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Building Conservation Assessment Report

For:
**Former Tuam Railway Station,
Vicar Street,
Tuam,
Co. Galway
H54 E186**

Client:
Galway County Council



Date: 11th February 2025

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**Copies of this report
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Acknowledgements:

Architectural Conservation Professionals acknowledges any information supplied by the Client and information obtained from the Record of Protected Structures (RPS), the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) and record of Monuments and Places (RMP)

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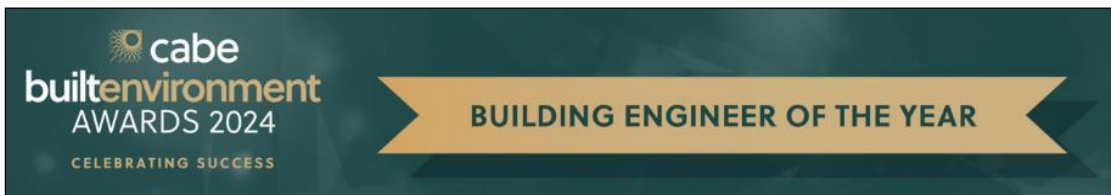
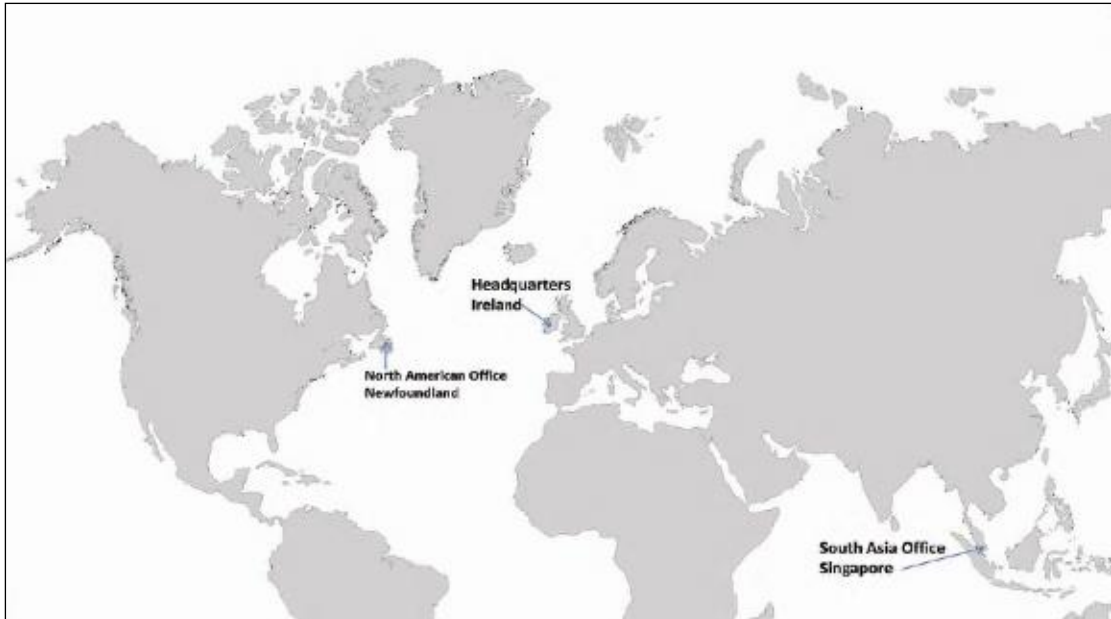




TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES, TABLES AND PHOTOGRPAHS.....	5
GLOSSARY OF TERMS	6
PENALTIES FOR OFFENCES.....	8
1.0 SCOPE OF STUDY.....	9
1.1 Method of study	9
2.0 EXISTING ENVIRONMENT	10
2.1 Location	10
2.2 Protection Status.....	12
2.2.1 Record of Protected Structures	12
2.2.2 National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH)	12
3.0 CONDITION ASSESSMENT	14
3.1 Emergency Works	15
3.1.1 Chimneys Stacks	15
3.1.2 Roof Covering	16
3.1.3 Roof Structure.....	17
3.1.4 Rainwater Goods	18
3.1.5 Floors	18
3.2 Urgent Works.....	20
3.2.1 Window / Door Assemblies	20
3.2.2 Ceilings.....	20
3.3 Necessary Works.....	22
3.3.1 Walls	22
3.3.2 Mechanical and Electrical Services	23
3.4 Optional Works	24
3.4.1 Insulation	24
4.0 CONCLUSION AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS.....	25
5.0 SIGNING OFF STATEMENT	26
6.0 PROJECT REFERENCES	27



