



Design and Access / Heritage Statement

Network Rail / Department for Transport

Railways for All

Accessible Route Programme

Wrexham General Station

Issue Record

Issue	Date	Comments
1	January 2010	Design and Access Statement incorporating conservation and planning issues highlighted through consultation with the Wrexham planning office.

1.0 Project Introduction

This project is part of a programme developed by the Department for Transport (DfT), Mobility and Inclusion Unit. The work is being managed by Network Rail on behalf of the DfT, who provide the funding, have chosen the station and have defined the scope of the works.

The Department for Transport (DfT) has specified that the objective of the project is to achieve an unobstructed and obstacle free 'accessible route' from at least one of the station entrances to each platform and between platforms served by passenger trains.

The DfT measures an 'accessible route' as one sufficient for a manually self propelled wheelchair user to negotiate. Where reasonably practicable, the works are designed to comply with the Department of Transport and Transport Scotland document; *"Accessible Train and Station Design for Disabled People: A Code of Practice – Version 1 July 2008"* and all relevant safety and technical standards.

2.0 Station Description and Layout

Wrexham General Station is a grade II listed building having been constructed in the early 1900s. It is a stone and slate built, single storey station. There are four platforms. Platform 1 is located with the station buildings (along with two bay platforms, not for passenger services), Platforms 2 and 3 are an island platform. Platform 4 is a single face platform. The principal locations served include Ruabon, Chirk, Gowbowen, Shrewsbury, Telford, Wolverhampton and Chester. Platform 4 provides services to Bidston. The train operating company at the station is Arriva Trains Wales. The station is located in Mold Road, Wrexham, LL11 2AA.



Step free access is available to the ticket hall and platform 1.



The station platforms are at level with the station buildings. Platform 1 can be accessed direct from the ticket hall onto the platform. Platforms 2, 3 and 4 can be accessed by proceeding down platform 1 and using the stepped footbridge (photos below).



For travellers requiring step free access to the island platform (comprising platforms 2 and 3), this can be achieved by using the existing lifts on the footbridge. The platform 1 lift is shown below.



The platform 2/3 lift is shown below.



For travellers requiring step free access to platform 4, this can be achieved by using an existing ramp which is accessed from outside the station area. This creates a long interchange route that is separate from the stepped access route. This ramped access does not comply with modern standards.



The pay & display station car park, comprising 68 spaces, 2 of which are designated exclusively for disabled use is situated to the front of the station.

Deleted: of

The out of hours gate is step free.



3.0 Design Options

The options for achieving an accessible route to the station's platforms were investigated prior to the current option being chosen. These are described below;

Option 1 Replace platform 4 footbridge span with a new span including a lift and stairs

Remove the existing span from platform 3 to platform 4 and replace with a new span incorporating a lift and stairs to platform 4.

Option 2 Upgrade the existing ramp to Platform 4

Rework the existing ramped access from the secondary drop off point to platform 4. The reworking will include a compliant gradient, rest landings and changes in direction after every second landing.

Option Evaluation

	Option 1	Option 2
Technical Factors	- The existing footbridge is of a steel and wood construction with brick built lift towers - A power supply upgrade may be required - The existing canopy on platform 3 will need alteration	None identified
Implementation Factors	None identified	None identified
Operational / Business Factors	The solution integrates the accessible route with the existing route for changing platforms	This solution keeps the accessible route separate from the existing access route
Environmental Factors	None identified	None identified
Health & Safety Factors	None identified	None identified

Option Selected

	Option 1	Option 2
Summary Justification	This solution integrates all station users into the same accessible route. RECOMMENDED	Not recommended

From the assessment, Option 1 was considered the most suitable as it would integrated with the existing station building, providing optimum accessibility to all passengers along the same access route and remove the need to leave the station area to gain access to platform 4.

Lift Selection Rationale

Network Rail lifts comply with stringent engineering standards so to provide heavy duty public service lifts to reliably operate within a harsh working environment of a railway station. This essentially means that station lifts must be working and available to passengers to operate, without assistance, for extended periods.

Additionally, lifts must comply to National and European standards and in particular The Lift Regulations 1997.

The Lift Regulations 1997 require the lift to be intrinsically safe as a piece of machinery (for people operating and maintaining it) as well as how it operates within the structural environment.

Personnel refuge areas are required at the lift's extreme positions of travel to prevent the potential of accidentally crushing people either working on top of a lift or within the lift pit.

