

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1991

THE REGISTERED BUILDINGS (GENERAL) REGULATIONS 1991

To: Mr Colin Victor Gundry and Mrs Anne Elizabeth Gundry
Port Soderick House
Port Soderick
Braddan
Isle of Man

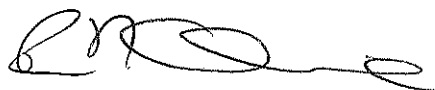
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that at a meeting held on the 18th August, 2000, the PLANNING COMMITTEE of the Department of Local Government and the Environment, in pursuance of its powers under the above Acts and Regulations REGISTERED

**Port Soderick House
formerly known as Port Soderick Railway Station**

as represented by the buildings shown outlined in red on the plan hereto attached, in the PROTECTED BUILDINGS REGISTER by reason of architectural and historic interest.

THE EFFECT OF THIS REGISTRATION IS IMMEDIATE and prohibits the alterations or demolition of the structures or appearance of any part of the buildings except in compliance with an obligation imposed by or under any statutory provision or with the prior written consent of the Planning Committee.

Dated this 18th day of September, 2000
By Order of the Committee



**R M Quine
Secretary, Planning Committee**

3rd Floor, Murray House
Mount Havelock
Douglas

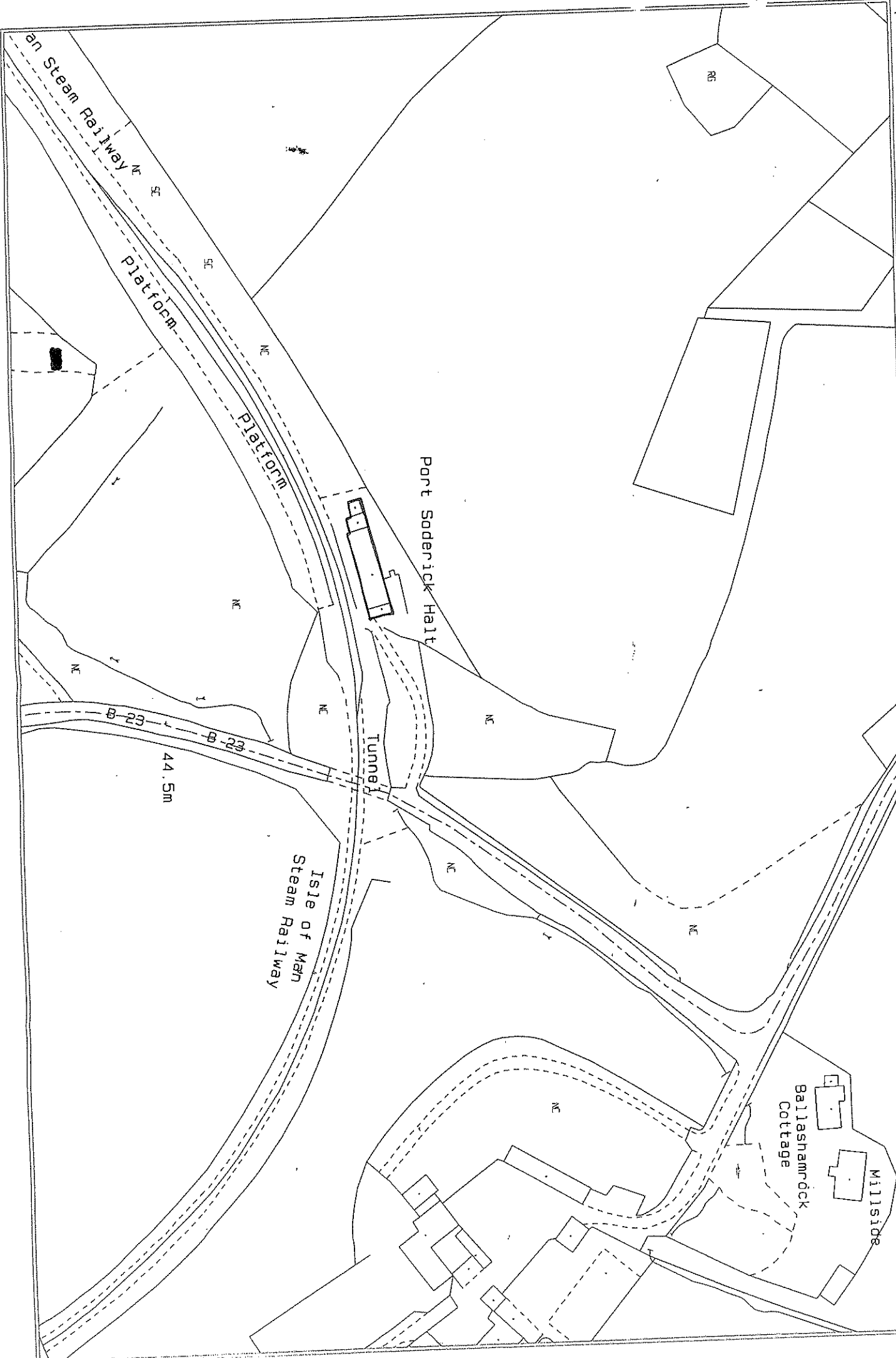
NOTE: Rights to de-registration of the building are provided under the Regulations and in summary are that:

Application in writing for de-registration may be made by the owner or occupier of, and any other person having an interest in the building, within a period of 28 days of service of this notice. Such application should be sent to the Secretary, Planning Committee, 3rd Floor, Murray House, Mount Havelock, Douglas.

