



## **Heritage Impact Assessment**

The Station Master's House,  
Hadlow Road Railway Station,  
Hadlow Road, Willaston

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas

November 2023

[hendersonheritage.co.uk](http://hendersonheritage.co.uk)

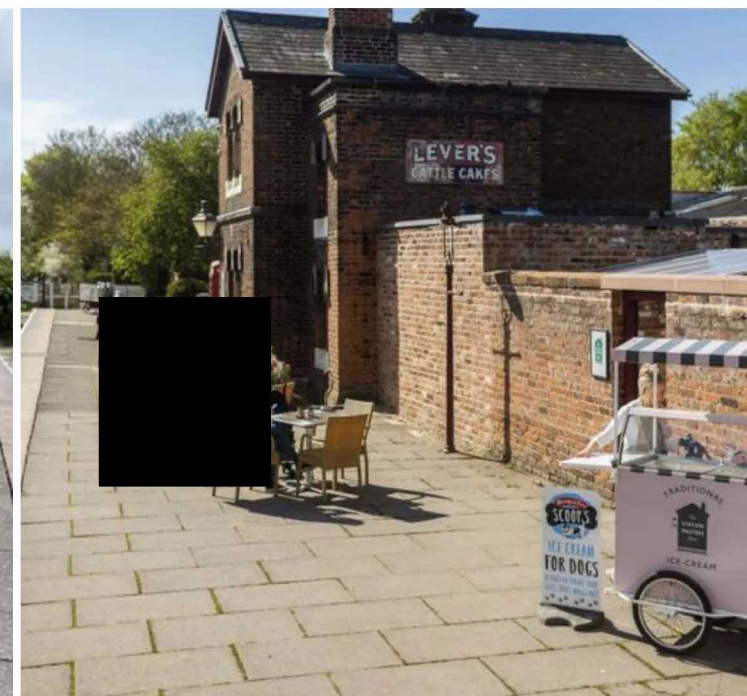
© Copyright – Henderson Heritage

# Contents

Executive summary	4
1. Introduction	6
2. Legislative and Policy Guidance	7
3. The application site and identified heritage assets	9
4. Historical context and heritage assets	11
5. The significance of the heritage assets	17
6. Impact of the development proposal on the heritage assets	23
7. Conclusion	36
Appendices	



Kirsty Henderson BSc (Hons), PgDip, MRTPI, IHBC



Hadlow Road Railway Station and The Station Master's House

## **Executive Summary**

This report is written in support of a listed building consent application for works to The Station Master's House Cafe at Hadlow Road Railway Station. The Station Master House and the railway station are collectively a Grade II listed building in Hadlow Road, Willaston. This Heritage Impact Assessment has been written to identify the significance of the heritage asset. This is in accordance with national planning guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework on the historic environment.

Hadlow Road Railway Station and the Station Master's House were erected in 1866. It is a purpose built station, with live-in Station Master's house, located on the Birkenhead Joint Railway line between Hooton and Parkgate. It was built for the Hooton to West Kirby line of the former Birkenhead, Lancs, and Cheshire Junction Railway as part of the Chester – Birkenhead line. This former railway line now forms part of the Wirral Way. It is within Willaston Conservation Area on the southern edge of the village boundary. The Wirral Way forms the southern boundary of the conservation area. Hadlow Road Railway Station and the Station Masters House is located on the north platform. The line closed in 1962. The former railway station is a museum. The Station Master's House is a successful café business established in 2018. It is the café business to which this application relates.

The building has a dual frontage, one facing northwards to the village the other southwards on the south platform. Internally it has some good surviving original and later features, including the staircase, the ticket office screen, and some architraves, fireplaces, and doors. The building's external character is of a mid-19th century domestic scaled village station, sharing some similar detailing with regional railway stations including doorways and brick paired windows with well-articulated round heads, the windows with chamfered brick mullions. The building was erected at a time of great growth in the railways.

The building's significance is derived from its evidential, historic, aesthetic and community significance as a former railway station with a later use as a museum and café with a clearly articulated architectural vocabulary. It has distinctive form and appearance as a former railway station with its physical appearance that clearly identifies it as a good example. It forms a strong relationship to the Wirral Way and clearly demarks to edge of the village and the countryside, which contributes to views, and vistas and setting; and its historical and aesthetic value, which helps define its sense of place.

The area to which the application relates is the courtyard attached to The Station Master's House. The railway station setting has been altered to the east several times in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with the loss of a small timber goods shed, and in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century post station closure, the erection of an enclosed courtyard behind a high brick wall. The courtyard has been altered several times since the closure of the station. The courtyard is used for seating and tables associated with the café use.

The significance of Hadlow Road Railway Station, The Station Master's House and its component parts has been carefully considered as part of the development proposal. The proposal remedies concerns highlighted by the Council's conservation officer, such as tidying electricity cables and painting an antenna to match the brickwork to the south facing elevation of the Station Master's House and removing a light on the north facing courtyard wall to make a sign non-illuminated.

The most significant change is the introduction of a lightweight roof covering to the courtyard, largely hidden behind the courtyard wall. The reason for the roof is to maximise the use of the courtyard seating for the café in all weathers. The courtyard has been altered many times in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and post closure, meaning that it was not used as part of the station's operations, although the site itself was.

The proposal is lightweight, honest, legible, and reversible. This, combined with continued investment into the repair and maintenance of the envelope of the building is not considered contentious from a heritage perspective. The covering to the courtyard would not appear in any views from Hadlow Road or the Wirral Way and would only be seen in limited views from the platform and the steps of the signal box. It is of materials used elsewhere in contemporary development on the rail network. The proposed new roof covering to the courtyard will create a small but important and viable all weather space as part of the café use, which in turn provides a long-term use and investment into the building. The alterations have been assessed against the building's features and significance, and overall, the scheme is a neutral change that will preserve the special interest of the listed building. The changes are not controversial and will not diminish its significance and should be seen as an evolutionary minor change to an area that has been much altered in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## 1.0 Introduction

1.1 This heritage impact assessment has been prepared on behalf of Mr and Mrs. Thomas, to accompany a listed building consent application for works associated with its current café use at The Station Master's House, Hadlow Road Railway Station, a Grade II listed building.