There are a number of different types of lift and drive systems to select from.

The lift proposed at Wrexham General Station is of a direct acting hydraulic arrangement which allows the lift headroom (dimension from the top floor served to the underside of the lift shaft ceiling) to be reduced to a minimum.

The hydraulic lifts meet the DfT Code of Practice and have been endorsed by the Disabled Passenger Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) and the DfT Mobility and Inclusion Unit.

There are lifts that can be installed with a lesser headroom (platform lifts are excluded from the headroom requirement in the Lift Regulations 1997). Platform type lifts are of limited value and of inferior construction for a railway environment as they do not meet the fire resistance levels required on the railways. Additionally, due to not having an enclosed lift carriage, they are slow in operation and may require an operating assistant for some disabilities. For these reasons DPTAC do not consider them wholly suitable for meeting DDA compliance.

The lift type selected is the most practicable available to provide reliable and dignified independent step free access at Wrexham General Station.

4.0 Heritage Statement

Wrexham General Station was first opened in 1846 and later expanded in 1912, and it is this latter building that still remains. The current configuration of the station incorporates the former Wrexham Exchange Station, which operated from what has now become Platform 4. This accounts for why the main footbridge was originally only built to serve Platforms 1, 2 and 3, and later extended to Platform 4.

The station's listing description is as follows:

		Grade	II
		Date Listed	05/09/1986
Community	Rhosddu		
Locality	Rhosddu	Grid Ref	
		Record No	1855
Post Code			
Name	WREXHAM GENERAL STATION: ENTRANCE BUILDING, STATION APPROACH (W SIDE)		
Entry Name/No	WREXHAM GENERAL STATION: ENTRANCE BUILDING, STATION APPROACH (W SIDE) / 342		
Street No, Name			
Location			
History			
Exterior			
Close by and below the A451 bridge carrying the road NW to Mold.			
GWR station building, built c1875 as a replacement for the original provided by Henry Robertson for the Shrewsbury and Chester Railway Company, formed in 1846, and absorbed by the GWR in 1854. Later extensions and enlargement of platforms, 1909-12.			
Roughly coursed and squared stone with ashlar dressings and fishscale slate roof. Symmetrical single storeyed entrance range with outer pavilion blocks with wrought iron brattishing surmounted steep roofs. Central entrance in roll-moulded archway, flanked by cross-pane windows. Cornices over similar windows in pavilions (one now a doorway). Long range of offices, waiting rooms etc. Continuous to right, with similar openings.			
Platform side has roll moulded arches to doorways and 4-pane fixed glazing to windows. Canopied opening links the original building with a later addition to the E in red brick with blue brick dressings. Overall platform canopy with glazed pitched roof carried on cast-iron columns with twisted enrichment to high bases, fluted shafts foliate capitals. These carry cambered iron ties with enriched scrolled brackets, supporting in turn cambered timber trusses with short chamfered king-posts. Similar brackets carry cantilevered canopy projecting to platform edge, terminating in fretted valences.			
A good example of GWR station architecture, which, with its fine canopy, survives intact.			
References:	P.E.Baughan, "North and Mid Wales", vol. XI of "Regional History of Railways", 1980, pp.38 and 44; W.A.Williams, "Old Wrexham", 1983.		

The footbridge is believed to be original to the construction of the station, however it is not mentioned specifically in the listing description. Nevertheless, it is an important feature of the

station both in terms of its design and historic significance. However, the extension to platform 4 is a much later addition of functional design and limited architectural quality. The replacement of this part of the footbridge is considered to be alteration rather than demolition given that the majority of the footbridge will remain in situ.

Modern materials have been selected for the construction of the replacement extension and new lift and stair towers situated on Platform 4. The design has been steered in conjunction with advice from the Local Planning Authority through two site meetings and subsequent correspondence, who feel that this is the most appropriate treatment and will allow the alterations to reflect modern architecture and distinguish it apart from the historic fabric. Given the scale of the extension, it was felt that mimicking the original parts of the bridge in terms of material and design would not be an honest approach, and would always look 'new' in comparison.

4.1 National Policy

Planning Policy Guidance 15

Planning and the Historic Environment sets out government policy and guidance to local authorities on the operation of the planning system and the identification and protection of historic buildings, conservation areas, and other elements of the historic environment.

