The Foundry, 15 Yorke Street, Wrexham, LL13 8LW
Tel: 01978 345250
www.hdsarchitectural.co.uk
enquiries@hdsarchitectural.co.uk

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT INCLUDING A HERTIAGE IMPACT ASSCESSMENT

Ruabon Railway Station, Station Road, Ruabon, Wrexham, LL14 6DL



Client: Nicola Pearson
Design team: HDS Architectural services LTD

1. Introduction

This Design and Access statement accompanies a planning permission and listed building consent application for the proposed conversion and change of use for Ruabon Railway Station from B1 Business-Offices to C3 Dwelling Houses.

To be read in conjunction with drawing No's and details;

- SR-PD-01-As Existing Floor Plan and Elevations
- SR-PD-02-Proposed Floor Plan and Elevations
- SR-PD-03-As Existing & Proposed Site Plans
- SR-PD-04-Window details
- 2493- Ruabon train station Appendix 1 photo survey
- 23340-1 (R2) – 2493 Ruabon Station Sound report
- STEICO-Internal wall insulation-IWI-1
- STEICO-Internal wall insulation-IWI section-1
- Seciltek ISOVIT lime mortar brochure
- ISOVIT lime technical information
- REABILITA CAL AC FINO lime plaster technical sheet
- Greenwood AIRVAC Acoustic Ventilation brochure

The Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) and Building appraisal examines the potential effects of the proposed works on the historical and architectural significance of Ruabon Railway Station. The Station is a Grade II listed building, Listed for its special interest as a good example of an 1860s station in a style popular for rural railway architecture.



Fig. 1 – Location of Existing Site

2. Proposed development

The brief and vision for this project are to transform the disused Railway Station building from offices into a three bedroomed residential dwelling. The design principle that the project has adopted is a minimum intervention approach, keeping most external and internal openings as existing.

3. Site assessment

The site is located on the Western edge of Ruabon Conservation Area. As a former Train Station it is well situated within the village with excellent road, footpath and bus access. The proposal is within walking distance of shops, schools, parks and other community facilities

