

Haltwhistle Station – Conservation and Change of Use of Waiting Rooms

Heritage Statement



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Figure 1 - Cover Photograph: Camera crew from Tyne Tees TV filing a news item about the fight to save the Alston Branch, 1973. The platform 2 waiting room in the background; Source:
<https://m.facebook.com/215596498473611/photos/a.895727540460500/1620261311340449/?type=3&source=54>

1. Introduction

Haltwhistle station is the site of two railway shelters. Whilst these two buildings are not listed, they sit within the overall setting of Haltwhistle Station and Haltwhistle Conservation Area. It is therefore important to justify the impact of any development proposal on the significance of the buildings and their setting. This Heritage Statement should be read in conjunction with the Design and Access Statement for the proposed development.

2. Historic Map Development

The following historic maps have been consulted and have been referred to elsewhere in this document.

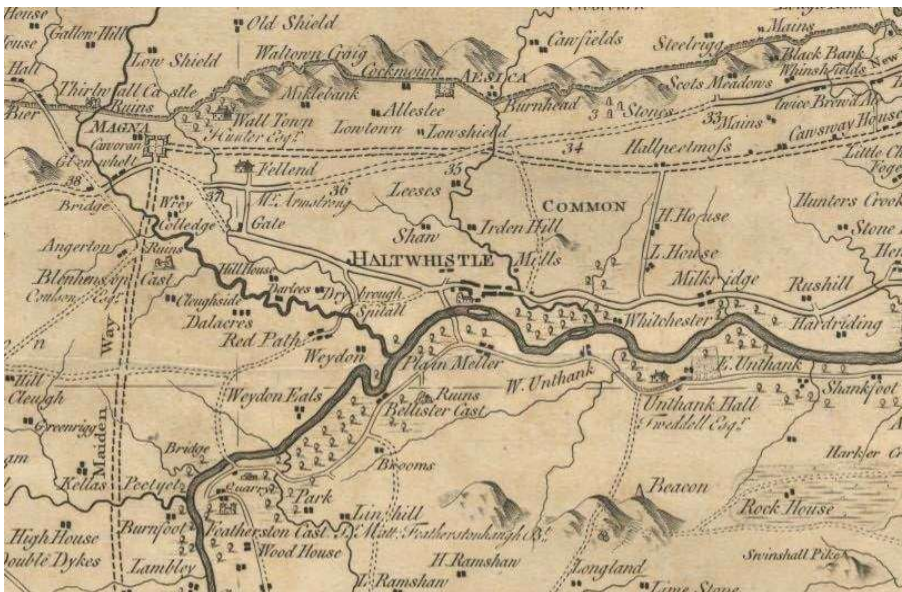


Figure 2: 1769 Armstrong’s Map of Northumberland, Source: Haltwhistle - Northumberland Extensive Urban Survey 2009



Figure 3: 1860 OS Map, Source: Haltwhistle - Northumberland Extensive Urban Survey 2009

