

Heritage Statement

Building Description

Introduction

The existing Bradford-on-Avon Railway Station was built in 1848, originally for Wiltshire, Somerset and Weymouth Railway (WSWR). The North and South platform buildings are amended for their special architectural or historic interest and comprise a good “Brunel-type” group.

Details

South Platform:

The south platform building is single storey and built in a Tudor Gothic style with a rectangular form. The materials are bath stone ashlar with a stone-coped Welsh slate roof and stone near the lateral stack. The south elevation (facing away from the platform) has raised quoins to returns and to the former open-fronted waiting room, as well as decorative cast iron brackets to the flat canopy with free-cut hood.

There are examples of chamfered mullioned and transom windows to the north elevation and a boarded canted bay window to the west elevation.

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1036171?section=official-list-entry>

North Platform:

The north platform building is also single storey and built in a Tudor Gothic Style, but has a T-shape form with a cross wing to the west. It comprises of the same material palette as the south platform building with similar features, such as a chamfered stone-mullioned and transomed window on the west elevation. It has steep-gabled projections on each side, a bay window to the platform, and hexagonal chimney stacks. The mid-20th century replacement canopy has decorative cast-iron brackets, and there is a short canopy over the entrance. The interior is noted as having retained original features, including moulded cornices.

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1253088?section=official-list-entry>



East Elevation of South Platform Building



Photograph of the two platforms linked by the footbridge



North-West Elevation of North Platform Building



Original GWR bench

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History

The first proposed scheme for a railway through Bradford on Avon was put forward in 1832 as part of a route between London and Bristol.

An initial survey of the proposed route via Bath and Bradford on Avon was carried out by Isambard Kingdom Brunel in 1833. Brunel estimated, following the survey, that construction costs would be £2,800,000.00. A Formal launch of the project took place in July of that year and so the Great Western Railway was born.

In 1834 the GWR presented its bill to parliament but simultaneously the London and Southampton Railway Company presented their bill which also included a proposed branch to Bath via Bradford on Avon. The GWR bill was rejected by parliament and although part of the London and Southampton bill was approved it didn't include the section through Bradford on Avon.

In 1835 the GWR had raised share capital of £2,000,000.00 and consequently a new bill was submitted to parliament which included a branch line which ran near to Bradford on Avon. This time the bill received Royal Assent in August of the same year.

Construction began on the scheme in 1836 and included the use of Brunel's 7¼ "broad gauge system. Although the first part of the GW route opened in 1838, this only ran from London as far as Maidenhead. By August of 1840 the section at the other end of the proposed route was opened between Bristol and Bath and a year later the whole of the main line between London and Bristol came into use.

In 1844 the GWR promoted a scheme by the Wilts and Somerset Railway Company to construct a line from Chippenham to Salisbury,

this included a branch to Bradford on Avon to meet up with the GWR branch from Bath. The scheme included a lease to the GWR together with running powers over the line with the GWR being a substantial shareholder. During 1844 the proposal grew with extensions to include a route to Weymouth. The company duly proposed the changing of their name to the Wilts, Somerset and Weymouth Railway. In 1846 the bill passed through parliament and received Royal Assent. Construction started in 1847 of the goods shed and station buildings at Bradford on Avon, all being built from local Bath stone with Welsh slate roofs and to a Tudor Gothic style. By 1848 the Brunel structures were fundamentally complete.

In 1849 huge spiraling costs of the scheme pushed the Wilts, Somerset and Weymouth Railway into an untenable position resulting in the company being absorbed by the GWR by the spring of 1850. The depth of the problem was such that the GWR proposed to abandon the branch to Bradford on Avon which naturally created discontent. Over the next few years various other disputes and problems created delays in the completion of the line. Finally Bradford opened its station in 1857 to both passengers and goods enabling the exportation of local wool.

In 1874 the decision was reached to re-gauge the route converting it to standard 4'8½" used throughout the country.

In 1895 the decision was made to change the station's name from Bradford to Bradford on Avon in order to avoid confusion with the Yorkshire town.



1897



1903



1950s



1950s



Late 1950s / early 1960s



1964