1.2 The proposal includes, and is described in more detail in **Section 6** (page 23): -

- External antenna for broadband
- External electricity cables.
- External lighting
- Covered courtyard.

1.3 The purpose of the assessment is to identify the significance of the heritage assets affected, and to consider and describe the effects of the proposals to them. This includes direct and indirect impacts up the building and its setting. This includes views within Willaston conservation area, and how the proposals will preserve and enhance the special architectural interest of the conservation area. It identifies mitigating measures, where necessary, to address this impact.

1.4 This document has been prepared following several site visits, the most recent in July 2023, and historical research. It is to be read in conjunction with other associated documents in relation to the planning and listed building consent application.

## 2.0 Relevant Conservation Planning Policy and Guidance

- 2.1 Under Section 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 local authorities must give special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest. Section 72 of the same Act states, in the exercising of planning functions in conservation areas special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area, when assessing planning applications.
- 2.2 National guidance is within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Policies 16. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment. Of relevance is policies on Proposals Affecting Heritage Assets, which states that “In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting.” In Considering Potential Impacts the NPPF states that “193. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation ... irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance. Paragraph 194. states that “Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Paragraph 196. advocates that “Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.” Paragraph 206 of the NPPF states that “Local Planning Authorities should look for opportunities for new development within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset should be treated favourably.”
- 2.3 In the Bramshill case in the Court of Appeal, Lord Justice Lindblom stated “what amounts to "substantial harm" or "less than substantial harm" in a particular case will always depend on the circumstances. Whether there will be such "harm", and, if so, whether it will be "substantial", are matters of fact and planning judgment.” This is balanced against the public benefits generated by the proposals.
- 2.4 A heritage asset is described in the glossary of the NPPF (Annex 2) as a “building, monument, site, place, area, or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage assets includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).” (*Annex 2: Glossary, [National Planning Policy Framework](#), Ministry*

*of Housing, Communities & Local Government, June 2021*). Designated heritage assets as those designated under legislation. These are a “World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area”.

- 2.5 The definition of significance in relation to heritage policy is defined in the glossary of the NPPF as “The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic, and historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting. “
- 2.6 The setting of a heritage asset is defined as “The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.” Setting is not a heritage designation.
- 2.7 In terms of assessing setting, special regard should be had for preserving the setting of a listed building. Case law has determined that preserve means to not cause harm to the setting, rather than to not change the setting. If there is harm, whatever magnitude, then the harm, must be evaluated in terms of assessing and mitigating positive and negative impacts in a holistic and balanced manner. This is to establish an overall conclusion on the level of harm, the weight that could be attributed to each element, seasonal effects and non-visual impacts and mitigating measures including public benefit.
- 2.8 Relevant local plan policies are in the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan: Part 1: ENV5 Historic Environment, and ENV6 High quality design and sustainable construction; and Part 2: DM 3 - Design, character and visual amenity, DM 46 - Development in conservation areas and DM 47 – Listed buildings. These policies reflect national planning policy in the preservation and enhancement of the building environment.



### 3.0 The application site and identified heritage assets.

3.1 The application site is in Willaston, some 13 km north of Chester. The application site is Hadlow Road Railway Station, on the southern boundary of the village of Willaston. The site is within Willaston Conservation Area. The station is located on the north side of the Wirral Way, which is the former railway line. Hadlow Road Railway Station is a mid-Victorian railway station, built in 1866. The station building is split into two halves which comprise of the Station Master's House and a separate ticket office and waiting room area. Following closure of the railway line in 1962, the Station Master's House building was used as office space for the Council Rangers who maintained the Wirral Country Park. More recently a local community group, the Friends of Hadlow Railway Station (FHRS), has helped to restore the ticket office and its surroundings into a museum attraction. In 2020 the Station Master's House building was leased to Mr and Mrs Thomas who have converted it into a family run coffee shop and kitchen.

3.2 The designated heritage assets that are relevant in considering the proposed development are identified below:

Directly impacting:

Listed Building: Hadlow Road Railway Station (Grade II) - first listed 1999.

Conservation Area: Willaston – it lies within it and was designated 1969 and extended in 2008 to include the railway station and north and south platforms.