The proposed alterations to the listed building need to be considered against PPG15. The general guidance applicable to listed building applications (PPG15, paragraph 3.5) is used:

1. The importance of the building, its intrinsic architectural and historic interest and rarity

As a grade II listed building the built heritage value of the station is important, but not of the highest significance. Alterations at this station have not been too complex to the design given the minimum intervention required to the historical part of the footbridge to upgrade the station to meet current accessibility standards.

2. Particular physical features which justify listing

The proposed alterations do not significantly affect the detailed features that justify the listing of the station building.

3. The building's setting and contribution to street scene

The proposal does not detract from the building's contribution to the streetscene as all the works are behind the main building, within the station's working environment as opposed to its important frontage.

4. The extent to which the proposed works would bring substantial benefits for the community, in particular by contributing to the economic regeneration of the area or the enhancement of its environment.

The proposed works are the minimum necessary to provide better access for all passengers to the station's platforms. By virtue of upgrading the existing station to create a safer and more accessible environment, the wider community benefits from enhanced station facilities. The changes will provide a route sufficient for a manually self-propelled wheelchair user to use, at a short distance from station entrance to platforms, and meet all applicable Train and Station Services for Disabled People Code of Practice technical standards. This project will result in a significant improvement to the station's environment for all users, by ensuring that there is an accessible, barrier free route to trains for those with access difficulties.

4.2 Planning Policy

The Wrexham UDP sets out the local framework for the protection of listed buildings in Policy EC9 : Listed Buildings:

Alterations or additions to, and development or redevelopment within the curtilage of, buildings or structures listed as of special architectural or historic interest must respect the setting and character of the listed buildings or structures.

In respect of alterations/additions to listed buildings the policy requires that developers take "the greatest skill and care in order to avoid damage to the intrinsic character of the buildings themselves (including interiors and fixtures) and to their setting".

It is felt that in this instance, the proposals will have a limited and acceptable impact on the character and setting of the station building, and that benefits gained from the alterations will far outweigh any damage to the historic environment.

5.0 Specific Detail of the proposal

Works to Platform 1

Provision of step free access to retail facility

Deleted: The project therefore meets several national and regional planning objectives in terms of encouraging better access to public buildings, and to transport services in particular..¶

The application will remove the existing stepped access up to the retail facility by relaying the existing paving to create a small ramp to the threshold.



Renewal and maintenance of stair treads and tactile warning strip

The application will maintain and renew the existing stepped access and will replace the blister tactile paving at the base of the stairs with the correct corduroy tactile paving.



Works to the Island Platform 2 and 3

Provision of step free access to station waiting room facility

The application will remove the existing stepped access up to the waiting room by relaying the existing paving to create a small ramp to the threshold.



Renewal and maintenance of stair treads and tactile warning strip

The application will maintain and renew the existing stepped access and will replace the blister tactile paving at the base of the stairs with the correct corduroy tactile paving.



Works to Platform 4

Removal of the existing footbridge span and stairs to platform 4

This application covers the removal of the existing footbridge span and stairs linking the island platforms 2 and 3 with platform 4. The configuration, construction and age of this span make altering it or adding a lift to it impossible. To provide an integrated accessible

route solution for Wrexham General station, the existing span will be removed and replaced with a new covered span, incorporating new stairs and a new, compliant 16 person lift.

The span and stairs that will be removed are shown in the photographs below.



Construction of new, covered footbridge span with stairs and lift serving platform 4

The new footbridge span will be covered and will provide a walk way 2400mm wide between handrails, refer to Drawing No's: 729098/WRX/800/101 to 729098/WRX/800/105.

New lift for Platform 4

The application is for the construction of a new lift from the new footbridge span to the platform 4.

The lift will be a single entry / exit lift. It is necessary to provide a waiting area for people using the lift. The DfT Code of Practice requires a waiting area outside a passenger lift that does not overlap with the main circulation area, 'Lifts must have a clear landing of least 1500mm x 1500mm in front of the entrance'. The Code interprets 'clear landing' as a designated waiting area.

At footbridge level the waiting area for the lift will be opposite the start of the stairs in an indented area set back from the main span. The design ensures that passengers waiting for the lift do not feel that they are 'in the way' or holding up other people, that is, it enhances their feelings of safety. It also ensures that the potential for passengers to collide or for there to be any passenger slips, trips or falls are minimised.

The lift will be a sixteen person lift carriage with internal dimensions of 1600mm x 1600mm. This lift carriage size allows for two wheel chairs users to make use of the facility at the same time. The sixteen person lift has been accepted by the DfT and DPTAC as suitable for providing an accessible route.