LIST OF FIGURES, TABLES AND PHOTOGRAPHS

FIGURES

Figure 1: OSI Map ©OSI License ACP Architectural Conservation Professionals CYAL50428180.....	10
Figure 2: 1 st Edition Map ©OSI License ACP Architectural Conservation Professionals CYAL50428180.....	10
Figure 3: 2 nd Edition Map ©OSI License ACP Architectural Conservation Professionals CYAL50428180.....	11
Figure 4: Map Genie 2013 - 2018 ©OSI License ACP Architectural Conservation Professionals CYAL50428180	11
Figure 5: Diagram of a suspended floor retrofitted with insulation.....	24

TABLES

Table 1: Protection Status	12
Table 2: NIAH Record.....	12

PHOTOGRAPHS

Photograph 1: View of the southern-most stack	15
Photograph 2: View of the western roof planes in very poor condition	16
Photograph 3: View of decayed roof timbers	17
Photograph 4: View of lean-to structure	17
Photograph 5: View of blocked and rusted cast iron gutter.....	18
Photograph 6: View of a suspended timber floor in very poor condition.....	19
Photograph 7: View of an original timber sliding sash window assembly	20
Photograph 8: View of original lath and plaster ceiling with decorative plaster coving	21
Photograph 9: View of modern plasterboard ceiling in the entrance hall.....	21
Photograph 10: View of suspected modern OPC external render	22
Photograph 11: View of internal wall suffering from water ingress	22
Photograph 12: Example of Cellulose being sprayed in between ceiling joists in an attic	24



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

1. ACA

An Architectural Conservation Area is a place, area, group of structures or townscape that is of special architectural, scientific, social or technical interest, or that contributes to the appreciation of a protected structure, whose character it is the objective of a development plan to preserve - Section 52 (1) (b) of the 2000 Act.

2. Area of Special Planning Control

Areas of Special Planning Control provide powers to planning authorities not alone to give protection to the character of certain qualifying areas, but also to enhance that character, that is, to restore it and to require owners and occupiers to conform to a planning scheme – Section 84, of the 2000 Act

3. NIAH

The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage. The purpose of the NIAH is to identify, record, and evaluate the post-1700 architectural heritage of Ireland, uniformly and consistently as an aid in the protection and conservation of the built heritage. NIAH surveys provide the basis for the recommendations of the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht to the planning authorities for the inclusion of structures in their Record of Protected Structures (RPS)

4. Protected Structure

A “**protected structure**” is defined as any structure or specified part of a structure, which is included in the Record of Protected Structures. The term “structure” is defined by Section 2 of the 2000 Act to mean ‘any building, structure, excavation or other thing constructed, or made on, in or under any land, or any part of a structure so defined, and where the context so admits, includes the lands on, in, or under which the structure is situate’. – Section 2 (1) of the 2000 Act

5. Section 57 Declaration

Section 57 Declaration Owners or occupiers of a protected structure may request a ‘declaration’ under Section 57 of the 2000 Act. The purpose of which is for planning authorities to clarify in writing the kind of works that would or would not materially affect the character of that structure or any element of that structure which contributes to its special interest. Declarations guide the owner as to what works would and would not require planning permission in the context of the protection of the architectural heritage. This is because the character of a protected structure cannot be altered without first securing planning permission to do so.

6. RMP

Archaeological sites are legally protected by the provisions of the National Monuments Acts, the National Cultural Institutions Act 1997 and the Planning Acts. The National Record of Monument & Places (RMP) is a statutory list of all known archaeological monuments provided for in the National Monuments Acts. It includes known monuments and sites of archaeological importance dating to before 1700AD, and some sites which date from after 1700AD.

7. RPS

Record of Protected Structures. A Protected Structure is a structure which is considered to be of special interest from an architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical point of view. The Record of Protected Structures (RPS) is a list of the buildings held by a Local Authority which contains



buildings considered to be of special interest in its operational area. Section 51 (of the 2000 Act) requires that the development plan shall include a Record of Protected Structures and that the Record shall include every structure which is, in the opinion of the Planning Authority, of special interest.

8. SAC

Special Area of Conservation are prime wildlife conservation areas in the country, considered to be important on a European as well as Irish level. Most Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are in the countryside, although a few sites reach into town or city landscapes, such as Dublin Bay and Cork Harbour.

9. SPA

Ireland is required under the terms of the EU Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) to designate Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for the protection of:-

- Listed rare and vulnerable species;
- Regularly occurring migratory species;
- Wetlands especially those of international importance.

Levels of significance – NIAH Definitions 2021

International Significance Structures of sufficient architectural heritage significance to be considered in an international context. These are exceptional structures that can compare with the finest architectural heritage of other countries. Examples include the Custom House in Dublin and Saint Fin Barre's Cathedral in Cork

National Significance Structures that make a significant contribution to the architectural heritage of Ireland. These are structures that are considered to be of considerable architectural heritage significance in an Irish context and examples include Ardnacrusha Generating Station in County Clare; Sligo Courthouse; the Carroll Cigarette Factory in Dundalk; Emo Court in County Laois; and Lismore Castle in County Waterford.

