

Proposed Fire Station for Ferbane

Architectural Impact Assessment Protected Structure at Ferbane, Co. Offaly



Location:	20-17 GALLAN Ferbane
Ref:	207 14806019
Rating:	Regional
Former Use:	Train Station
Current Use:	Offaly County Council, Ferbane area office
Proposed Use:	Ferbane Fire Station to extension and single storey part of building and the two storey section will continue to be used as Offaly County Council, Ferbane area office

Record of Protected Structures:

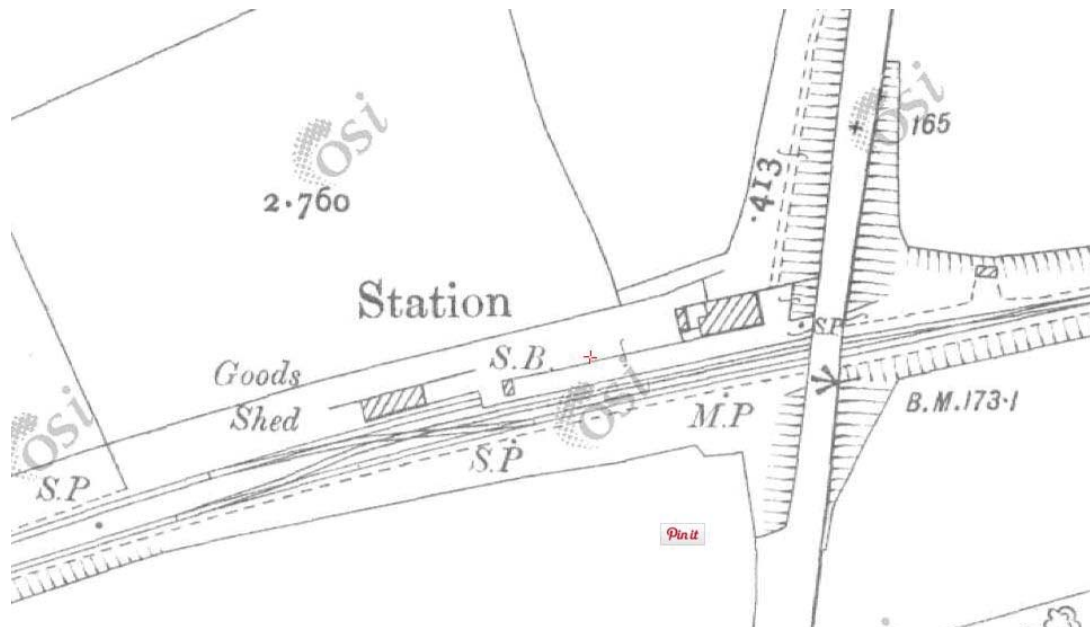
This Record of Protected Structures (RPS) is part of the County Development Plan for Offaly, 2014 - 2020 which was adopted by the members of Offaly County Council on 15th September 2014 and came into force on 13th October 2014.

Building Description:

Detached three-bay two-storey former railway station, built in 1884, on the Clara to Banagher Branch by the Great Southern and Western Railway. Set back from the road. Single-storey entrance to south. Pitched and hipped slate roofs with barge boards to gables, cast-iron rainwater goods and stepped brick cornice to eaves. Ruled-and-lined render to walls with smooth base plinth. Timber sash windows with painted stone sills. Square-headed door opening with overlight and timber door

Having closed to passengers in 1947 and ceased all services by 1963, the Clara to Banagher Line was made redundant. The station at Ferbane, like many of its counterparts, was no longer needed. Despite this, the Victorian structure has survived and is now reused, housing offices. Architecturally, the design is both simple and functional, adorned by few enrichments. Features that compliment its modest character include a brick eaves-cornice, timber barge boards, two-over-two sash windows and a square-headed doorway with overlight.

Original Setting:



Extract from the 25" historic map showing the station beside the tracks

This building was one of a number of almost identical buildings constructed along the Banagher line. The single storey side faced the platform and railway tracks. The station was in a rural setting outside of the town of Ferbane.



Historic photo of Ferbane station, probably taken from the railway bridge.



Historic photo of Belmont station, taken from the platform.



Belmont station was the next station along the Banagher line, it is used as domestic house today. Note the chimneys, it is likely that Ferbane station also had two chimneys. There was certainly one on the end nearest the road. They may have been removed because of water ingress or structural issues.