Platform 4 lift machine room

The machine room for the platform 4 lift will be located beneath the new stairs. This position has been selected so as to provide straight forward access to both the machine room and the lift shaft. Additionally this position removes the need for a separate structure to be built on the platform.

All of the changes outlined above are best viewed using the following plans that accompany the application:

Drawing Reference Numbers	
2126-001A	Existing Site Plan
2126-002A	Existing Footbridge Sections
2126-003A	Existing Footbridge Elevations
2126-101B	Proposed Station General Arrangement
2126-102C	Proposed Footbridge Elevations

2126-103B	Proposed Footbridge Cross-Section
2126-104B	Proposed Bridge Level Plan
2126-105B	Proposed Roof Plan

6.0 Planning

The works to the station comprise a railway operational development for which Network Rail has statutory powers. We consider that, given the scale of the proposal, there is no material change to the appearance of the station and therefore the works fall within Part 17A of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, which relates to development by statutory undertakers.

However if the local authority consider that there is a material change to the appearance of the station, planning permission is still authorised by the General Permitted Development Order, under Part 11 of the same Schedule (works under local or private acts or orders).

The original station was Wrexham General which was built under the powers of the Authorising Act for the line that runs through, namely the North Wales Mineral Railway Act 1844. Section 240 of that Act contains permitting the then railway company and their successors in title (now Network Rail) powers to undertake future works for altering, maintaining and using the railway.

Exchange station arrived under the Authorising Act of the line that runs through, namely the Wrexham, Mold & Connah's Quay Railway Act 1862 which incorporates the Railway Clauses Consolidation Act 1845 (RCCA). Section 16 of the RCCA 1845 enlarges upon the works which may be carried out and this includes the power "from time to time alter, repair, or discontinue the before-mentioned works, or any of them, and substitute others in their Stead; and they may do all other Acts necessary for making, maintaining, altering, or repairing and using the Railway".

It is acknowledged however, that under condition A1 of Part 11, it is necessary for details to be submitted to the Council for prior approval to the design and sighting of the proposed works. It should be noted however that under Condition A2, the prior approval cannot be refused unless the Council are satisfied that the development ought to be and could reasonably be carried out elsewhere on the land, or the design or external appearance would injure the amenity of the neighbourhood and is reasonably capable of modification so as to avoid such injury.

As such it would be requested that such prior approval is subsumed into the Listed Building Application since they are in effect dealing with the same plans and specifications.

7.0 Consultation

There has been early consultation with the local authority by the Network Rail project team.

16 May 2007 Local Project Group Meeting.

Initial meeting with Peter Smith and Anne Irwin of Wrexham planning office to discuss the Access for All options. The group agreed that Network Rail would produce some drawings of the new footbridge span. These drawings show the new footbridge proposal in two styles, one as a red brick construction and one as a contemporary steel and glass footbridge, Peters initial preference was for a modern looking structure.

24 September 2009 Local Project Group Meeting.

Design meeting on site, attended by Peter Smith from Wrexham planning office and members of the Mouchel and SBS Architects design team along with the Network Rail project team.

The group reviewed the draft drawings for a new covered glass and steel footbridge span with lift and stairs. The review went well and Peter confirmed that we could now proceed with finalising the scheme.

26 October 2009 Phone call between Jason Barker, AfA Project Development manager and Peter Smith, Conservation Officer.

Jason called Peter to confirm that the maintenance engineers preference for a brick skin to the first 2000mm of the lift shaft cladding was acceptable. Peter acknowledged the need for robust materials for maintenance and did not feel that this initial brick work up to head height was an issue.

8.0 Conclusion

The Access for All investment in Wrexham General Station will ensure that the station meets the needs of local people and visitors to the town, as an inclusive transport facility. The existing ramped access arrangement to Platform 4 is no-longer considered to be acceptable given its gradient and long diversion away from the station itself. Through an optioneering process guided by experienced engineers, the Access for All project team have produced a carefully designed solution to make all

platforms at Werexham General fully accessible, whilst involving the Local Planning Authority at an early stage to steer the design details which work in harmony with the character and setting of the listed building. As such, it is felt that the overwhelming benefits of the scheme will far outweigh the loss of the existing footbridge extension to Platform 4, and any impact on the character and appearance of the original footbridge.