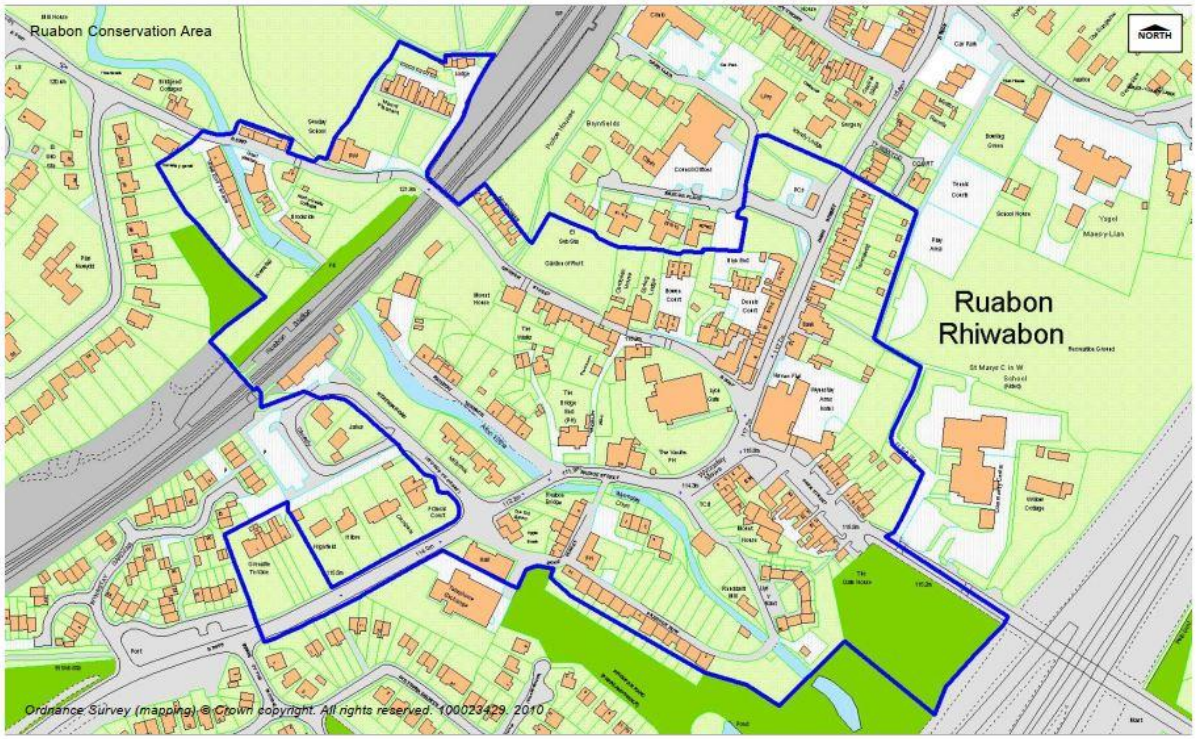


Fig. 2 – Ruabon Conservation zone map

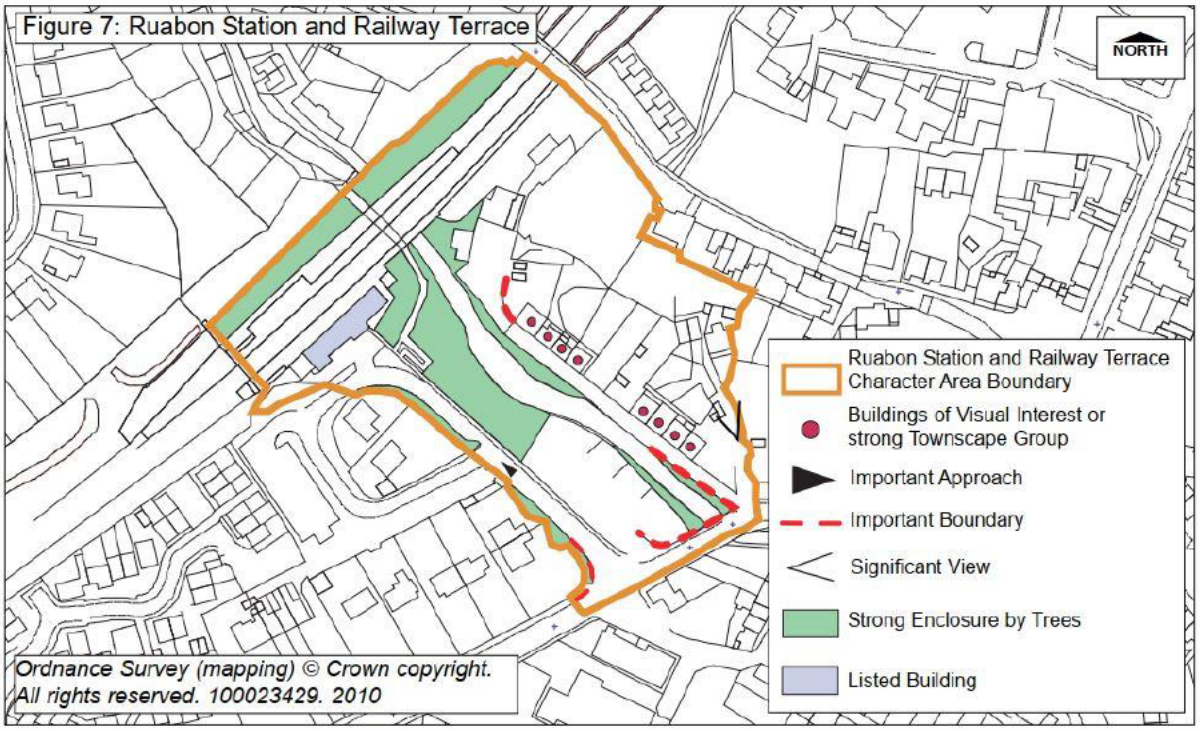


Fig. 3 – Ruabon Station and railway Terrace Character Area Boundary

The applicant has previously applied to convert the building into a dwelling and was successful in gaining listed building consent approval but was unsuccessful in gaining planning permission. This new application aims to address the issues and concerns that led to the refusal.



