

Design and Access and Heritage statement

As received 29 April 2026

Relevant Planning history

Whilst there is an extensive planning history for the station and surrounding area, it is not relevant to these applications.

3. CONSULTATIONS

The following were consulted:

- RBC Conservation officer - Regarding the proposed works, I noted that they are very minimal in scale and in the modern extension of the Grade II listed building. As such, the proposed development would not have any harmful impact.
- Reading Civic Society – No comments were received at the time of writing this report.

A site notice was displayed for the required period and an advert was placed in a local newspaper. No letters of representation have been received.

Equality Act 2010

In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. However, there is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application. Therefore in terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

4. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. However the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making (NPPF paragraph 12). In this regard, the NPPF states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies of the Local Development Framework (LDF) (Core Strategy and Sites and Detailed Policies Document) according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given). The Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance and Supplementary Planning Documents are also material planning considerations.

Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990:

- Section 16(2) requires the local planning authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting or any features of special interest which it possesses.
- Section 72 (1) requires the local planning authority in the exercise of its functions to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

Reading Borough Council Planning Policy

Reading Borough Council Local Plan (2019) EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment states:

Historic features and areas of historic importance and other elements of the historic environment, including their settings, will be protected and where appropriate enhanced. This will include:

- Listed Buildings;
- Conservation Areas;
- Other features with local or national designation, such as sites and features of archaeological importance, and historic parks and gardens.

Planning permission will only be granted where development has no adverse impact on historic assets

and their settings. All proposals will be expected to protect and where appropriate enhance the character and appearance of the area in which they are located and for the purpose of ensuring that work is appropriate to the special architectural or historic interest of the listed building.

The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Council Local Plan (2019)

EN1: PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

EN4: LOCALLY IMPORTANT HERITAGE ASSETS

SPG/SPD

None.

OTHER

- Historic England Good Practice Guide Note Number 2: managing significance in decision-taking.
- Principles of Conservation (Historic England, 2008)
- Guide to the Conservation of Historic Buildings
- (British Standards Publication BS 7913:2013, 2015)

Local Plan Update

The current version of the Local Plan (adopted in November 2019) turned five years old on Tuesday 5th November 2024. The Local Plan was reviewed in March 2023 and around half of the policies in the plan are considered still up to date. However, the rest need to be considered for updating to reflect changing circumstances and national policy. A pre-submission draft was submitted to the Secretary of State on the 9th of May 2025 and is currently at examination.

Although there is a five-year period for carrying out a review of a plan after it is adopted, nothing in the NPPF or elsewhere says that policies automatically become “out of date” when they are five years old. It is a matter of planning judgement rather than legal fact whether a plan or policies within it are out-of-date. This will depend on whether they have been overtaken by things that have happened since the plan was adopted, either on the ground or through changes in national policy, for example.

Officer advice in respect of the Local Plan policies pertinent to this application listed above is that they remain in accordance with national policy and that the objectives of those policies remains very similar in the draft updated Local Plan. Therefore, they can continue to be afforded weight in the appraisal below and are not considered to be ‘out of date’.

5. APPRAISAL

Policy EN1 of the Reading Local plan 2019 states that historic features and the historic environment will be protected. Careful consideration has been given to ensure that installation of the cable will not have a detrimental impact on the historic fabric of the building. In this instance the proposal detailed above is not considered to compromise the significance of the listed building or cause harm to the appearance of the historic character of the building. The proposal is therefore in accordance with Policies EN1 and EN4 of the Reading Local Plan 2019.

6. CONCLUSION

The proposed development has been assessed and the proposed works for the installation of cabling are considered to be in accordance with the above relevant policies and Listed Building Consent can be granted.

7. RECOMMENDATION

Grant Listed Building Consent

Recommended Conditions:

1. Time limit
2. Plans
3. Making good

Informatives:

1. Terms
2. Positive and proactive