



THE NEW REFRESHMENT ROOM AT BRIDGNORTH STATION

There is no better way to take in the beauty of the River Severn and the Shropshire countryside than from one of the popular steam trains that run the 16 miles journey on the heritage line from Bridgnorth to Kidderminster.

Bridgnorth Station is the northern terminus of the Severn Valley Railway (SVR) heritage railway. Lying within the Bridgnorth Conservation Area and overlooked by Pan Pudding Hill – an important English Civil War site and a scheduled ancient monument - the Station is a highly significant heritage asset and popular tourist attraction.

Decline and preservation

Originally opened in 1862, the Station was built to serve small towns and villages in the area, but by 1963 (the time of the Beeching Report), passenger traffic had declined so much that it had to be closed down. From 1965 on, the Station was preserved from ruin by enthusiasts from the Severn Valley Railway Society until it could once more be opened to the public in May 1970.

In the 2000s, fundraising and development plans, including car park improvements and the restoration of the Grade II listed neo-Jacobean main Station Building were underway. However, toilet and buffet facilities, which had been housed in a 'temporary' Portakabin Refreshment Room since 1979, was now badly in need of replacement by something more sympathetic to its sensitive heritage surroundings, whilst meeting 21st century health and safety demands.

The new Refreshment Room

In August 2016, planning permission and listed building consent were granted for a new Refreshment Room building, funded by the SVR's successful £2.5million share offer.

Planning, listed building application and construction drawings were produced by Oxford Architects LLP, in close collaboration with Robert Marrows and David Postle from the SVR Conservation and Heritage Committee, who also project managed the development.

The new design by Robert Marrows was in the style of a typical ancillary structure of the Great Western Railway (GWR) from 1910, at an appropriate scale to the main station building minimise its impact on the heritage environment.

Sympathetic detailing

Meticulous attention was paid to all external and internal details, materials and finishes from bricks and mortar through to the interior design.

The simple single-storey structure was built with over 25,000 Staffordshire blue multi solid 'Class A' engineering bricks from Ketley Brick, which have natural blue tones with random flecks of red and brown on the face giving them an antique brindle appearance.

These were selected by hand in order to achieve the level of colour variation that would have been seen in this type of brick at the turn of the century and were laid in a traditional English bond pattern, with approximately 13,000 specially cut header bricks. Even the choice of mortar was consistent with the 1910 GWR aesthetic.

All pictures, Bridgnorth Station.

Areas of decorative brickwork further added to the character and historical authenticity of the building. Expert detailing included arches and bullnose brick reveals round the windows and doorways, corbelling beneath the eaves and plinths at the base of the building, and the four elaborate brick chimney stacks in the same brick.

The interior, which is fully fitted out with tables, chairs and curtains and Ketley's Staffordshire blue and red square quarry tile floors, recreates the period feel of a typical station buffet of that era.

A significant achievement

The project, which was managed by an SVR team with significant input from Robert Marrows and David Postle, was expertly executed thanks to the skillful workmanship of main contractor Iris Construction Projects Ltd, brickwork subcontractor, Jason Harrison and his team at Newdawn Construction.

Now open to the public, the finished Refreshment Room has greatly added to the development of this important Shropshire tourist attraction, allowing SVR to provide a better 'visitor experience', whilst greatly contributing to the local economy.

For more information about Ketley's range of bricks and quarry tiles call
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Above, Bridgnorth Station