Fig. 4 – Roadside / Front Elevation

4. Building Appraisal

4.1 Description of property

The Former Station House is a single storey building formed using sandstone ashlar walls with intersecting pitched slate roofs. It was designed in the Tudor-Gothic Revival style by Henry Robertson in the 1860s.

4.2 Survey details

The report is based on a detailed site inspection conducted on 08.08.25. The survey was a visual survey only, with access gained only to building and immediate grounds. No inspection was made of any roofs or below ground services.

4.3 Investigation & Analysis

The Station House is considered to be in an overall good condition and suitable for conversion. A detailed analysis and proposed schedule of works will be addressed within the Heritage impact assessment.

4.4 Condition

External

Roof coverings

From a ground level inspection, the slate roofs appear to be in good overall condition. There are no obvious slipped slates or faulty flashings and no evidence of visible leaks. The parapet walls appear to be in good condition.

Soffit / Eaves

The soffits and eaves are timber construction with a painted finish. They are in fair condition but are in need of redecoration. Further investigation is required to check for rot

Rainwater Goods

These are painted cast iron and are generally in fair condition. They need to be cleared out and checked for leaks and corrosion.

Drainage

There is UPVC drainage pipework located on the roof. It is in fair condition. Further investigation is required to check the joints for leaks.

Walls

Exterior walls are masonry sandstone ashlar walls with lime mortar. Their condition is generally good. Some internal walls are brickwork walls with ordinary Portland cement.

Windows

Units are painted timber with single glazing. These are in fair condition but would benefit from redecoration.

Doors

These are stained timber units and are in fair condition. They would benefit from redecoration.

Boundaries

The client has planted screening around the front boundary of the property. Behind the planting, the client has erected temporary builders fencing to screen and secure the property. The rear and side elevations act as the boundary / party structure for the property as the train station is still in full time use by the public.

Grounds

The front of the property has been split up with the original office car parking spaces retained and the remaining area landscaped to create some amenity space. The soft landscaping includes areas being set out with artificial grass, several potted plants & loose stone patio areas.

Levels

As a former public building the site is mostly level with no step up from the outside to the finished floor level within the building.

Internal

Floors finishes

Floors are all concrete with carpet tiles fitted throughout; the floors are in good condition.

Wall finishes

The walls are lined internally with sand and cement render with thistle top coat plaster that has been painted. They are in fair to average condition. There is no evidence of damp ingress. Some walls have a timber stud partition lining that has been plaster boarded and skimmed

Ceiling finishes

Suspended ceilings are fitted throughout. Where they have been removed, the rafters and ceiling-ties appear to be in fair condition.

Fittings

The Kitchen fittings are in fair condition.

Services

Heating

The building has a gas supply and electric connected, there is no heating system currently installed.

Lighting

Pendants, fluorescent tubes and ceilings fittings are installed throughout. These are in fair to poor condition.

Security

No security system was evident on the day of the survey

Fire precautions

The fire extinguishers, fire blanket and detection system are in good condition.

Accessibility

The main entrance doors have good accessibility with a level threshold approach from the parking area. The access paths around the station building were well maintained and clear of any obstacles.