Indirectly impacting: -

Curtilage listed building: Signal Box at Hadlow Road Railway Station

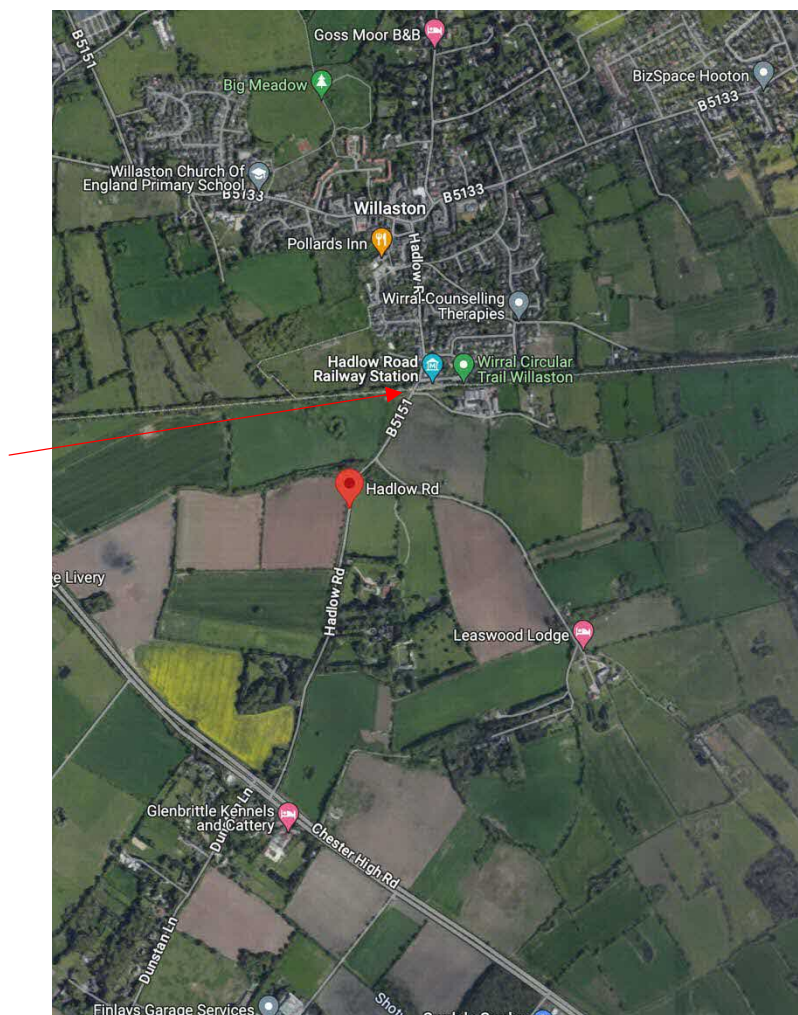


Fig 1. Location (Google Maps)

#### 4.0 Historical context and heritage assets

- 4.1. Willaston is a village that has origins in the medieval period, almost certainly with Anglo Saxon origins. It is a nucleated settlement, which today is focused on the village green. Willaston has associations with many old families in the area, including the de Orreby's, the Ardernes, Mainwaring's, Trussells, De Vere's and Hatton's.
- 4.2. The village has expanded slowly, with standing buildings dating from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards. These buildings are located within what is likely to have been the medieval village nucleus, of which many are listed. Such buildings include the former Willaston (Old) Hall, built for Hugh Bennet and dated 1588, on the east of Hadlow Road; the Pollard Inn, a manor house of the 17<sup>th</sup> century; the Old Red Lion, a timber framed building facing the green, built in 1631; 17<sup>th</sup> century farmhouses including Corner House Farm, Ashtree Farmhouse, Atworth Terrace and Atworth House; and 18<sup>th</sup> century farmhouses including Smithy Farm and Cherry Brow Farm. Hadlow Road Railway Station is also listed at Grade II.
- 4.3. The area around Hadlow Road, south of Willaston according to some records, is a possible site of a deserted medieval settlement dating between the 11<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century. The area today includes 19<sup>th</sup> century alterations to the village which occurred with the arrival of the railway. The railways were of key economic importance in the Industrial Revolution because of the speed that goods could be transported, considerably faster than using Turnpike Roads and canals. The construction of the railways required a great deal of manpower and associated with this, the production of iron and coal. George Stevenson and his son Robert developed the steam railway locomotive to create both a freight and passenger line between Liverpool and Manchester between 1826 and 1830. In 1837 the Chester to Birkenhead Act was passed, a station was built in Chester in 1840 and as additional separate station built a week later for the Grand Junction Railway. In 1847 an Act of Parliament was passed to build the existing Chester Station, with the two stations mentioned above demolished to create one larger one.
- 4.4. From its opening Chester was used by four different railway operators - Chester and Holyhead Railway, Grand Junction Railway (both later merging to form the London and North Western Railway (LNWR), the Shrewsbury and Chester Railway and the Chester and Birkenhead Railways.

- 4.5 The first railway in Wirral was the Chester and Birkenhead line, which opened in 1840. The tracks were built by Thomas Brassey (1805-70) assisted by Robert Stephenson, and it was officially opened in 1848. The track that Hadlow Road Railway Station relates, also built by Brassey, is the former Parkgate Railway, located on the Birkenhead Joint Railway line – Hooton to Parkgate branch, which opened in 1866 as a single track line between Hooton and Parkgate, serving collieries at Neston and Parkgate. This formed part of the Birkenhead, Lancaster and Cheshire Junction Railway which became the LNWR and Great Western Joint Railway (Hooton and West Kirby) until 1948, when it was nationalised, and became part of British Rail's London Midland region.
- 4.6 Hadlow Road Railway Station, built c1860, was built on former open fields, to the south of the village core of Willaston. The railway station at Hadlow was described as an intermediary station, as was Neston. At Hadlow there was a passing loop. The station was built on the eastbound side, as a T-shape, with a single storey ticket office and waiting room running parallel to the track, and a two storey cross wing which housed the Station Master's House. Two sidings were created to the east of the station for goods storage.
- 4.7 Some 20 years after opening, the line was extended to West Kirby. Following this, at Hadlow Road, a signal box was added in the 1890's on the eastbound side. A flat roofed brick shelter was added on the south platform in 1909 for Edwardian travellers to West Kirby.
- 4.8 The line enjoyed a degree of commercial success, helped by freight traffic that served Neston colliery. This closed in 1927 but passenger travel remained buoyant through the interwar years.
- 4.9 Following the end of the second World War, the increase in the rise of the motor car and the development of the motorway resulted in more flexibility in destination travel. Passenger services on the line ceased in 1956. The line closed for freight in 1962, and the line removed in 1964.
- 4.10 Wirral Country Park was established in 1968, and apart from some landgrab for gardens, almost all the line was used to create the Wirral Way and part of Wirral Country Park, which opened in 1973.

