

Application Name: Ashburton Old Station

Number: 1423438

Type: New

Heritage Category: Listing

Address:

Station Garage, Chuley Road, Ashburton, Newton Abbot, Newton Abbot

County	District	District Type	Parish
Devon	Teignbridge	District Authority	Ashburton

Recommendation: Reject

Assessment

CONTEXT

English Heritage has received an application to assess the former Ashburton Railway Station Terminus Building for listing. The applicant has provided information relating to the terminus building; however, they have also mentioned other buildings which formed part of the wider station complex, including a listed goods shed (Grade II) and an unlisted engine shed. Due to the potential group value, the engine shed has also been assessed using available information.

The terminus building was previously listed, along with the goods shed, in 1972 and was removed from The List in 1983. It stands within the Ashburton Conservation Area.

The former station buildings form part of a proposed development area identified in the Ashburton Masterplan currently under consideration by Dartmoor National Park Authority.

HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION

The South Devon Railway line was first built by Isambard Kingdom Brunel in 1846. Ashburton Railway Station formed part of an extension to the line which ran from Totnes to Ashburton, via Staverton and Buckfastleigh. It was opened on 1 May 1872 and, as well as carrying passengers, was used for goods traffic, including coal, wool, cider and agricultural goods. It closed to passengers in 1958 and freight in 1962. In 1969 it was run as the Dart Valley Railway tourist line, but was closed in 1971 due to the widening of the A38.

The terminus building was constructed in 1872. It is believed to have been designed by one of Isambard Kingdom Brunel's assistants. It consisted of a stone-built stationmaster's building and an attached covered train shed with an essayed timber roof and wrought-iron ties and struts. In the 1970s it was converted into a garage and was subject to a number of significant alterations. New openings were created in the stonework and further alterations were made to the original openings. Most of the current windows and doors are late C20. The covered train shed has been largely re-clad externally, extended to the east, and the formerly open north and south ends have been enclosed. The original iron and timber roof structure may survive beneath the corrugated covering. The associated railway tracks have been removed.

A contemporary engine shed is located 180m to the south-west. It is a stone rubble construction with triple-arched brick openings on the west and east elevations. The northern elevation, originally the access point for the engines, is obscured by a later single-storey concrete-block extension which has effectively doubled the size of the building. The pitched roof over the original engine house is topped by timber-clad clerestorey.

DISCUSSION

The Principles of Selection for Listing Buildings (DCMS, 2010), state that, due to their level of survival, for buildings later than 1840 rigorous selection is required. The English Heritage Selection Guide for Transport Buildings (2011) notes that most pre-1840 purpose-built railway structures will often be of international significance as being among the earliest in the world, and even partial survivals need to be assessed carefully. The 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. Increasingly rigorous selection is required for buildings after about 1860: this reflects both the quantity of what remains, and the standardisation of design which was applied to buildings and structures erected along different railway lines. Rarity is an issue which needs to be factored in when assessing more recent railway buildings. Architecture and design quality, technical or construction interest, date, and extent of alteration will be key issues.

The former Ashburton railway terminus building and the associated engine shed are not recommended for listing for the following principal reasons:

Terminus Building and Train Shed

- * Architectural interest: although parts of the building demonstrate architectural attention, overall the terminus building is relatively modest for a late-C19 transport building;
- * Alteration: alterations have greatly affected the legibility of this former station building, most notably the in-filling of either end of former open-ended train shed, its extension to the east, the removal of the railway tracks and the insertion of modern windows and doors;
- * Rarity: although small-scale examples of railway stations with covered train sheds are not as common as they once were, there are listed stations of a similar size which are earlier and demonstrate a greater level of intactness, including Frome Station, Somerset (circa 1850; Grade II) and Kingswear Station, Devon (1864; Grade II). Chard Station, Somerset (1866, Grade II) has also been converted and this has included

enclosing the train-shed openings; however, in this instance, the overall intactness and the level of architectural interest is greater;

* Group value: although it has local interest as part of a group of station buildings, including the nearby goods shed (listed Grade II), in light of its date and the level of alteration, this association is not sufficient to raise its overall special interest.

Engine Shed

* Architectural interest: although it shows some architectural attention, including the contrasting stone and brick dressing and the clerestorey roof, as a late-C19 transport building it does not demonstrate the high level of architectural interest and intactness required for a building of this date;

* Alteration: the addition of the single-storey extension to the north has obscured the building's principal opening;

* Group value: engine sheds are often listed in association with other railway structures. Although it does have an association with the listed goods shed (Grade II), the principal association is with the main terminus building. The level of alteration to the terminus building, in conjunction with the alterations made to the engine shed, has affected the strength of its group value and impacted on its overall legibility.

CONCLUSION

The former railway terminus building, with its former covered train shed, and the engine shed at Ashburton have strong local interest as part of a group of railway buildings that are associated with a listed goods shed. However, given the level of alteration that has affected the legibility and intactness of these late-C19 railway buildings, the level of architectural interest and group value is not sufficiently high to merit designation in a national context.