5. The Proposal

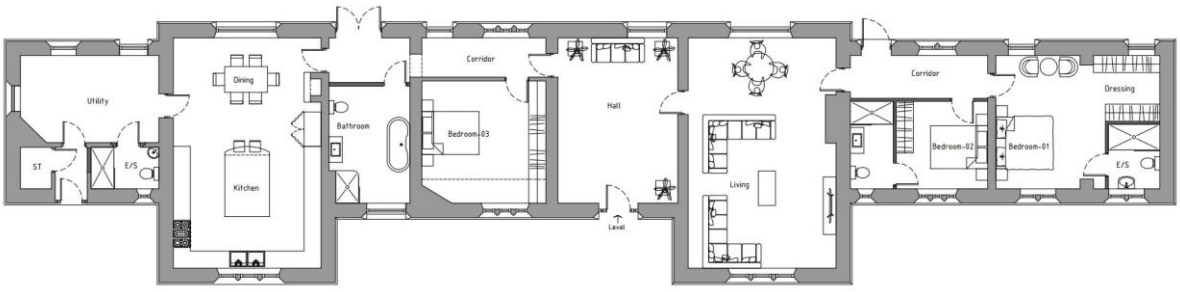


Fig. 5 – Proposed Floor Plan

Amount

The buildings internal floor area is approximately 220m2. It is proposed to create a single storey three bedroomed dwelling from the building. Very minor internal reorganization is required to make this work. Three bedrooms have been chosen as the desired development density as this would be the most suitable given the size of available amenity space and available parking within the site boundaries. This density level would also be the most optimal when considered against the neighboring densities and surrounding infrastructure around the site.

Scale

No changes are proposed to the building's superstructure so the scale of the development would remain unchanged.

Layout

The rear of the building faces directly onto the station platform, which is still in daily use by the public. On the day of the survey, all the exits onto the platform had been closed off and the windows onto the platform obscured. This arrangement will be maintained with the proposed new use to give the occupants of the building privacy. The doors will still function as a means of escape in the event of a fire but will not be in day-to-day use by the occupants.

The front section of the site will be split up to provide parking and amenity space for the building's occupants. No.3 x parking spaces have been provided in line with local planning guidance note No.16, space for No.2 x bicycles has also been allocated adjacent to the bin storage area. There is sufficient space with the turning area provided for any vehicles to reverse from the parking spaces and to leave the site in a forward gear.

The remaining front area of the site is being assigned to be amenity space for the building's occupants. This area will total 68m2, exceeding the 50m2 required for a three-bedroom dwelling under local planning guidance note No.21. The site is currently enclosed by recently planted hedges and temporary fencing. Subject to planning consent, the client would like to erect a 1m high stone wall to enclose the property. Sandstone boundary walls and front gardens are mentioned as features that contribute to the special character within the Ruabon conservation area, the adoption of these features would be appropriate to conform with the conservation area management plan.



Fig. 6 – Proposed Site Plan

Access statement

As a former public building, the site offers easy access to all around the building. Access routes around the site are safe with no significant changes in level around or through the building. None of the changes proposed will negatively affect access.

Environmental sustainability

No new buildings or extensions will be erected as part of the proposal. Minor internal reorganization is being proposed to make the building function as a dwelling. It is proposed to add thermal upgrades to the roof area through the introduction of additional loft insulation and to insulate the exterior walls of the building. The floor will not be insulated as the client does not wish to alter the existing finished floor level. By approving the change of use, a vacant building will be brought back into use promoting sustainable development.