- 4.11 Following the loss of the railway, the station was retained, and its recent use has been as a Ranger's office for the Wirral Country Park. The station, which is in the ownership of Cheshire West and Chester Council, now comprises of a museum area and the Station Master's house building and yard area. The upkeep of the museum area is tended to by The Friends of Hadlow Railway Station community group. The Station Master's House building and yard area has been converted into a privately run café which serves local residents and users of the Wirral Country Park.
- 4.12 Relevant approved historic planning and listed building consent applications include: -  
3/13163/CCC | Change of Use of Station House from Rented Accommodation to Office Use - Station House Hadlow Road Willaston Neston Cheshire CH64 2UQ – approved 10/5/1991.  
18/00517/FUL and 18/00518/LBC | Change of use to a cafe and craft rooms, single storey rear extension and partial adaptation of the existing outbuildings - Station House Hadlow Road Willaston Neston CH64 2UQ – approved 27/03/2018.  
19/000339/FUL and 19/00340/LBC – Refurbishment and extension of the Old Station Master's House - approved 30/07/2019.  
20/02179/LBC – Proposed bracket sign and 4 fascia signs all non-illuminated - Station House Hadlow Road Willaston Neston CH64 2UQ - approved 30/03/2021.  
21/00480/LBC – creation of new door in detached garage – Station House Hadlow Road Willaston Neston CH64 2UQ - approved 30/03/2021.





Fig 2. From top left. The Station Master's House, looking west from platform; Top centre and right: the interior of The Station Master's House; Bottom left: the courtyard; Bottom centre: the serving hatch and bottom right: external platform seating.



Fig 3. Hadlow Road Railway Station as a working station c1900-1910. The area in question is arrowed in red.



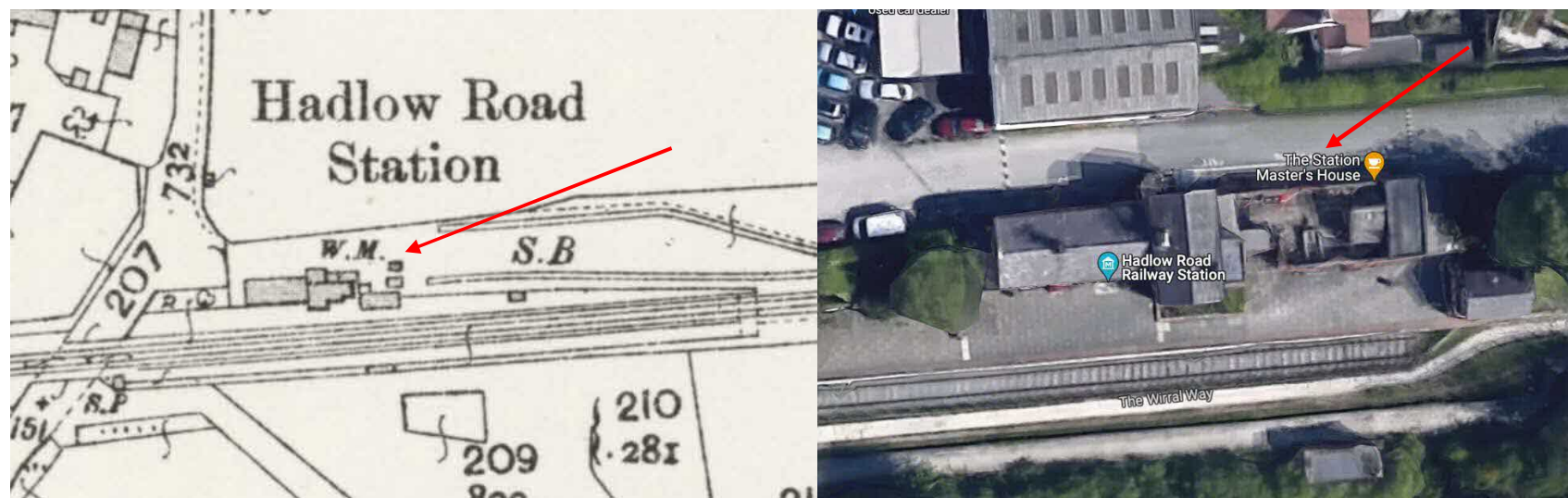


Fig 4. First Edition Ordnance Survey maps Cheshire XXII.16 Revised: 1909, Published: 1912. The long parallel waiting room and ticket area can still be seen, as can the cross range, which is the Station Master's house. The courtyard is new, along with a c1960's flat roofed garage, and the timber goods shed has been demolished.



## 5.0 The significance of the heritage assets


5.1 **Assessing significance** is embedded in national planning policy. Heritage values that contribute to a greater understanding of significance are identified by Historic England in 'Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance (April 2008)' as being: -

Evidential  
Historical  
Aesthetic  
Communal


5.2 There are six commonly accepted levels of significance. These are as follows: -

Outstanding	Highest level of importance, SAMs, WHS, Grade I / II* listed buildings, Historic Parks & Gardens
High (significant)	Grade II listed buildings, Historic Parks and Gardens and conservation areas
Medium (moderate)	Locally listed buildings, and those buildings that contribute to a listed building's setting.
Low (limited)	Limited heritage value
Neutral	Neither positive nor negative features
No significance	Features that detract from the heritage values