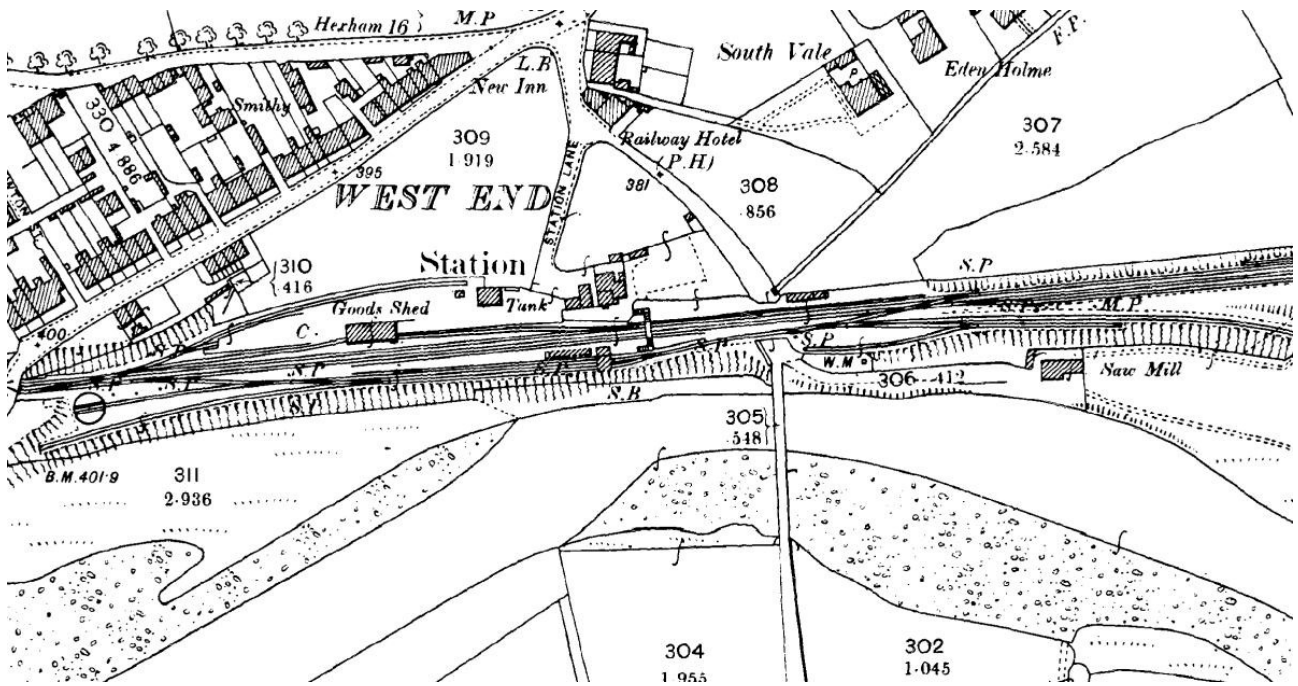


Figure 4: 1897 OS Map

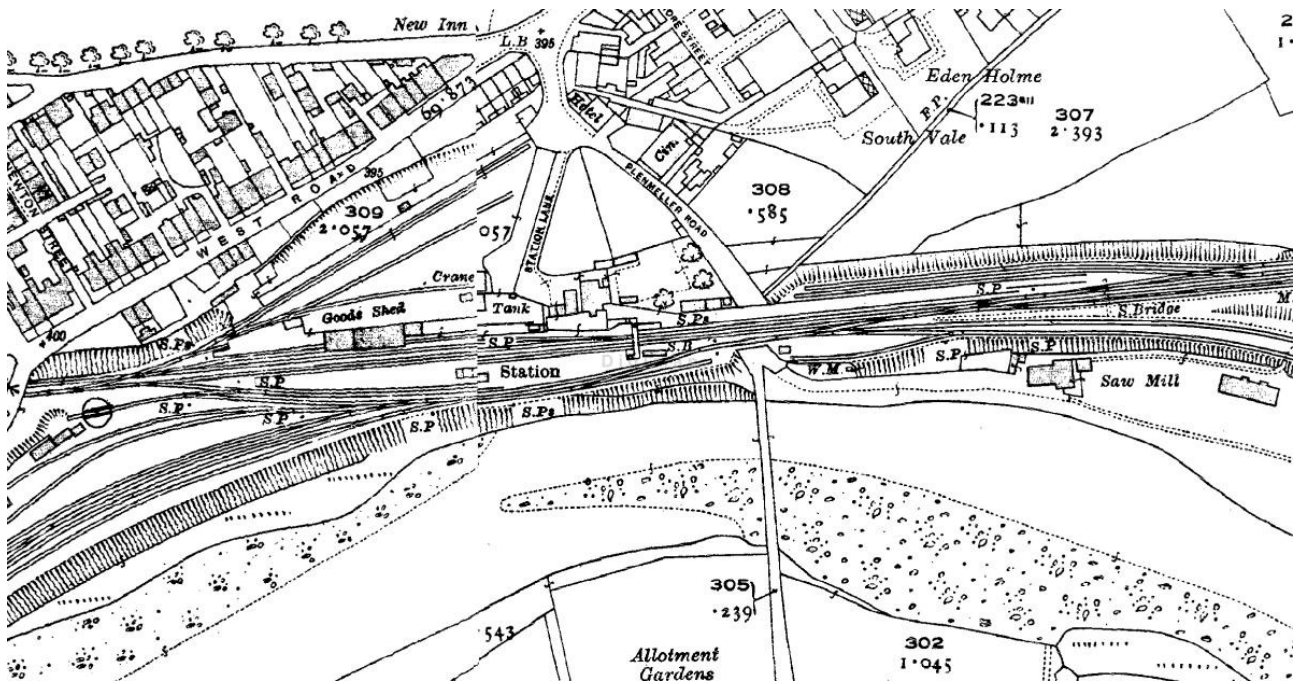


Figure 5: 1920's OS Map

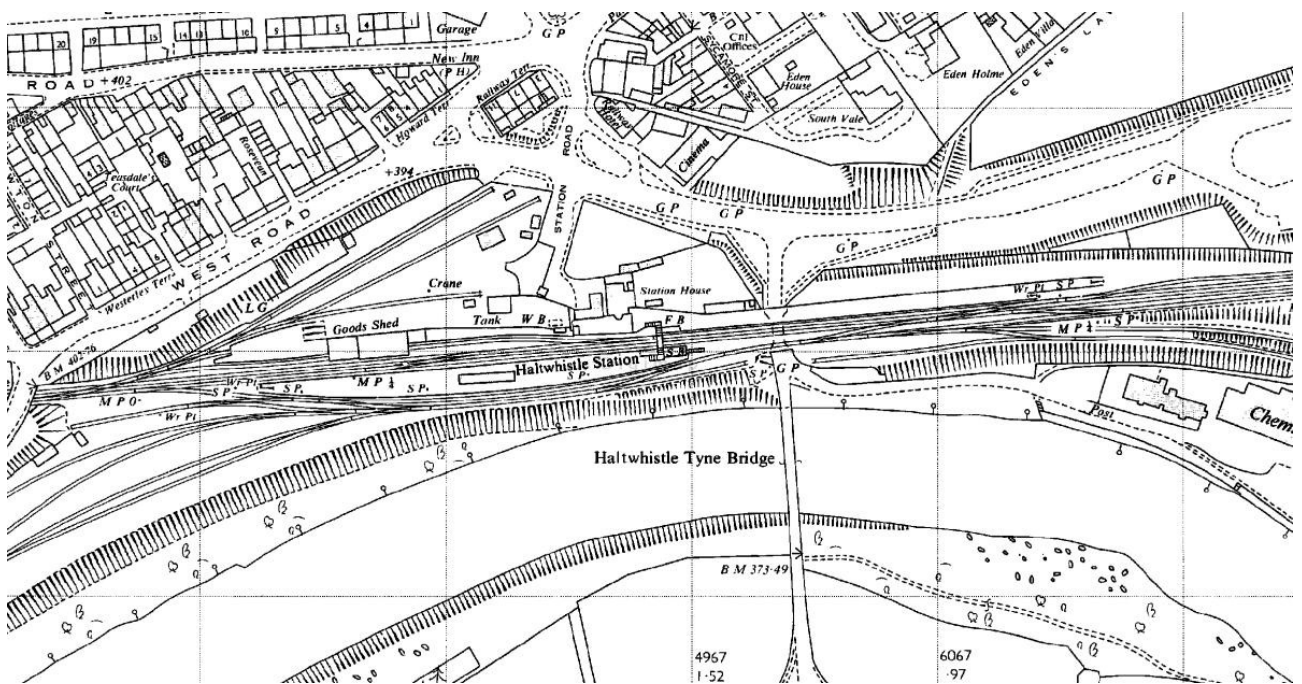


Figure 6: 1970's OS Map



Figure 7: Current Site Plan

3. Location and Setting

Haltwhistle Station is historically important for Haltwhistle but also in regards to the development of railways as modes of transport for goods and passengers and their impact on the towns and villages along the Carlisle – Newcastle railway line.

Northumberland Extensive Urban Survey, carried out by carried out between 1995 and 2008 by Northumberland County Council with the support of English Heritage summarises the development and impact of the arrival of the railway in Haltwhistle as follows:

‘The railway had arrived at Haltwhistle in 1838, carried on a long embankment across the flood plain of the South Tyne. It was a coast-to-coast link (the first of its type in Britain) and greatly stimulated the economy along its route, especially of those areas with mineral resources. There was a passenger station (HER 6708) at Haltwhistle and to the east, a few hundred yards down the line, a major freight siding developed serving the industries along Haltwhistle Burn, greatly facilitating the expansion of local coal mines and quarries (Storey 1998, 9). It closed in the 1930s along with the South Tyne Colliery.

