

RAILWAY
HERITAGE
TRUST

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Commercial

The Railway Heritage Trust gives grants to restore historic buildings and structures across the national rail network. Our main brochure, which you can find on our website, railwayheritagetrust.co.uk, gives guidance as to exactly which sorts of buildings and structures are in our scope, and what our objectives are. Please make sure you are dealing with a building that is in our scope, and that your project meets our objectives, if you want to discuss a scheme with us.

However, we do not just look at the restoration works. We always want to see that the projects we support are associated with an ongoing sustainable use, so that the buildings do not fall back into disrepair. Such uses can be either community-based or commercial, and we have no particular preference for either. However, we do want to see a financially viable operation if we are going to support its capital costs. Here are some examples of commercial use of railway buildings that we have funded. We hope they might help you in setting up a project:

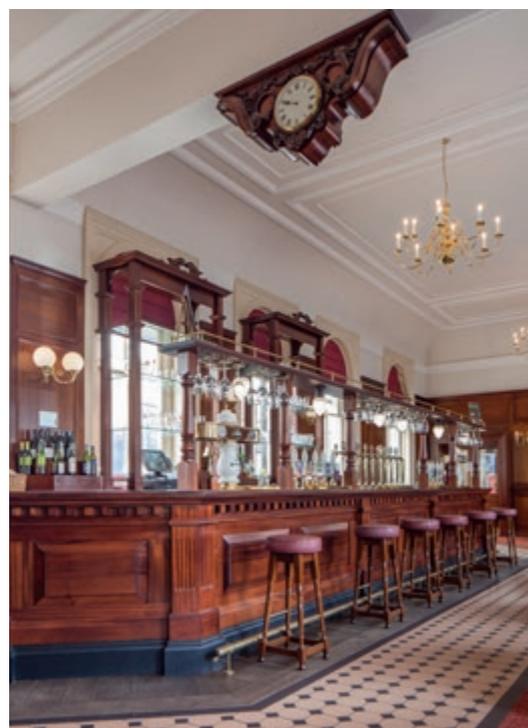
FOOD AND DRINK

We have successfully funded a wide range of pubs, cafés and the occasional restaurant on stations, from the very smallest, such as the former coal office at Dunbar or the café on the platform at Dumbarton Central, through the highly successful Taps at Euston, Sheffield, York and Harrogate, cafés at Coatbridge (Sunnyside), Berwick on Tweed, Lincoln and Newark Castle and the Platform 1864 restaurant at Tain. If you are interested in running a food or drink outlet on a station you need to look at the amount

of passenger traffic on that station, whether or not you can attract people into the station from outside the railway, and where your facility is placed relative to the flow of traffic (particularly important for cafés, which are at their busiest in the morning peak). You need to discuss your proposal with the station operator (usually the lead Train Operating Company), and your local planning, licensing and conservation offices. You need to set up your offer so that it is appropriate for the size of station and number of potential customers:

- will you offer food and drink;
- will you have seating or be take away only, and;
- how will you incorporate the heritage features of the building?

There's plenty to think about, but lots of examples show it can be done successfully.





OFFICES

Another use of redundant space in stations is for offices. In Morpeth the local development trust restored the station, and created seven starter office spaces, of which six were let before the restoration was complete, whilst at Moorthorpe the local council successfully restored a derelict station to provide café and office space. At Ingatestone a local developer has rebuilt the station house as his main office. Can you think of a location where offices might be useful?

HOLIDAY LETS

In out-of-the-way places it may be possible to create an unusual self-catering overnight rental base. We have particularly done this with redundant signal boxes: Corroul (Britain's most remote station) and Kyle of Lochalsh are two examples. Ribblehead and other stations on the Settle and Carlisle line, and Helmsdale in the far north of Scotland, are good examples of holiday space on restored stations. Perhaps you can attract customers to travel to you by train?



ART STUDIOS

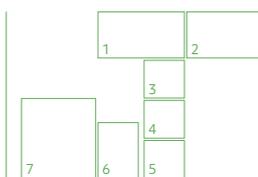
We have had particular success with creating art studios in the Kingdom of Fife, with commercial studios at Burntisland, Aberdour, Kinghorn and Ladybank. We can't see why this should not stretch to further afield!

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

In many ways station space can be used to improve people's health and wellbeing. Amongst other projects we have sponsored a health clinic at Eastbourne, a pharmacy at Bexhill, space for a psychotherapist at Ladybank, and martial arts gymnasiums at both Saltcoats and Helensburgh Central. The latter two could be considered as either a straight commercial business, or as a community operation designed to help young people develop their self-reliance and discipline.

CONCLUSION

We hope that all these schemes show some of the great ways you can restore old railway buildings into profitable enterprises. If you want to work with us on such a project, we will want to see your business case, and also to agree how the heritage features of the building can be incorporated into your business. Does it sound difficult? We are able to share plenty of examples with you to help you develop your proposal to become reality.



- 1 Morpeth
- 2 Kinghorn
- 3 Wakefield
- 4 Corroul
- 5 Saltcoats
- 6 Harrogate Tap
- 7 Coatbridge

Front York Tap

Back Corroul



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