### 5.3 Heritage values - Willaston Conservation Area – South Area: Station area

<b>Evidential Value – High</b>	<p>The area has a history of use that has gradually evolved over time, as evidenced in archival and archaeological records. This includes historic use, including the shape and boundaries, which are well preserved as indicated by historic mapping sources and reports.</p>	<p>Overall significance <b>High</b></p> 
<b>Historical Value – High</b>	<p>The station area is in the southern end of Willaston Conservation Area and its historical significance is associated with the development of the railways, which changed the rural landscape of this area, and to some degree, that of its inhabitants, creating the opportunity for commuting to work. However, Hadlow Road itself is much earlier and as such has historical significance as part of the medieval village.</p> <p>Hadlow Road railway station was built at a time of significant railway growth between 1853 - 76. New routes were added to the rail network at a rate of 400 per year. It was a time when more rural areas were opened to the network. This resulted in a high increase in passenger and freight travel which itself brought a plethora of other structures, some now demolished, that has contributed to the history of and understanding of the rail network.</p>	
<b>Aesthetic Value – Moderate</b>	<p>Willaston conservation area has vernacular, Georgian, Victorian architecture that has a strong and high aesthetic value in terms of the contribution it makes to local distinctiveness and to key views, that contribute to Willaston’s sense of place. Its village centre, and the buildings close to it, contribute strongly to its character.</p> <p>Hadlow Road is an historic street leading from the A540 Chester – Wirral Road to the village centre. It is in essence a rural lane that becomes more suburban and built up in character once one passes Hadlow Road Railway Station. There are strong anchor buildings within the streetscape – Hadlow Road Railway Station being one of them, but overall, there is a variety of architectural style, quality and grain which has developed post 1950, which dilutes the strong overall character of the conservation area in this area. Trees and landscaping contribute to the street scene as does the setting of the conservation area to the south. Hadlow Road forms part of the permeable network of streets within the conservation area. The station forms an important collection of buildings that contribute to the character of this area.</p>	
<b>Communal Value - Moderate</b>	<p>The conservation area has local interest for the wider community in which it serves.</p>	

#### 5.4 Heritage Values – Hadlow Road Railway Station (Grade II)

<p><b>Evidential Value - High</b> <i>This derives from those elements of an historic asset that can provide evidence about past human activity.</i></p>	<p>The site has a history of use as a railway station, as evidenced in archival and map sources. Hadlow Road Railway Station was built as part of a defining moment of the Industrial Revolution where it was possible to travel for national and international distances for the entire population. The station forms part of Britain's architectural, social, and cultural heritage.</p>	<p>Overall significance <b>High</b></p> 
<p><b>Historical Value – High</b> <i>(Special Historic Interest)</i></p>	<p>The building forms part of a distinctive building stock and suite of buildings associated with railway connectivity across the whole country. The building reflects the architectural influences with the railway estate by private companies of the time and is a familiar and recognisable building type. New buildings and structures have been added over time within the existing site. This includes the south railway shelter and signal box. It represents an understanding of how the station was manned. The station, the station masters house, the signal box, and gates are well preserved. The loss of the line in the 1960's did not result in its loss, but of its restoration by the community, although the timber goods shed was demolished to the east of the site.</p> <p>The line has associations with Thomas Brassey, one of the most influential and important railway builders in the world.</p> <p>The building is listed at Grade II for its special architectural and historic interest and is within the Willaston conservation area.</p>	
<p><b>Aesthetic Value - High</b> <i>(Special Architectural Interest)</i></p>	<p>The building is of a domestic scale, and whilst the internal plan is probably standardised to some degree based on a late 19<sup>th</sup> century layout, of single storey public areas and two storey private areas, the station has seen a degree of change, post nationalisation and post closure. Overall, the aesthetic value is high but there are components within that that are strictly utilisation and 'back of house' and of less value. This includes the area to the east of the Station Master's House which is of low significance.</p>	
<p><b>Communal Value - high</b></p>	<p>The building was a railway station building, with a purpose built station masters house attached. The main station is now a museum, manned by The Friends of Hadlow Road since 2014. The Station Master's House is a café, which is a successful separate commercial venture created by Mr and Mrs Thomas following closure of the Rangers office at the Station Master's House in 2016. Both museum and café attract many visitors.</p>	

## 5.5 Heritage Values – Signal Box

<b>Evidential Value - High</b>	<p>The signal box forms part of a suite of buildings associated with the railway at Willaston.</p>	<p>Overall significance <b>High</b></p> 
<b>Historical Value – High</b> <i>(Special Historic Interest)</i>	<p>Its design is synonymous with the rural signal boxes of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.</p> <p>The building is within Willaston conservation area.</p>	
<b>Aesthetic Value - High</b> <i>(Special Architectural Interest)</i>	<p>The signal box is a good example of type – a rural chalet type timber box, domestic in scale, glazed on three sides, cross brace timber guard rail to steps and painted in the Hadlow Station colours.</p>	
<b>Communal Value - Medium</b>	<p>The building is not in use as signal box but is used as part of the general community use at the railway station.</p>	

## **5.6 Key Points of interest relevant to the site:**

- 5.6.1 The station building is a modest single storey ticket office with a two storey wing for the station master's house. Access was originally from the north. Of key interest are the following: -

The architectural style of the building and its association with the mid Victorian period of rural railway building on a domesticated scale.

The relationship with adjacent railway structures that forms part of its setting.

Its high-quality rural context and street scene that contribute to the group value and views and vistas of Hadlow Road from the south to the north and the Wirral Way.

Its historical and aesthetic value, related to its association with railway development of the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century.

There are three, possibly four areas of phasing. These are the main central block and station master's house, the secondary outriggers to the east, the post war ancillary structures to the east and the high wall enclosed courtyard, built post 1977.

The rooms of the most aesthetic and historic interest is the waiting room, which is managed by the Friends of Hadlow Road Station. The Station Master's House is also highly aesthetic with the historic plan form largely retained.

Historic maps show that the area directly to the east of the Station Master's House was used as a goods area, with a small timber goods shed next to the station masters house on the platform. Later photographs show the degree of change that has occurred since the station was built.

Access to the Station Master's house is via two entrances – the main entrance into the courtyard on the north side of the building, but also east from the car park onto the platform and south from the Wirral Way.