Regional Significance Structures that make a significant contribution to the architectural heritage of their region. They also bear comparison with similar structures in other regions in Ireland. Examples include the Georgian terraces of Dublin and Limerick; the Wikinson-designed workhouses in each county; and the Halpin-designed lighthouses around the Irish coastline. Increasingly, structures that warrant protection make a significant contribution to the architectural heritage of their locality. Examples include modest terraces and commercial buildings with early shopfronts.

Local Significance These are structures that make a contribution to the architectural heritage of their locality but which do not merit inclusion on the RPS.

Record only These are structures that are considered to have insufficient architectural heritage significance at the time of recording to warrant a higher Rating.



Penalties for Offences

Architectural Heritage Protection

A Protected Structure and built fabric within its curtilage is protected by law under Part IV of the Planning and Development Act 2000. The penalties for breaches of this Act are severe. Section 156 of the Act states:-

(1) A person who is guilty of an offence under *sections 58(4), 63, 151, 154, 205, 230(3), 239 and 247* shall be liable—

(a) on conviction on indictment, to a fine not exceeding £10,000,000, or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 2 years, or to both, or

(b) on summary conviction, to a fine not exceeding £1,500, or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months, or to both.

Monuments and Places included in the Record

Section 12 (3) of the Act provides for the protection of monuments and places included in the record stating that

"When the owner or occupier (not being the Commissioners) of a monument or place which has been recorded under subsection (1) of this section or any person proposes to carry out, or to cause or permit the carrying out of, any work at or in relation to such monument or place, he shall give notice in writing of his proposal to carry out the work to the Commissioners and shall not, except in the case of urgent necessity and with the consent of the Commissioners, commence the work for a period of two months after having given the notice."

A person contravening this requirement for two months notification to the Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland of proposed works at or in relation to a recorded monument or place shall (under Section 13 of the Act) be guilty of an offence and be liable on summary conviction to a maximum penalty of a £1000 fine and 12 months imprisonment and on conviction on indictment to a maximum penalty of a £50,000 fine and 5 years imprisonment.

It should also be noted that Section 16 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994 amended the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1987 (the Act of 1987) so that under Section 2 (1) (a) (iv) of that Act **the use or possession of a detection device**

"in, or at the site of, a monument recorded under section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994,"

is prohibited otherwise than in accordance with a consent of the Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland granted under the provisions of Section 2 of the Act of 1987.

A person contravening the above provisions relating to use or possession of detection devices shall (under Section 2 (5) of the Act of 1987) be guilty of an offence and be liable (under Section 23 (1) of the Act of 1987) on summary conviction to a maximum penalty of a £1000 fine and 6 months imprisonment or on conviction on indictment to a maximum penalty of a £50,000 fine and 12 months imprisonment.

It should be further noted that under Section 7 (1) (a) of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994 a member of the Garda Síochána may without warrant seize and detain:

"a detection device found in, at the site of, or in the vicinity of a monument recorded under Section 12 of the Act unless the person in possession of the device has a consent of the Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland in accordance with the provisions of Section 2 of the Act of 1987."



1.0 Scope of Study

This report has been prepared following a request by the client, Galway County Council. The study sets out to determine the condition of the Former Tuam Railway Station, Vicar Street, Tuam, Co. Galway and assess the condition of the building's fabric from a Building Conservation perspective.

The condition of the building fabric is categorized to illustrate the items which are in most need of attention to achieve a habitable dwelling.

This is not a comprehensive building/structural survey and should not be taken as such. It must be noted that no opening up was carried out on walls, floors etc. and that this report is based on a visual inspection only. We can only comment on those items which were both visible and accessible at the time of our inspection.

1.1 Method of study

The following methods and resources were used in establishing this report. This list is not exhaustive.

- The subject site was studied, visited and inspected by a Building Conservation Accredited Surveyor / Chartered Building Engineer and a Historic Building Consultant from ACP on the 31st of January 2025.
 - The data and observations provided within this report are representative of the condition of the subject structure(s) on the day of inspection only.
- The Record of Protected Structures constraint maps and lists (RPS) and the sites were studied.
- The Record of Monuments and Places from the National Monuments Service website was studied.
- The National Parks and Wildlife Service website was studied.
- The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage was studied.