Current Setting:

The building is set within a county council yard with former stone railway sheds, newer storage sheds, prefabricated council accommodation and oil tanks to the rear.

This council yard area is separated from the relevant building by a green palisade fence. There is a mast to the rear of the building (the side of the former train track). The mast is also surrounded by a green palisade fence. The area in front of the building is covered in tarmac and is used for parking.



Council yard with palisade fence



Mast enclosure with palisade fence

A small enclosed courtyard adjoins the building. It contains a shed. A ground floor window and first floor window overlook the yard. This yard cannot be accessed from within the building. It would appear that a doorway from the building into the courtyard was closed up in the past. The outline of the doorway can be seen in the render. Another opening that would have opened onto the platform is also blocked up. A large painted metal gate allows access to the courtyard from the car park. This courtyard area is not currently in use.



Adjoining courtyard with metal gate



Adjoining courtyard with shed, mast to visible rear



Window overlooking courtyard



Window overlooking courtyard

The railway track has been removed. The platform adjoining the building has also been removed. This area has been infilled and now accommodates car parking. Further to the rear of the site near the stone shed, a section of the platform remains in place, although in poor order. The current county council offices no longer exist in their original railway station context.



Elevation of building, which would have faced onto platform.

Current Building Condition & Record:

The building comprises of a two storey section with a pitched natural slate roof and gable. This part of the building would originally ave faced onto the train platform. The single storey section has a hipped roof. There is a lead valley between the hipped roof and the wall of the two storey section. The gable of the building faces onto the public road. On the gable are attractive timber fascias with a decorative circle at the end. This fascia is rotten and one of the circles is damaged. There are no doors on this elevation.



Street Elevation



There is a commemorative plaque on the single storey section. It is in honour of Vol. Frank Dolan, old IRA who was killed on the 9th July 1922.

The building is constructed of buff coloured brick, or possibly stone. The external walls are approx 400mm deep. It is unlikely that there is any cavity in the walls.

The existing windows are generally in good order both externally and internally. They would benefit from painting on the exterior. The locks and sash cords are all in place and are in working order. The first floor window overlooking the courtyard does not appear to be in good order and is painted closed. It will need to be restored to working order.

The original window surrounds are all in place and are in good order. There are no shutters and it would appear that there never were shutters.



External view of window



Sash horn and cord in place

The two external timber doors are identical and are in reasonable order and can be retained and repainted. They both have a square headed clear light over the door.



Front door



Rear door

The roof is of natural slate construction and will require some repairs. A few slates have slipped and may need to be replaced with similar natural slates. There are slates on the shed which is to be demolished. It is proposed to retain these slates and use them for all future repairs on the roof of the main building. The slates are a heather colour and are probably Welsh in origin. One can see a few grey slates used for repairs that do not match the heather colour.

The ridge and hip tiles are clay. The hoppers, gutters and downpipes are cast iron. They will require painting and some maintenance but are in reasonable order and will not require replacement.



Slate roofs

The brick eaves-cornice includes a beautiful stepped detail. These bricks are brownish purple in colour. The brick detail is only on two sides of the single storey section and does not continue onto the courtyard elevation.



Hopper at roof junction



brick detail

Internal condition

Internally there are signs of dampness on all of the walls.

There is also signs that the roof is leaking over the stairs.

No remedial action apart from heat and ventilation is proposed for the dampness on the walls. The internal finishes will be repainted.



Evidence of leak over stair



Dampness under first floor window



Dampness between ground floor window, dry lining blow window boards hides dampness



Crack in wall in ground floor office

Internal Doors

A number of the internal doors are original and many are of a more recent construction. We have numbered the doors to show which are original and which are more recent.