## **5.7 Key Points of Significance relevant to Hadlow Road Railway Station and the Station Master's House**

### **Of outstanding significance and particularly sensitive to change**

Nothing

### **Of high significance and sensitive to change**

The frontages of the original station and Station Master's House to the car park and platform  
Original features such as windows, door architraves, doors, fireplaces, staircase, the ticket office

### **Of medium (moderate) significance and opportunity to change**

Fixtures and fittings pre nationalisation not mentioned above.  
The plan form.  
The secondary single storey lean to roofed outriggers attached to the Station Master's House

### **Of Low (limited) significance and of limited heritage value and opportunity to change**

The courtyard

### **Of Neutral or no significance with neither positive nor negative features or detracting from the building and opportunity to change.**

The modern flat roof extensions  
Modern fixtures and fittings, plaster, plasterwork and fixtures and fittings

## 6.0 Impact of The Development Proposal on The Heritage Assets

6.1 The legislative requirements and local planning policy documents contain detailed criteria and guidance that must be adhered to. As a result, it is that matters of detail that will be crucial to this proposal in demonstrating that it has been carefully designed to sensitively fit within the building and will preserve the listed building's setting, the setting of adjacent listed buildings and the character and appearance of the conservation area context. Based on our review of past decisions and the key planning policy tests, we consider the following matters of detail to be central to this proposal:

The main issue to be considered, is the effect of the proposal on the special architectural and historic interest (or significance) of the listed building (a designated heritage asset) – Hadlow Road Railway Station.

Impact on the setting of designated heritage assets – Hadlow Road Railway Station (Grade II), and Signal Box (curtilage listed building); Willaston Conservation Area.

Design and impact on local character (layout, architectural style)

Key views

6.2 The key matters to consider from this perspective, having looked at several options is: -

The building's significance as a former railway station.

The frontages to the car park and platform

The present layout and the assumed past layout

Present features of significance

Any sequencing of development and whether there have been any previous alterations, or the appropriateness of alterations.

Present modifications that detract from the building

6.3 The proposal includes the follows: -

External antenna for broadband  
External electricity cables.  
External lighting  
Covered courtyard.

6.4 **Areas of Significance** - There are features of significance that are subcategorised as Highly Significant, Significant and Neutral. The ones affected are as follows: -

North and south station / Station Master's House elevations  
Courtyard

Highly significant – for its external character  
Low Significance – late 20<sup>th</sup> century alteration, forms part of setting



## 6.5 Assessment of Heritage Impact of the proposed works.

Proposal	Features affected	Heritage values	Significance	Scale of Change	Heritage Impact	Justification
Antenna	South elevation to Station Master's House	Evidential Historic Aesthetic Communal	High	Minor	Neutral	The antenna is necessary for broadband and internet connection. The antenna has been painted to match the brickwork and frontage. Given the well-considered and characterful metal signage on the Station, added with permission, by The Friends of Hadlow Road Station, the antenna is a very minor and reversible item that is difficult to spot, and its removal is easily reversible without causing damage to the building. No harm.
Cables	South elevation to Station Master's House	Evidential Historic Aesthetic Communal	High	Minor	Neutral	The cables associated with electrical works for the café, have been tidied up and clipped so that their cumulative impact is kept to a minimum. It should be noted that approved works to the external courtyard walls undertaken by Mr and Mrs Thomas, included bedding in electrical cables into the new wall so that they are not visible. Retrofitting cabling to the elevation is more difficult; however, the cabling is discreet, and is a very minor and reversible item that is difficult to spot, and its removal is easily reversible without causing damage to the building. No harm.
Lighting	Courtyard elevations	Evidential Aesthetic Communal	Low	Minor	Neutral	Signage is consummate with the Station Master Brand. The issue of illumination by external lighting, is minimal and the effect of these low energy level downlighters is not considered harmful as they are well spaced out. Furthermore, the public benefit of providing safe and lit passage for staff and guests is of key importance for evening events and winter months. Given that this was a station with associated passenger traffic in the day and evening, it is felt that these minor illuminated additions are consummate with the former use. Some lighting has been removed after discussion with the conservation officer. No harm.

Proposal	Features affected.	Heritage Values	Significance	Scale of change	Heritage Impact	Justification
Roof covering	Courtyard	Evidential Communal	Minor	Moderate	Neutral with positive benefit	<p>The former railway station and station masters house has areas of low to high significance. The courtyard area is a modern feature that, in terms of heritage significance is low.</p> <p>The proposal is to retain the covered roof structure, which is timber and a plastic roof covering of polycarbonate.</p> <p>The roof structure is attached to the courtyard wall, which is post 1948 and therefore, although attached to the Station House, not technically part of the listing. The courtyard did not ever form an ancillary use to the station as it was built after the station was closed.</p> <p>Nonetheless, it is important to establish how the proposal impacts on the setting of the station and Station House to establish what impact it has and what the public benefit will be if there is any harm identified. It is also important to understand the historic setting to make an informed choice of how that impact is assessed.</p> <p>Station facilities at intermediate stopping places on the early main line railways were initially very basic as seen on the photographs of Hadlow Road. The historic setting is demonstrated overleaf. The photograph is undated but is pre-closure, as evidenced by the line in the foreground.</p> <p>The photographs shows that the setting of the station building to the east included ancillary functional buildings. In this case the building was a timber goods shed, with a low profile roof and low ridge. The entire structure was timber. This shed projected in front of the Station Master's House.</p> <p><b>Cont. overleaf.</b></p>