6. Heritage impact assessment

History

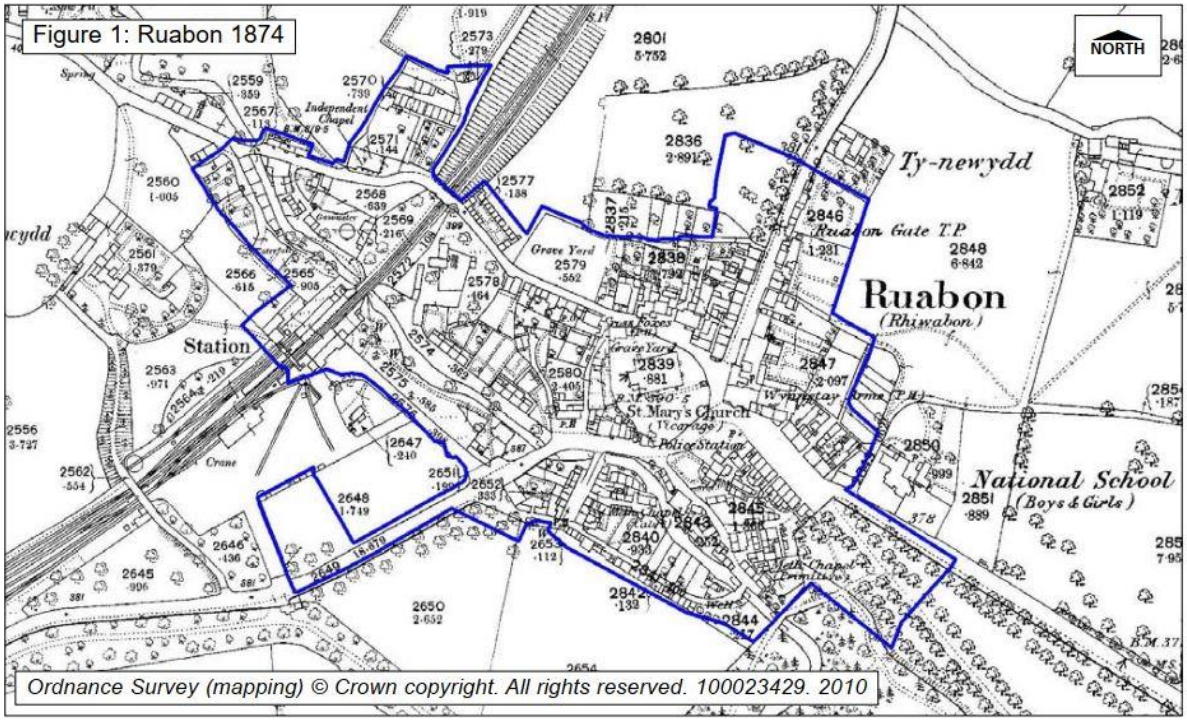


Fig. 7 – Historic Site Plan

Ruabon Train Station was once a bustling junction, offering passengers the opportunity to transfer between two major railway lines.

It first opened in 1846 with the launch of the Shrewsbury & Chester Railway. The original station building, designed by architect Thomas Penson, featured an Italianate style and opened its doors on 4 November 1846. This structure was later replaced in 1860 by the present neo-Tudor stone buildings, crafted by Henry Robertson.

By 1862, the Vale of Llangollen Railway introduced passenger services between Ruabon and Llangollen, eventually extending the route to Corwen, Dolgellau, and Morfa Mawddach near Barmouth. These trains branched off from the main line about a kilometre south of Ruabon station. In 1870, refreshment rooms were added between the platforms serving Chester and Barmouth, enhancing the station's amenities for travellers.

Both lines were later absorbed into the Great Western Railway (GWR), though the connections at Ruabon weren't always convenient. In 1899, frustrated by long waits, Llangollen traders and residents petitioned the GWR to add a Ruabon stop to a lunchtime express. Without it, passengers from Llangollen faced a 45-minute delay for onward travel to Chester, Liverpool, and Manchester—and an even longer wait of over two hours on the return journey in the evening.

In later years the station started to fall into a decline. The branch line from Ruabon to Barmouth closed to passengers in 1965 and completely by 1968, following the Beeching cuts. Following further cuts in the national railway service in 1974, the glass roof canopy was removed, and the station became an unstaffed.

In 2009, the station underwent a £70,000 refurbishment project funded by the Welsh Government, which added new shelters, lighting, and information screens.

Listing

History

Designed by Henry Robertson in the 1860s replacing the original Shrewsbury and Chester Railway Station by T M Penson. Converted to offices late C20 and platform canopy removed.

Exterior

Tudor-Gothic Revival style, single storey. Sandstone ashlar with rusticated quoins, slate roof, stone chimneys. Elevation to road: projecting gabled wings to each end with stone copings and finials. Each has a tall mullioned and transomed window, partially blocked. Central range has central mullioned and transomed window, and a doorway on each side with Tudor-arch head and dimpled spandrels. Low ranges with end stack set back and attached to left and right. Similar platform elevation: low flanking ranges have blocked entrances and windows, other openings blocked, cast-iron gutter with shaped brackets and cast-iron rainwater goods.

Interior

The Cadw official listing does not list any of the internal features of the building

Reason for designation

Listed for its special interest as good example of an 1860s station in a style popular for rural railway architecture.