Door 9



Door 6



Door 5



Door 4

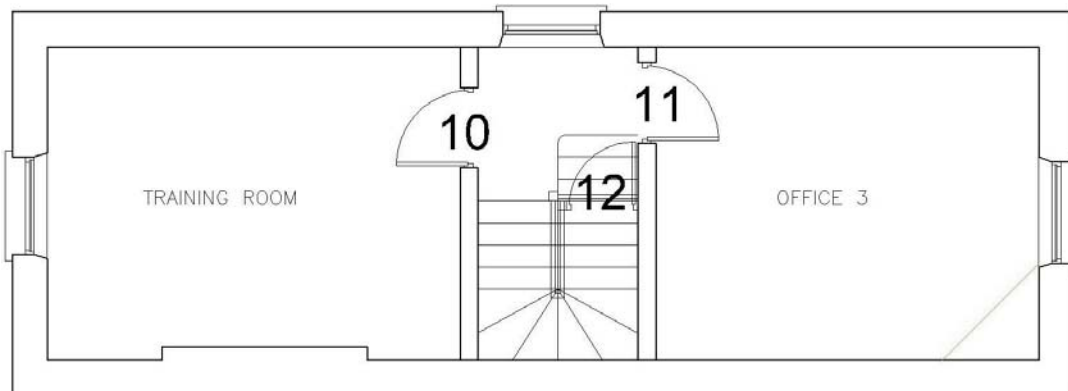


Door 3 & 2 (to side)



Ground floor plan.

Doors 3, 6, 8 & 9 are original



First floor plan.

Doors 10 & 11 are original

Proposed alterations & Impact:

It is proposed to demolish the courtyard and the shed within the courtyard completely. The slates from the shed are to be used to repair the main roof.

To form the link with the new section of the fire station, it is proposed to remove the window, cut the wall down to ground level, leaving the existing lintel in place over the door. The existing window surrounds are to be left in place.

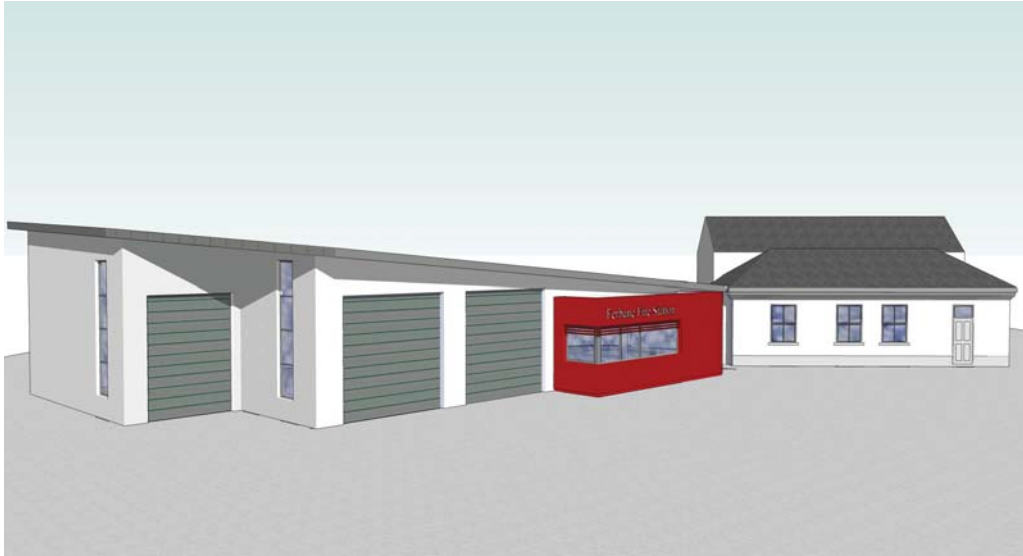


Relevant window, which is to be turned into doorway.

It is also proposed to demolish the wall dividing the main room in the single storey section in two. This wall is a stud partition and would not appear to be original. The layout of the room and the new skirting would suggest that the wall is not original, as would its stud work construction however the door in this wall is an original door (Door 9). We propose to save the door and use it to replace one of the newer doors.

It is also proposed to block up Door 6. This will allow Offaly Co Co to use the two storey part of the building and Ferbane Fire service to use the single storey part. It is proposed to block it by a stud partition, packed with insulation & with plasterboard on both sides, constructed within the depth of the doorway and to leave the door in place. This action is reversible and will not damage the fabric of the doorway.

The impact of the extension will not negatively affect the setting of the building. The current setting is rather bleak and the Fire Station use will bring the building back to being more involved in the day to day life of Ferbane. The extension is modern and is sympathetic to the protected structure. The structure of the new building will be completely separate to the existing. The roof of the extension rises up from the side of the single storey section and the mass of the new part does not belittle the existing protected structure.



While there will be irreversible damage done to the protected structure, on balance I believe it is a positive change that breathes new and exciting life into this old railway station.



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