					<p>Willaston railway station ceased passenger services on the line in 1956. The line closed for freight in 1962. As with most stations the land surrounding the station continually adapted and changed in response to functional requirements. It should be noted that whilst passenger movement was the reason for the station's creation; the station was also designed to support other operational functions. This there was a degree of evolution and functionality rather than aesthetics that dictated the layout of the wider site. This is particularly evident on early and late 20<sup>th</sup> century photographs of the site.</p> <p>In terms of building materials, it should be noted that this was a local, intermediary station. The use of brick as a building material for the station adds a degree of permanence; however, it should be noted that timber was used extensively in railway architecture, for shelters and small buildings, including stations. Roofing material depended on the station type, with more elaborate cast iron roofing generally confined to higher status stations.</p> <p>It should be noted that post nationalisation, railway architecture included the use of plastic rather than glass. Whilst glass was used as a roofing material for the early platforms as influenced by Sir Joseph Paxton (1803-1865), reinforced glazing was Georgian wired glass. Glass, including the use of toughened and laminated glass, required heavier frames. In the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century, translucent sheeting, such as fibreglass and polycarbonate has been extensively used to replace aging glass to roofs, and to create new roofs to stations, with the advantage that it could be laid as sheets without sub framing. It has been used on many station repairs, for example on Lewes railway station canopy (Grade II) in East Sussex.</p> <p><b><i>Cont. overleaf.</i></b></p>
--	--	--	--	--	---

					<p>A new plastic roof structure has been used at Manchester Victoria railway station and Manchester Piccadilly (both Grade II). The roof structure uses a steel frame structure, using ethylene tetrafluoroethylene, a fluorine based plastic, used because of its appearance, lightweight quality, safety, and cost as a viable 21<sup>st</sup> century alternative to glass.</p> <p>There is therefore precedent of the modern use of plastic as a roofing material on the railway network, including on prestigious projects.</p> <p>The roofing material at Hadlow Road does not require any additional framing, and the timber framed roof structure is a material that is appropriate to the context. It would benefit from being painted in the Hadlow Road Railway Station colours.</p> <p>The scheme should also be looked at in the wider context of the reuse of the vacant Station Master's House as a successful and well used café venue, rather than in isolation. The changes bring about considerable public benefits to the wider community in the use for the space, the income generated to maintain the building and business, for the benefit of the community who live in or near to Willaston or those walking along the Wirral Way. The recognition of this as a viable facility will encourage more visitors to Hadlow Road railway station which will in the short and medium term will raise its profile further which will in turn help in the maintenance of the building.</p>
--	--	--	--	--	--



Fig 5. Hadlow Road Railway Station. Top right: as a working station 1950. Top left: following closure, 1962. Bottom: 1977. It can be seen here that this area has undergone many changes including the creation of a courtyard and raising the courtyard wall following its closure, suggesting that this was a deliberate remodelling or interpretation as part of the workings of the building as a museum. The station (last image: Vincent Pleasant) showing the roof in situ.





Fig 6. Hadlow railway station pre 1964. Note the changes to the east side of the Station Master's House.



Fig 7. Top from left to right: The first two photographs show the yard prior to the arrival of the Station Master's house. Top right: The Station Master's House courtyard prior to its covering. Without the covering, it can only be used inclemently because of weather.

Bottom left – an unsuccessful temporary options, which is not windproof or properly weather proof and impedes easy access from the entrance because of the legs. Bottom middle: the proposed option in its raw state. It is proposed to paint the rafters and ridge to match the colour of the station if approved. Bottom right: the limited view of the roof from the platform.





Fig 8. The courtyard in use as part of the Station Master's House café.





**6.6 The impact on the listed building** - The proposals overall must be viewed in the overall context. The courtyard attached to the Station Master's House has no internal features of interest, and whilst there are features of note, such as the brick walls, its significance is low, and in an area that has been much altered. There is precedent on the rail network of both the use of plastic roof coverings and, timber roof structures. The roof is hidden from any key view within the village and cannot be seen to any significant degree from key views to the station.

Whilst there is a change to the courtyard, by creating a partial roof covering, it is felt, on balance, that there is little material impact on the building's setting because the features of the listed building are still appreciated, and the structure hidden within the courtyard. There is an appropriate balance between the scale of alteration and that proposed.

On balance, it can be demonstrated that the development complies with local plan Policy DM47 – Listed Buildings and with policies in the NPPF, where the level of harm has been demonstrated to be neutral in terms of the impact on the listed building and its setting and is legible, honest, and reversible. However, should the Council see this as being of less than substantial harm, it is respectfully requested that it is looked at in the context of the reuse of this building, which is recognised as providing an important commercial community function in a community building, which will contribute to economic activity and investment in the station, which is a public benefit. It is fundamentally important that the reuse of the building should include viable activity in a manner that preserves its special interest. This should be regarded as a key public benefit.

**6.7 The impact on the wider conservation area** - The building is on Hadlow Road and the Wirral Way and contributes strongly to the character of this area. Hadlow Road is considered to make some contribution to the character of the conservation area; the station buildings have an historic association with the village and the buildings and structures all forming a strong building group that forms part of the surroundings in which the listed buildings and building of merit / non-designated heritage assets are experienced. There are shared views and places where they are all seen together. The application site has an economic, social, and historical relationship with Willaston, but the scale of change is negligible. The proposal preserves the architectural and historic interest of the conservation area. It is not seen from outside the station and has a negligible impact upon its special architectural and historic interest. The special architectural or historic interest of the conservation area will be preserved, given that the development is of a scale and density that is low key, and that has been designed to blend in with its location and context. It will not adversely affect the character or appearance of Hadlow Road and will result in a negligible change to the rear eastern area of the station.

**6.8** An analysis of the impact on the setting of heritage assets.

### 6.8.1 **Signal box**

The significance of the building is based on its character as a regional signal box; its location on a rail platform; its interrelationship with the surrounding railway structures.