2.0 Existing Environment

2.1 Location

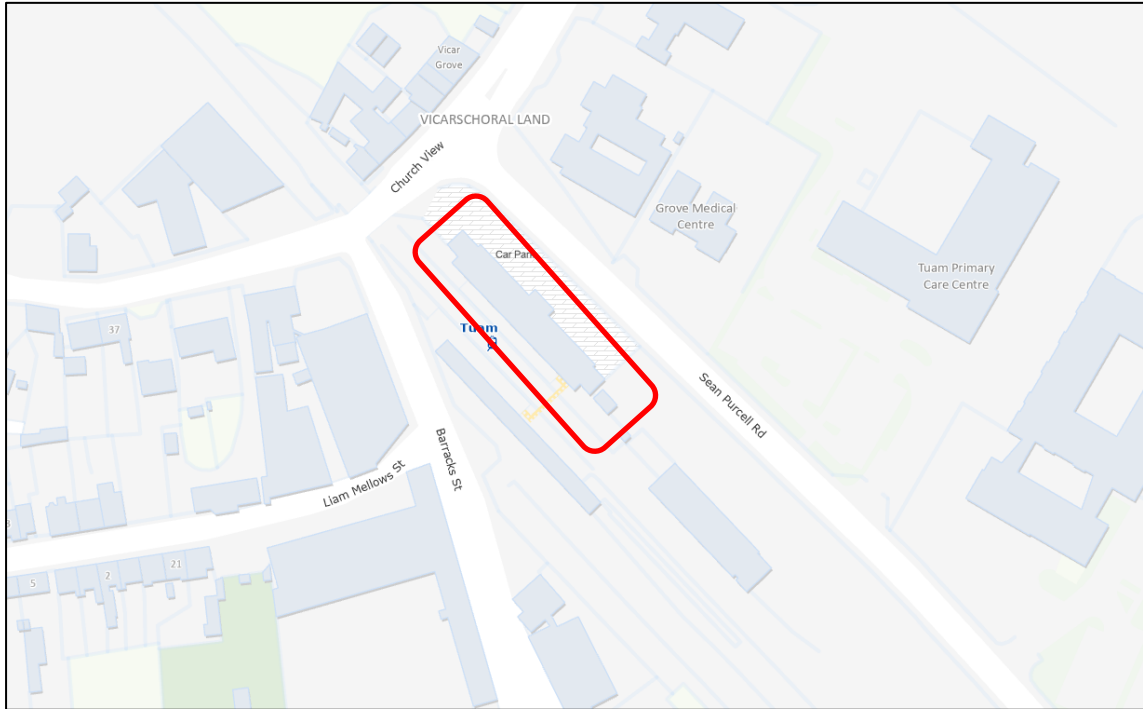


Figure 1: OSI Map ©OSI License ACP Architectural Conservation Professionals
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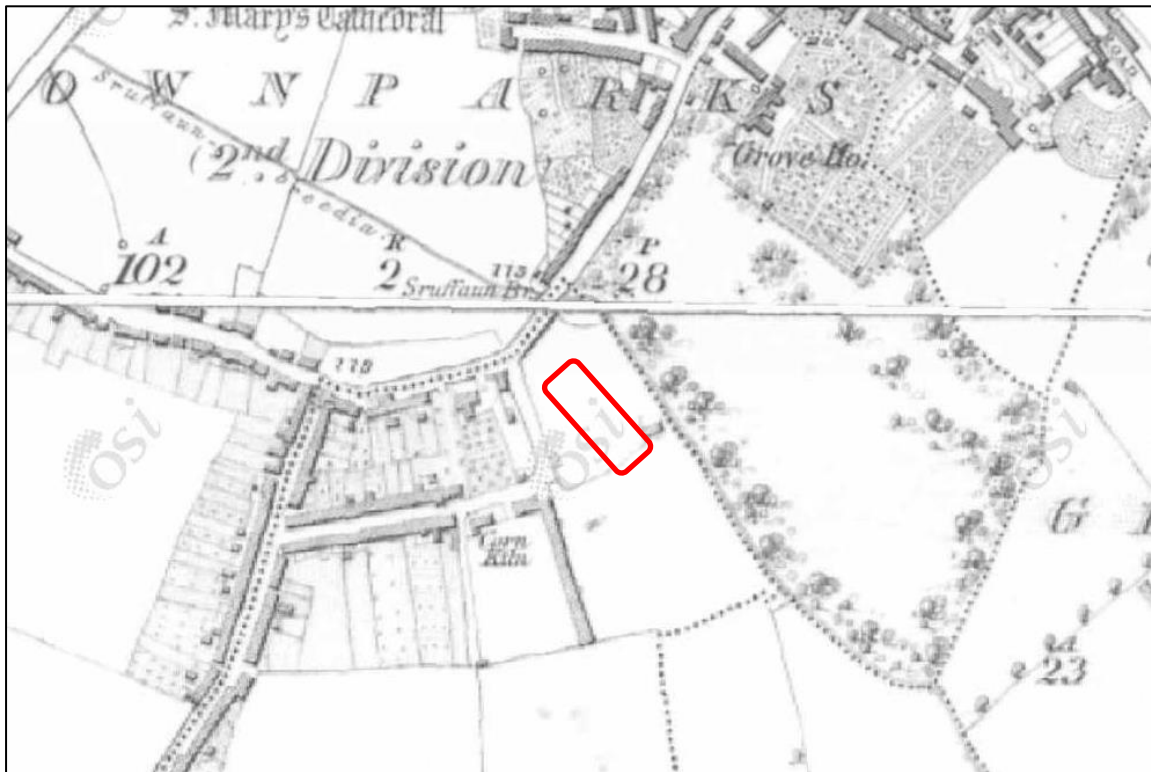


