

Station Master's House: Restoration

McGurk Architects



McGurk Architects' concept for the refurbishment of the Grade B1 Station Master's House, Maghera, revolved around the restoration of the building's primary architectural features and the integration of the beautifully detailed 'porte cochère' platform and covered waiting area to provide a functional, modern office space. This was successfully achieved with a structural glazing 'wrap' which the practice developed in conjunction with local firm Top Glass, whilst also creating much needed floor space for the developing solicitor's business. Commissioned in January 2015 by Mallon McCormick Solicitors, the practice researched

the building's listing, through the local library's archive material, the Ulster Architectural Heritage Society and contemporary train stations constructed in the late 19th Century, such as Malahide Station (using information provided by Joe Mallon). The original property was a single-storey, detached building of solid brick construction with a flat-roofed canopy extending to the front of the premises over the old platform. The structure dated from the 1880s, the time of the construction of the railway. A two-storey side extension with a dual pitched roof was added shortly after this, as evidenced in photographs dated 1937. The

building showcases a range of integral brick detailing; the main brick coursing pattern is a 'common bond' (sometimes referred to as American bond) with a two course head of distinctive blue banded brick. The eaves are detailed with a corbelled saw-tooth arrangement and a quarter circle concave detail whilst the windows and door jambs also have quarter circle convex jamb and head details, brick hood and segmental arch defined in a yellow brick. The building was listed in 1994 and given a grade B1 status due to both its historical and architectural interest. Working with an historic building



ornate cast iron engraved support columns and the original brick building behind.

New interventions, such as the polished concrete floor, frameless glazing and Specialist Joinery's timber clad conference room are confidently new; juxtaposed with the original features they create a complimentary respectful relationship between old and new. Historic buildings narrate our social, economic and environmental past. Having suffered from dereliction, neglect and vandalism, the repair and restoration of this building has brought new life into the Station Master's House, conserving its historic value for years to come whilst supporting a new use. Much credit must go to P & K McKaigue, the main contractor, for applying the attention to detail required throughout the project and for Joe Mallon, the client, for his unwavering commitment to ensuring the finished detailing was worthy of such a fine historic building refurbishment.

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Photography by Richard Trainor

always comes with an inherent risk; a project which may at first appear straightforward can often unveil a number of 'surprises' which can often substantially increase the scope of both work and cost. A detailed survey of the Station Master's House revealed several items for concern; outbreaks of dry rot, decayed structural timber, woodworm and rising damp - to name but a few - much to the client's dismay. Specialist sub-contractors were therefore engaged to treat the damp and dry rot. All sources of moisture which were identified were eliminated, and timbers no longer fit for purpose replaced or spliced. The traditional timber sliding sash windows were retained and refurbished to their original state. Brick was cleaned and re-pointed with lime mortar. The existing Bangor Blue roof slates were carefully removed to allow for new roofing felt and replacement joists, before being reinstated. Specialist suppliers were sourced to ensure any replacement items were authentic. Advice was sought from the Ulster Architectural Heritage Society on how to utilise

traditional building skills and traditional design. Enclosing the existing canopy allowed us to utilise this area to provide additional internal usable space for the client whilst also defining the entrance to the building with the new approach from Station Road. The space under the canopy was converted into a waiting and reception area; recalling its historic usage as a waiting platform. The frameless glazing system reveals the