The setting of the building along the platform, on the Wirral way in a rural and peaceful setting, includes views and relationships with other building in the group. The types of views to it are seen as a townscape whole – it is not a landmark building and has group value with others.

There may be minor incidental views arising out of changes to the east of The Station Master's House. These views are not important or significant. Whilst the proposed development would be co-visible with the inside of the courtyard, this would be limited. It will therefore be largely a matter of scale, degree, proximity, and nature of relative impact. The impact is limited because the façade to Hadlow Road railway station is the primary focal points. The view is seen with the buildings within the courtyard, which are more adhoc and 1960's in nature.

The slight change created by the roof is minimal, and not really noticed to any degree in the view, because of the location, low scale, and height of development, and the simple roof form proposed. The weight of the given effect is neutral and of no harm.

### 6.8.2 **South shelter**

The significance of the shelter relates to its simple Edwardian style of the building that identify the use and historic function of the building. It contributes to the history of the area including the designed relationship with the station. It contributes to the character and identify of this part of the conservation area.

The proposals will have no effect on the setting and significance of the south shelter. The development will not affect the experience, setting or significance of it. The weight of the given effect is neutral and of no harm.

## 6.9 Summary of impact on the heritage values

**Evidential:** The courtyard is retained and is still read.

**Historic:** The courtyard is not significant. It would not change to any significant degree the volume of the space. It demonstrates an evolutionary process of development for the 21st century.

**Aesthetic:** There would be some adjustment to the courtyard because of the insertion of a simple roof structure which if painted to the Hadlow Railway Station colours would be a neutral ancillary addition.

**Communal:** The capacity of increased use would be more in keeping with its original function as a station and goods area.

## 7.0 Conclusion

- 7.1 The application site is located at Hadlow Road Railway Station. Hadlow Road Railway Station and Station House, the adjacent structures and buildings and the conservation area are of high significance and are designated and non-designated heritage assets. Great weight has been given to the conservation of these designated heritage assets and their setting.
- 7.2 The impact on the listed building - The order and sequence of development is legible, the unity and expression are different but contextual, and the function of the roof is honestly expressed. The colour palette will be a respectful addition. The roof is designed so that the space inside the courtyard inside can be used to its full potential without impacting adversely on the building's setting. The massing or three-dimensional silhouette height and bulk is modest, and the proposal is in scale with the host building. Overall, the features of the listed building are still appreciated. There is an appropriate balance between the scale of alteration and that proposed. The proposals conform with Policy DM47 – Listed Buildings. The re-use of, and investment into the building, will help to preserve the fabric. It is fundamentally important that the reuse of the building should include viable activity. This should be regarded as a key public benefit, which is generated by the use of the site.
- 7.3 The impact on the setting of adjacent listed buildings would be minimal. There would be a low impact on the Station Master's House, as the roof covering is in the courtyard attached to it, and no adverse impact on the signal box or south shelter. This is a simple roof structure that seen against the wider setting, will be a neutral addition and a neutral impact on the setting of Hadlow Road Railway Station. The proposals have a moderate material impact on the building's architectural or historic interest but overall, the key features of the listed building are still appreciated. There is an appropriate balance between the scale of alteration and that proposed. The proposals conform with Policy DM47 – Listed Buildings.
- 7.4 Hadlow Road railway Station and the Station Master's House is in the conservation area and contributes strongly to the character of this area. The area to the east of the station is less significant. The roof would not appear in any significant views from Hadlow Road or the Wirral Way and would only be seen in limited views from the platform when the door to the courtyard is open. The scheme will not detract from the character and appearance of the wider conservation area or obstruct key views. The proposal will preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area and is in accordance with Policy DM 46 – Development in Conservation Areas. The impact of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the conservation area would be neutral and in accordance with Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

- 7.5 The alterations have been assessed against the building's features and significance, and overall, the scheme preserves the special interest of the listed building. The changes will not diminish its significance. In summary it can be demonstrated that the development complies with local plan policies and with policies in the NPPF, where the level of harm has been demonstrated to be neutral in terms of the impact on the listed building. The use of this small open space in the courtyard of this building, which is recognised as a much later addition is an evolution of the use of the space. The proposed roof will create a more usable, year round space that would encourage a longer term business let and thus more investment into the heritage asset, which will encourage more visitors to appreciate this important asset. The concept and scale of public benefits is broad and in the context of heritage assessment is not restricted to heritage benefits. The use of the building and spaces within them allow for innovative small scale proposals that strike a balance between conserving the listed building and better revealing aspects of the building's significance. In this case, Hadlow Road railway Station remains as a museum, and the Station Master's House is a viable café use, which uses the best of the Station Master's features, by sensitive conservation, whilst adapting the least sensitive areas for its continued use.
- 7.6 The desirability of preserving the building or its setting has been assessed upon a clear understanding of the baseline heritage significance. This has established the extent of the assessed harm and the heritage value of the assets in question, as well as identifying opportunities where proposals better reveal the assets significance. There has been a proper balancing of harm vs benefits, and overall, there is a net beneficial gain. This is because there are wider benefits to the heritage assets when the balance is struck. Should the conservation officer feel that the roof is of a low level of less than substantial harm in the terms of the NPPF, it would have to be balanced against the benefits outlined above.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1 Bibliography

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment>

<https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/constructive-conservation/conservation-principles/>

<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conservation-principles-sustainable-management-historic-environment/>

<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/gpa3-setting-of-heritage-assets/heag180-gpa3-setting-heritage-assets/>

<https://www.nestonpast.com/the-railway-at-parkgate/>

<https://historicengland.org.uk/research/results/reports/72-2016>

Historic Environment Record – Cheshire

Thornton R and Wood M *The Architecture and Legacy of British Railway Buildings 1825 to present day* The Crowood Press Ltd 2020