Figure 2: 1st Edition Map ©OSI License ACP Architectural Conservation Professionals
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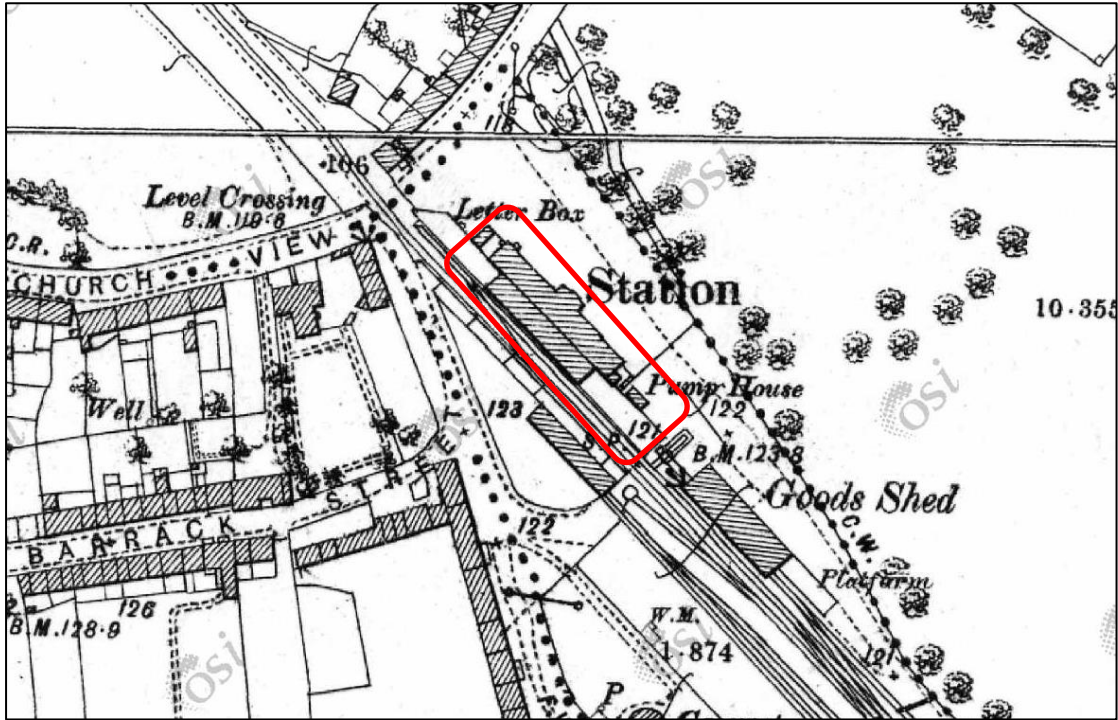


Figure 3: 2nd Edition Map ©OSI License ACP Architectural Conservation Professionals
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Figure 4: Map Genie 2013 - 2018 ©OSI License ACP Architectural Conservation Professionals
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2.2 Protection Status

Protection Status	Y/N	Details
Record of Protected Structures (RPS)	Y	RPS No. 52
Recorded Monument (RMP)	N	
Architectural Conservation Area (ACA)	N	
Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	N	
National Heritage Area (NHA)	N	
Zone of Archaeological Notification	N	
State Guardianship or ownership	N	
NIAH Building Record	Y	30331045
NIAH Garden Record	N	

Table 1: Protection Status

2.2.1 Record of Protected Structures

The designation of a Protected Structure includes the structure itself, its interior, the surrounding land or ‘curtilage’ of the structure, or any other structure (including boundaries) within the curtilage, their interiors and all fixtures and features of the structures. It can also include certain features in the attendant grounds. All features which contribute to the character and special interest of a protected structure are considered protected.

52	30331045	Tuam Railway Station	Detached nine-bay single-storey former railway station with rendered facade and stone dressings and open bed pedimented central breakfront.c.1860. Platforms, water tower, foot bridge, shelters and goods sheds. Station building undergoing renovation to accommodate hostel and restaurant facilities.	Regional value because of its architectural quality and as a complete unit of railway buildings. Historically they recall the great age of railway transport.	Tuam	VICARSCHORAL LAND	X:143430 Y:251600	
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1

2.2.2 National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) ²

Reg. No:	30331045
Date:	1870 - 1890
Previous Name:	St. Joseph's Convent of Poor Clares
Coordinates:	143430, 251597
Categories of Special Interest:	Architectural, Historical, Social
Rating:	Regional
Original Use:	Railway station
In Use as:	Building misc

Table 2: NIAH Record

“Description

Detached nine-bay single-storey railway station, built c.1880, five-bay central section with projecting gable-fronted porch, flanked by slightly recessed two-bay sections. Now in commercial use. Pitched slate roof with six ashlar limestone chimneystacks, and wide eaves with carved timber brackets. Painted rendered walls, front elevation having rusticated limestone raised quoins to all corners and cut limestone skirting. Square-