Many early components of Haltwhistle Station survive including Station House, formerly the station master's residence (HER 6791), the ticket office and the waiting room (HER 6792). These buildings were constructed in 1838 in a 'Modern Gothic' or Tudor style, probably by Benjamin Green. A water-tank building and two water columns (HER 6793), on the west side of Station Road, were built in 1861 for the North Eastern Railway (NER), designed by Peter Tate and built by Wylie and Co. A signal box (HER 6789) on the south platform, of brick and weather-board construction and a cast-iron footbridge over the line (HER 6790) both date from the late 19th century and were built for the London and North Eastern Railway (LNER).

In the 1850s, a branch line to Alston from the main line at Haltwhistle was opened (Storey 1998, 4), providing a link to the near 60 lead mines of Alston, Garrigill and Nenthead. The branch line included some major engineering works, most notably the Alston Arches Viaduct (HER 6711) built in 1852 by Sir George Barclay Bruce. The branch ran until 1976. A Coal drop siding (HER 6810) at the end of the Alston line in Haltwhistle also served as the yard for deliveries of coal by horse and cart throughout the town until the 1950s (Storey 1998, 8)



Figure 8: Haltwhistle Station in 1896



Figure 9: Platform 2 in 1963; Note the ventilation dormer on the North Side of the building above the toilets which have been roofed over.



Figure 10: Platform 1 in the 1960's with the platform 1 waiting rooms on the left of the image



Figure 11: 2018 - Haltwhistle Station with platform 2 waiting room in background

Haltwhistle Conservation Area

Haltwhistle Station lies within the South-Western tip of Haltwhistle Conservation Area and its setting and historic buildings are indeed the predominant aspect of the character in this character area. Tynedale Council's 2009 Conservation Area Character Appraisal recognizes that the listed railway station complex creates '*... an impressive introduction to the town to arriving rail travellers*'. It also recognizes that in order for Haltwhistle to exploit economic opportunities through local tourism, '*... the appreciation of its built heritage should very well help to shape the continuing survival and growth of the town during the next century.*'

The Historic Environment Record (HER) lists six historic assets connected to Haltwhistle Station:

1. Haltwhistle Station footbridge - Grade II Listed Building
The footbridge that connects the platforms at Haltwhistle Station was built in the late 19th century for the North Eastern Railway Company. It is made of cast iron.
2. Haltwhistle Station south platform signal box - Grade II Listed Building
The signal box on the south platform was built in 1901 for the North East Railway Company.

Note: The signal box is currently in intermittent use as a Network Rail office.



Figure 12: Haltwhistle Station - Footbridge and Signal Box

3. Haltwhistle Station ticket office and waiting room (Old Booking Hall) - Grade II Listed Building
The Old Booking Hall at Haltwhistle Station was built in 1855 for the Newcastle and Carlisle Railway Company and may have been designed by Benjamin Green.

Note: In 2016, Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership restored the Old Booking Hall and took on the lease in order to use it as their education base room.

4. Station Master's House - Grade II Listed Building
Built between 1838 and 1855, Station Master's House or Station House probably by Benjamin Green for the Newcastle and Carlisle Railway Company, was originally the station and part of the sequence of very early buildings along the line.

Note: Station House is now a private residential property.



Figure 13: Haltwhistle Station - Old Ticket Office and Station House in background

5. Haltwhistle Station water tank building and water columns - Grade II Listed Building
The water tank building at Haltwhistle Station was built in 1861 by R.Wylie and Company for the North Eastern Railway Company. Nearby are two mid-19th century water columns, each with a swinging arm with a leather hose.

Note: The water tower has been successfully restored and developed as small business accommodation by The Haltwhistle Partnership.



Figure 14: Haltwhistle Station - Old Water Tower

6. Railway turntable

The turntable was built at Haltwhistle Station in the 1850s when the Alston railway line was opened. This new line meant that the railway engine had to be turned around.

Note: The turntable was removed in the late 1990's.