Significance

The significance of the station building has been evaluated based on the concepts of value outlined on Historic England's (2008) Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance;

Evidential value: the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity.

The site of Ruabon Train Station, which includes the station house, is of national significance and importance. The sites listing state the reason for designation being a good example of an 1860's station in a style popular for a rural railway station.

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.

The site as a whole is of national significance, as previously stated. The station reflects the areas strong links to the age of industry with the surrounding collieries and heavy industry that relied on the good transport links provided by the railway.
Aesthetic value: the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place.

The Station house is of local significance for its aesthetic value; it is identified in the Ruabon area conservation assessment and management plan, mentioning it as a building that will require regular maintenance and repair to prevent it becoming a Building at Risk. Approving this application will ensure the future survival of the building.

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.

The station platform remains in public use; the station house's most recent use has been as offices. The building has been out of public use for some time. The proposed change of use will have not impact on the local community or how the aesthetics of the building are appreciated by the public.

Schedule of works

Windows

To meet the attenuation measures requirements of the sound report, it is proposed to replace the existing timber windows, so that suitable acoustic glazing can be installed. The current windows are poor quality timber frames with, in many paces opaque Perspex. The new hard wood windows would have a painted finish with double glazed acoustic glass as detailed in the accompanying sound report. The heritage impact for this change would be considered to be low and would has a positive impact on the sustainability of the building.

Roof / ceilings

The 1980's suspended ceilings will be removed as part of the internal alterations. Above the suspended ceilings there are exposed timber ceiling joists, it is proposed to board these out and create a ventilated cold roof above using mineral wool thermal insulation. The impact of these changes would be considered low.

Walls

It is proposed to insulate the external walls of the building using wood fibre-based insulation board and lime-based render & plaster. A specification for the proposed STEICO walling system can be found in the accompanying trade literature. The walls do not bear any historical features with plain plastered walls and no decorative covings, architraves or skirting boards. Some of the offices had been lined with

timber panels during the 1980's. These have no historical value. Making these thermal and acoustic upgrades to the external walls will have a low heritage impact.

Ventilation

As the platform side glazing is to be fixed, alternative arrangements will have to be made to ventilate the building. The sound report has identified suitable acoustic window and wall ventilators subject to authority approval. The addition of these small vents is considered to have a low heritage impact on the character of the building.

External changes

The applicant has erected temporary site fencing around the front of the site to secure the building. In addition to the fencing the client has planted a number of small evergreen hedging plants and shrubs. Subject to approval the applicant would like to erect a 1.2m high stone boundary wall as indicated on the proposed site plan. This was approved in principle on the previous listed building consent application. The heritage impact of this is considered to be low to medium.

The applicant has created a temporary amenity space at the front of the property. They have laid artificial grass and loose stone over the existing tarmac. These changes are not permanent features so would have a low heritage impact as they are easily reversible. The suitability of this area for an amenity space is comparable with neighbouring properties at the Wynnstay Gardens development and houses on Railway Terrace as they also have garden amenity space that adjoins onto the railway line so would experience similar levels of noise.



Fig. 8 – Perspex window example



Fig. 9 – Roof void above suspended ceiling



Fig. 9 – Roof void above suspended ceiling

8. Conclusion

This Heritage Impact Assessment and design and access statement aim is to evaluate the effects of the proposed works and guide decision-making. It considers the historic significance of the Station building and the broader site, assessing the implications of the planned changes. The primary focus of the proposals is to bring the redundant building into use, ensuring the preservation of the building while maintaining its aesthetic value.

The planned refurbishment and remedial works will improve the overall condition of the structure, prolong the life of the listed building, and enhance the surrounding area's appearance. While the use as a dwelling may introduce minor changes to the building's heritage, the practical benefits far outweigh any potential impacts.

In conclusion, the proposals are considered essential to the ongoing care of the railway station, thoughtfully designed with respect for its existing materials and architectural aesthetic. The planned works will have no adverse effect on the character of the listed structure and will serve to preserve and strengthen its historical significance