¹ Source: Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028: Appendix 6 - Record of Protected Structures

² Source: <https://www.buildingsofireland.ie/buildings-search/building/30331045/tuam-railway-station-sean-purcell-road-vicar-street-vicarschoral-land-tuam-galway>



headed window openings with limestone sills and two-over-two pane timber sliding sash windows, except for westernmost opening which is replacement timber. Latter opening formerly doorway, with moulded limestone surround. Square-headed doorway having cut limestone doorcase with impost, plinths and brackets supporting heavy cornice, glazed timber panelled double-leaf doors and plain overlight and approached by limestone steps with metal rails. Platform façade of building obscured by modern additions. To east is cast-iron water tank signed 'B GRAHAM WATERFORD', standing on limestone base built of large blocks of roughly finished limestone, some with natural vermiculation, and rusticated raised quoins on corners and on central round-headed arch.

Appraisal

Tuam railway Station is a handsome villa-style building probably by J.S. Mulvany who designed doorcases similar to this one in other locations. It is a fine building in the tradition of railway architecture and is enhanced by the retention of most of its original fabric and details. The water tank is also a good structure in the engineering tradition."



3.0 Condition Assessment

The report categorises the works into those repairs of an emergency nature, those that should be done as soon as is practicable and works of a more comfort-of-use nature.

Emergency Work: is what must be done straight away to deal with work necessary for the safety of the fabric and/or its users.

Urgent Work: is that required to prevent active deterioration, i.e., attack by insect or fungus or penetration by rainwater.

Necessary Work: is that required to the 'standard' appropriate for the building and its present or proposed use in the context of the client's resources and includes items of preventive maintenance. This category can be subdivided into 'good housekeeping' 'rolling programme' and 'major works'.

Optional Work: is what is recommended to enhance the use or appearance of the building or what is necessary for re-evaluation or adaptive use of the building.

Note: The condition of the modern extensions is discussed in this report, however, the recommended works to the same are not included as the client is proposing to remove all modern extensions as part of the proposed works.



3.1 Emergency Works

Works required to fabric which is in imminent danger of failure resulting in loss of fabric and injuries to the users of the buildings. Works of this nature, in the case of the Former Tuam Railway Station, are required to the chimneys, roof, rainwater goods and floors.

3.1.1 Chimneys Stacks

There are 6 No. brick chimney stacks to the principal roof which are in varying states of repair. The lead flashing and counter flashing applications at eaves level have been removed in recent years exposing the base of the stacks to the elements. A number of the original stone chimney caps appear to have been replaced with modern concrete capping. There are no chimney pots present.



Photograph 1: View of the southern-most stack

The Chimney stacks will all require full raking out of the existing binder and repointing using a natural lime based and sharp sand based mortar.

When on closer inspection during the detailed design stage (pretender), it is found that the chimney stacks are compromised, it is recommended to dismantle the defective stacks and rebuild the stack to match existing using a natural lime based mortar. Any masonry that can be salvaged would be reused with any shortfall in brick masonry or stone capping to match the original.

Works would include the installation of a rolled lead sheet termination tray at eaves level and at the top of the chimney stack beneath the capping. It is advised to installed new chimney pots along with cowls to prevent direct water ingress to the lining of the stacks.

The chimney systems will require further investigation by way of a CCTV survey, to be undertaken ahead of the detailed design stage, pretender. The result of this survey will narrow down the required scope of works for each chimney stack.



3.1.2 Roof Covering

There is a natural slate roof covering with clay tile ridges on the principal roof planes of the Former Tuam Railway Station which is in very poor condition with slipped and fallen slates throughout. A considerable portion of the natural slate is no longer present on the southwestern-most roof plane, leaving the underlying roof structure exposed and resulting in severe water ingress internally.

The 2 No. modern extensions flanking the northern and southern ends of the station building have a modern fibre cement slate roof covering which are in fair to poor condition as observed externally. There are a number of broken and fallen slates on the western roof planes of both structures resulting in water ingress internally.

There is a corrugated metal roof covering over the original lean-to canopy on the track side of the station building, which is in very poor condition with bowing and rusting throughout. The original lean-to sails over a modern flat roof corridor extension which also has a corrugated metal roof covering. Internally, it is evident that the abutment detail between the flat roof and the wall has failed due to the water ingress observed, most notably on the southwestern-most portion of the corridor.

All of the roof coverings are presently secured in place using netting, affixed to the roof at eaves.



Photograph 2: View of the western roof planes in very poor condition

In the case of the Former Tuam Railway Station, it is recommended to remove of the full roof covering, undertake remedial repairs to the timber structure as required (discussed separately), followed by the addition of an underlay before reinstating the salvaged natural slate, new natural slate and rolled lead sheet as required. The corrugated metal roof covering over the original lean-to canopy will require a full replacement to match existing.