It can be concluded that the historic setting of Haltwhistle Station is still very much intact. The individual historic assets and buildings can still be 'read' and experienced together and constitute part of a historic ensemble connected to a busy railway line. However, the functional connection within this setting (their railway use) has all but disappeared due to changes in the way railways operate. New uses and in most cases new ownership have been introduced which led to the successful conservation and development of Station House, the Old Booking Hall and the Old Water Tower building. However, the future of the historic assets that fail to adapt to new uses (ie the waiting rooms and the signal box) is precarious since the original use has ceased to exist. The refurbishment and change of use of the two waiting room buildings needs to be seen in this pretext.

4. Significance

The two waiting room buildings are located on platforms 1 & 2 of Haltwhistle Station respectively. Whilst the larger shelter on platform 2 occupies a site highly visible from the station forecourt and drop-off area, the smaller shelter on platform 1 is visually less prominent.

Photographic and mapping evidence (see chapter 2 above) attests that the two waiting rooms are a standard North Eastern Railway design and date from the first two decades of the 20th century. The 1897 OS Map suggests that they acted as replacements for earlier waiting rooms at a different location.

North Eastern Railway used prefabricated kits that could be adapted to local situations. Evidence of that can be found in infilled door and window openings on both platforms.

Earlier timber buildings survive in local but non-railway use at defunct Staward and Langley on Tyne stations as holiday accommodation and café. A waiting room building has been revived and another one built at Slaggyford in 2017 as part of the South Tynedale Railway renovation.



Figure 15: Slaggyford waiting rooms

The reduction of route network and restructuring of the railways in Great Britain by the Beeching Cuts of 1963 and 1965 and the use of bus stop shelters has hugely reduced the number of timber waiting room survivors, adding to the significance of the waiting rooms at Haltwhistle.

The survival of the toilets and of the North Eastern Region ex LNER blue and white paint scheme inside the shelters is significant.

Significance of a place is the sum of its heritage values. English Heritage (2008) have identified four broad areas of heritage values which may be attached to places.

Evidential value

'The potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity.'

The physical remains of the waiting rooms have survived with the majority of the original features intact, if some in a dilapidated state. Evidence of the way railway waiting rooms were constructed as well as the functional aspects of it (waiting rooms, workshops, fire places and toilets) is present. The evidential value has added significance in the fact that the waiting rooms are two of the last surviving examples of this once numerous type of structure along the entire line.

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.’

Association with development of railways as modes of transport

The ensemble of buildings at Haltwhistle Station also a close association to the success of the railways as modes of transport for goods and passengers and their impact on the towns and villages along the Carlisle – Newcastle railway line.

Association with nationally important railway company

The station ensemble forms part of the branded identity of a particular railway company, North Eastern Railway, from its incorporation in 1854 to the amalgamation with other railways to form the London and North Eastern Railway in 1923. This identity would have been experienced all along the line. The fact that in Haltwhistle a group of corporate buildings can still be experienced together adds to the significance of the waiting rooms.

Association with development of a standard building type

The waiting rooms testify to the development of a standard building type. This building type needed to be adaptable to variety of locations, serve platforms on one or two sides, be cost efficient to build and maintain and fit within a branded identity of a group of buildings. As such it serves as a point of reference of a particular time and can be compared with earlier waiting rooms as well as examples of a building type that is still today being used and developed.

Aesthetic value

‘The ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place.’

The appearance and internal atmosphere of a building that is timber-clad on the inside and outside is unique. Large window openings flood the internal space with light and when the waiting rooms and associated workshops were in full use and good condition would have been very pleasant places to be in.

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.’

Railway stations are deeply embedded into the way people experience important aspects of their life. This rings equally true now than it has in the past. Waiting rooms are an important part of a place where one welcomes or says farewell to friends and family, departs on holidays or spends considerable time in during a daily commute to work.

Past and present employees at the station will also have a strong connection to their place of work. In addition, railway enthusiasts visit the stations along the Newcastle – Carlisle line in order to better understand, experience and record the history connected to it.

5. Current Condition

Both buildings are timber-framed constructions clad externally and internally in painted horizontal timber boarding. The roof is slate whilst the floor is partially timber joists and floor boarding and partially concrete. Timber windows are single glazed and most of the original 4-panel doors survive. A modulated pattern of window and door openings allows for easy adaptation to site conditions and numerous changes to the layout appear to have been made in the past. The buildings are not insulated.