3.1.3 Roof Structure

Access to the attic space was not possible on the day of inspection. It is evident when viewed externally that the principal roof carcass is in very poor condition, suffering from severe wet rot due to its exposure to the elements and the extent of water ingress over the years. The principal roof plane level also appears to have dropped throughout due to the decay of underlaying timbers.

The principal timbers of the original lean-to canopy appear to be fair condition throughout with further inspection required to the ends abutting the main station building to assess their condition for potential repairs. The fascia boards, however, have decayed considerably.



Photograph 3: View of decayed roof timbers



Photograph 4: View of lean-to structure

On the removal of the roof covering, it is envisioned that the roof carcass will require extensive repair / replacement works including splice repairs where possible with any required replacements to be carried out on a like for like basis.



3.1.4 Rainwater Goods

The existing original cast iron rainwater goods on the principal roof are in very poor condition. Many elements are either no longer present or are blocked with vegetation and have rusted. There are modern PVC rainwater goods on the 2 No. modern extensions flanking the northern and southern ends of the station building.



Photograph 5: View of blocked and rusted cast iron gutter

There are extensive replacement works required to the gutters, downpipes, anchors, gaskets, etc.

It is recommended that surviving elements of the rainwater goods are blast cleaned and inspected by the appointed Building Conservation Accredited Surveyor for suitability of reuse. Any sections requiring replacement and the replacement of any missing sections are to be with new cast iron elements, to match the exiting dimensions and profiles.

3.1.5 Floors

The majority of the original station building has suspended timber floors (a number with modern carpet or lino finish) with concrete floors throughout the modern extensions. Many of the timber floors are in very poor condition due to water ingress over the years and insect attack. of which there is evidence of.

There are areas where the suspended timber floors are dangerous to walk on, especially given the depth of the space between the floors and the ground level and safety risk factor associated with falling through such a distance. There are floor vents present on the external walls, as observed externally.



Photograph 6: View of a suspended timber floor in very poor condition

It is recommended that the full suite of repairs is carried out to the suspended timber floors. All floorboards will need to be lifted to assess the underlying floor joists and determine the extent of repair/replacement works required.

The original floorboards would be reinstated as part of works with any shortfall to be made up with new timber floorboards to match existing.

See section “



3.4 *Optional Works*” below on recommended “enhancements” to the building fabric to bring the building up to a comfortable state of habitation / use.



3.2 Urgent Works

Works as required whereby the fabric of the building is in a poor state of repair and requires urgent intervention to stave off any further decay. Works of this nature, in the case of the Former Tuam Railway Station, are required to the window assemblies and ceilings.

3.2.1 Window / Door Assemblies

There are original timber sliding sash window assemblies present throughout the original portion of the station building with a mix of original and modern doors present. The window and door assemblies are generally noted to be in a fair to poor condition due to years of little to no maintenance.



Photograph 7: View of an original timber sliding sash window assembly

It is recommended that a paint sample analysis is undertaken ahead of works, in order to determine finishes and inform the record of the structure. Generally, the works will involve the removal of the assembly from the frame (window or door), the removal of glazing, the removal of paint finishes to inspect and repair to the timbers, the reinstatement of the glazing and putty followed by priming, painting, hanging and balancing.

3.2.2 Ceilings

There is a mix of original lath and plaster ceilings and modern plasterboard ceiling in the building. There is decorative plaster coving present in a number of the rooms. It appears that where there have been replacement works carried out to the ceilings, the coving detail was not reinstated. Overall, the ceilings are in poor repair with cracking and crazing throughout the original ceilings. There is also widespread mould buildup as a result of water ingress and a lack of heat and ventilation.



Photograph 8: View of original lath and plaster ceiling with decorative plaster coving



Photograph 9: View of modern plasterboard ceiling in the entrance hall

It is recommended to carry out necessary repair / replacement works to the original ceilings whereby the ceilings are pinned back to the laths, using a system of stainless steel “mushroom” pins installed in predrilled holes at regular intervals, rendered back over with a natural lime-based render and natural plaster finish applied to entire ceiling.

Whereby way of inspection, it is found that the plaster “keys” through the laths is absent or severely compromised, it may be necessary to remove the ceiling in full and reinstate a new lath and plaster ceiling, with the new ceiling using traditional methods and materials e.g. riven laths, natural lime based plaster with natural plaster skim finishes. If required (should the existing cornices be deemed not salvageable by the inspecting conservation consultant), the cornices are to be reinstated using the traditional running mold method, with natural plaster material. The profile taken from the existing.

Works to the modern ceilings will involve the replacement of failed sections with a matching plasterboard followed by the application of a skim coat finished level with the surrounding surface. It is also recommended to reinstate the plaster corncicing detail throughout the building.



3.3 Necessary Works

The Necessary works will generally cover elements of the buildings fabric which are in a fair state of repair overall but require localised works to ensure that the fabric doesn't decay any further, or the fabric is approaching a repair / maintenance milestone. Works of this nature, in the case of the Former Tuam Railway Station, are required to walls.