Following an initial visual inspection site the external envelope of the buildings appears to be in a good condition. The slate roofing and rainwater goods including fascia and gable-end boarding are in places in need of repair and / or replacement. Some of the timber corner posts and foot plates appear to have deteriorated and will need replacement. It would seem sensible to re-roof both shelters re-using a portion of the existing slates as much as possible. Some of the windows have been blocked up with timber cladding and three of the original doors on platform 1 appear to have been replaced with flush doors. Most of the windows can't be opened due to the fact that they have been painted over multiple times. Window glass is partially broken in unused areas.

Internally, the now vacant parts of the platform 1 waiting rooms are in need of repair and restoration. Toilets including water and drainage connections have been defunct since 1967 when the station was de-staffed and can't be retained. In the current waiting room timber floor boards and joists show evidence of timber rot and woodworm and will need to be replaced. An inappropriate timber stud partition has been erected in order to partition off some of the waiting rooms and is not original. Lighting in the waiting room is fluorescent strip lighting.

On platform 2 too toilets including urinals, water and drainage connections have been defunct since 1967 when the station was de-staffed and can't be retained. The existing ventilation dormer to the toilet area is in need for substantial repair. On the West end, an inaccessible space has been partitioned off, to which at current there is no door or window. A defunct fire place is still present and in good condition, although has been blocked off at some point in the past. Lighting in the waiting room is fluorescent strip lighting.

6. Impact of Adaptation on Significance

The proposal aims to minimise the impact of interventions on the historic fabric and appearance. The fact that the original standard layout was designed to be adaptable means that boarded up additional window and door openings can now be utilised. Where external fabric has deteriorated, it is proposed to repair or replace it to match the existing. It would seem appropriate to match any new timber

windows to the existing ones and equip them with double glazing and opening panes. It is also proposed to replace flush doors on platform 1 with new 4-panel doors to match existing. On platform 2 it is proposed that external metal bars are mounted on the external face of the South elevation as this part of the building is not overlooked and is prone to be broken into. The applicant would anticipate that design details can be conditioned.

In order to adapt the building to a new use as studios or offices, walls, roof and floors will have to be insulated. It is proposed that in order to achieve improved wall insulation whilst retaining the character of the buildings, the internal timber wall cladding is removed and set aside, additional timber studs and insulation are inserted and the internal face is re-lined. A re-roofing partially using existing slates would present an opportunity for the insertion of additional insulation into the roof space. The suitability of water, drainage and electricity supply is still under review, however the state of the water and drainage goods and the absence of heating and sufficient lighting will necessitate new installations.

On platform 1 it is proposed to install photovoltaic panels across the Southern part of the roof in order to keep electricity cost for the tenants low. This is envisaged as a reversible installation that stands proud of the slate roof and is fastened by brackets.

A proposed external alteration is the relocation of the entrance to the platform 2 waiting room to the gable end of the building and the addition of an external porch. Both interventions aim to aid an accessible approach and maximise the use of the building. It is also intended to raise awareness and interest for the new use of the building to arriving and departing travellers and tourists alike since some public interaction with the new studios is expected. For this reason and to make clear that these changes are new additions, a contemporary design for the canopy is proposed. The existing dilapidated (South) and removed (North elevation) ventilation dormer windows above the former toilet area are proposed to be replaced with adapted glazed dormer windows to the original extent.

In summary, the applicant considers the impact of the proposed development on the historic asset minimal and appropriate. The external envelope will, with minor adaptations, retain its appearance, scale, shape and fabric. Internally, proposed subdivisions have been designed to work with the external elevations and with existing walls as far as possible. Overall, the redevelopment proposal for the waiting rooms will not only secure their sustainable use but also contribute positively to the retention and conservation of their historic fabric.

For more detail on the proposed redevelopment, please refer to plans and elevations as well as the Design and Access Statement submitted with this application.

7. Existing Photographs



Figure 16: Platform 1 - View from South West



Figure 17: Platform 1 - View from North West

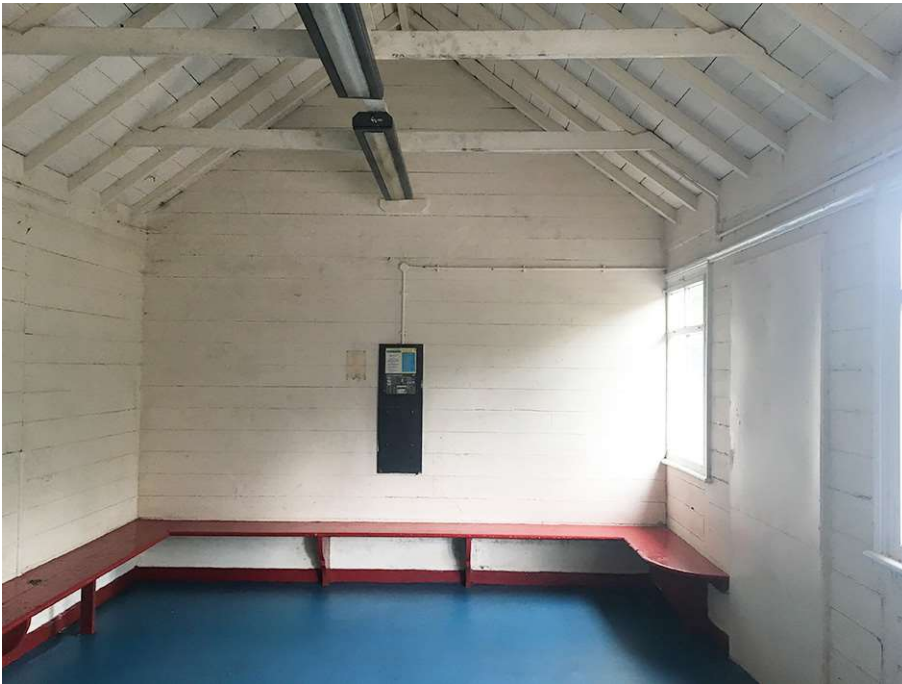


Figure 18: Platform 1 - Waiting Room

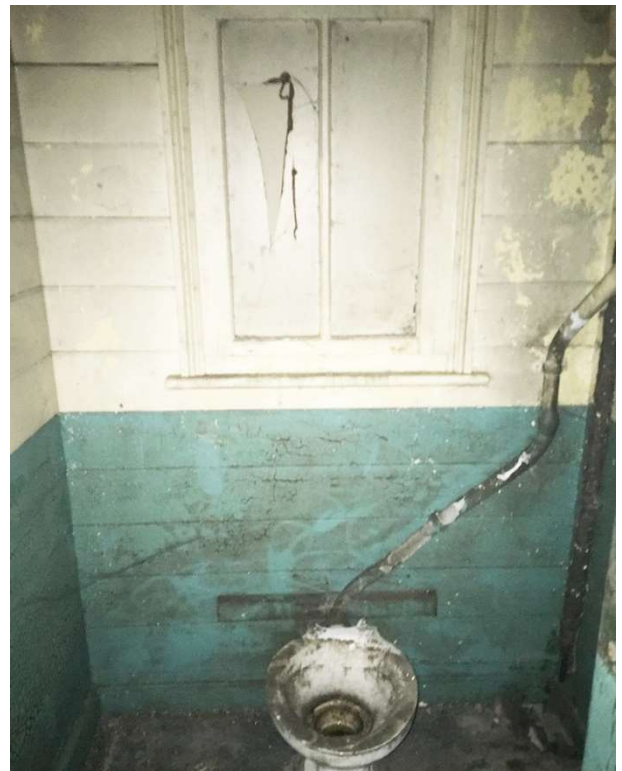


Figure 19: Platform 1 - Disused part of waiting room and WC



Figure 20: Platform 1 – North East and North West corners timber deterioration



Figure 21: Platform 1 – West gable roof detail and adaptable window opening



Figure 22: Platform 2 - View from North East



Figure 23: Platform 2 - View from South East



Figure 24: Platform 2 - Waiting room and fire place



Figure 25: Platform 2 - Waiting room with blocked up door opening to East gable



Figure 26: Platform 2 - fire place and door in disused part of building



Figure 27: Platform 2 - Disused toilet and urinal



Figure 28: Platform 2 - Deteriorated ventilation dormer above existing toilet area