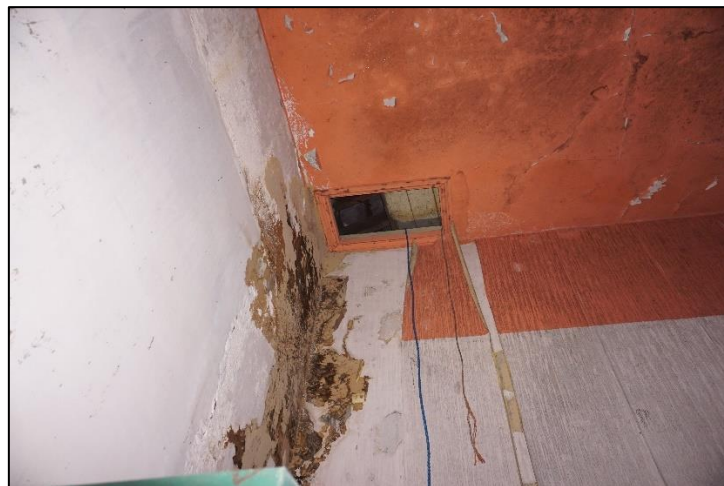
3.3.1 Walls

It is suspected that the original masonry walls are finished externally with an Ordinary Portland Cement (OPC) based render. Although the render does not currently display a great number of patent defects, it is inherently unsuitable for the building's traditional masonry construction type due to its near impervious nature.



Photograph 10: View of suspected modern OPC external render

Internally, the original walls are in fair to poor condition, having suffered damage due to ongoing water ingress over the years with paint and wallpaper coming away from the walls in places.



Photograph 11: View of internal wall suffering from water ingress

Externally, it is recommended to remove any inappropriate cementitious render, undertake necessary raking and repointing works using a natural lime-based mortar followed by the application of a four-coat natural lime-based render with a harling dash finish to match the style of the existing.



Internally, a plaster analysis is recommended to confirm whether the smooth plaster finish on the walls is original or modern which will then determine the scope of repairs required.

3.3.2 Mechanical and Electrical Services

It is recommended that an audit of the existing mechanical and electrical services to the Former Tuam Railway Station be carried out to ascertain any required works. It is likely that a full renewal of these services is required.



3.4 Optional Works

In the case of the Former Railway Station, the recommended optional works include the insulation of the floors and attic space to improve the thermal comfort within the building.

3.4.1 Insulation

Currently there is no insulation in the suspended timber floors, and it is not known whether or not there is insulation in the attic space.

On completion of the necessary repair works to the roof and ceilings and the installation of the first fix service runs, it is recommended that a natural, vapour open insulating material (such as Cellulose or Hemp) be installed over the ceiling fabric to the required depth as per standard.



Photograph 12: Example of Cellulose being sprayed in between ceiling joists in an attic³

It is also recommended to retrofit insulation beneath the floorboards, between the supporting joists amid repair works to the suspended floor throughout the original building. Retrofitting works include the introduction of an appropriate breathable membrane, draped up and over the joists which supports a natural, vapour open insulating material (such as Hemp Jute) followed by the installation of a vapour control membrane before the reinstatement of the floorboards.



Figure 5: Diagram of a suspended floor retrofitted with insulation⁴

³ <https://www.ecologicalbuildingsystems.com/product/cellulose#installation-guide>

⁴ <https://www.ecologicalbuildingsystems.com/post/suspended-timber-floor-insulation-best-practice-installation-guide>



4.0 Conclusion and Development Implications

The Former Tuam Railway Station was presented on the day of inspection in a poor, severely dilapidated condition overall. The roof covering has failed and given cause to a series of defects to the internal fabric giving cause to the dereliction of the building.

The items categorised as Emergency Works in this report, which include the chimney stacks, roof, rainwater goods and floors, are in a condition such that they present a danger to anyone working in or near the building and to the public in general.

Much of the original historic fabric of the station building remains, including walls, ceilings, floors, etc., and can be successfully repaired and retained within the principles of Architectural Conservation to ensure that the character of the Former Tuam Railway Station is retained.

The full suite of repairs, as detailed within the report, are required in order to return the building from its current derelict condition and made the building habitable once more.

As the Former Tuam Railway Station is a Protected Structure all works within the property and its curtilage will require permission under Part IV of the Planning Act 2000. This includes both internal and external works and includes general maintenance works.

A Section 57 Declaration can be sought from the Local Planning Authority which will set out works that can be undertaken without planning permission and it will also identify works that would require planning permission.

Maintenance and repairs are normally covered under a Section 57 Declaration. All other works which involve a change of character to the building and its curtilage will require the granting of Full Planning Permission.



5.0 Signing off statement

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Signed:

For ACP Archcon Professionals Limited.

Dated:

11th February 2025



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