In the event that de-registration is not requested by any party within the 28 day period described above, then de-registration may not be requested within a period of 3 years.

- cc
- 1) Braddan Parish Commissioners, Close Corran, Union Mills, Braddan
 - 2) Manx National Heritage, Kingswood Grove, Douglas
 - 3) The Advisory Council on Planning & the Environment, 52 Alberta Drive, Onchan
 - 4) R.B. File 180

Scale 1:1000



PORT SODERICK STATION BUILDING

Historical Notes

Introduction

A railway was first mooted, for the Island, in the 1840's when internal transport was still fairly primitive. However, it was not until 1865 that a short-lived Isle of Man Railway Company came into being; even though it was only in name. Finally in December 1870, the I.o.M Railway Co. Ltd was registered with the purpose of connecting the four main towns of Douglas, Castletown, Peel and Ramsey; with an understanding that, at some point in the future, the southern line would extend to the new harbour development in Port Erin. Initially, Port Soderick, or Ballashamrock as it was first named, was only planning to be a stopping point - so no passenger facilities were considered necessary. Somewhat surprisingly the Company only recognised how important the halt was after the line was opened; and it was the popularity of Port Soderick Cove that subsequently led to the construction of the station.

Historical Association

When the Douglas to Port Erin Railway line was opened on the 1st August 1874, the station consisted of a single track served by a 'wooden sentry box'; built to offer administrative facilities and some protection to the station master.

Even by 1875 this was found to be wholly inadequate, particularly during rain storms when waiting passengers also attempted to take shelter in the box, and improved facilities were requested.

The Superintendent of Line's, F.H. Trevithick, solution was to bring the 'box' from Santon, locate it adjacent to the existing 'box', join the two together with a roof; thus creating a perfunctory shelter. A siding was also added to cater for Port Soderick Cove 'excursion coaches'.

In 1880 it was proposed to convert the existing siding to a full loop and to build a station master's house (at a price not exceeding £120).

The loop was apparently completed in 1881 but according to one source and for some unrecorded reason, not officially commissioned until 1894.

In 1894 the Railway Company determined to improve the station with a budget of £1800. Plans were drawn up (a Manx Museum reference is given by JIC Boyd - but currently the whereabouts of the plans are 'uncertain') and tenders sought. At the

General Purposes Committee meeting, of 19th December 1895, it was resolved to accept the tender of James Cowle for the sum of £1054. It is assumed that the design was also by James Cowle, it being known that he offered such as a service. By early 1896 the old station buildings had been demolished and a new purpose built, and substantial, station house was well under construction. It was reported by the Chairman, Goldie Taubman, at the March 1896 AGM that the new station was very much required as the station master often had to walk some distance home at night carrying all the takings; as it was unsatisfactory and unsafe leaving them at the station. Furthermore, there were complaints from customers about the lack of refreshments and shelter available whilst waiting for trains. Taubman stated that all of these failings would be remedied by the new building. The new station building was completed possibly by the autumn (Sept/Oct?) 1896 and included ticket office, licensed refreshment hall and station masters accommodation.

In December 1896 a tender was accepted from Brook and Sons to build a 'downside' platform, that was flagged with Hipperholme Yorkshire stone, at a cost of £1100. The coping stones were paid for in March 1897, so it is assumed the work was completed about that time.

At the AGM, held in March 1897, the Chairman's Report included this excerpt:

"We have done something towards improving our stations during the year. At Port Soderick, as you are no doubt aware, we have put up a good substantial building at a cost of something like £1100. It is not a very beautiful or ornamental building, but it is admirably adapted to the use to which we have put it."

The station house continued to serve the railway for almost 100 years, except when it was closed during the First World War and at other such times before dwindling passengers and revenues forced the company to offer the house for private use. A planning application was lodged in May 1979 by a prospective tenant, to convert the station for adventure Holiday accommodation. Despite planning approval in principle being granted, the plans did not progress.

In fact, by the time this application was made, owing to its financial plight, the Railway Company had already succumbed to a takeover by the Government. At an extraordinary A.G.M., held on 23rd November 1977, the shareholders had accepted an offer of purchase. The M.E.R. took control of the running of the Isle of Man Railway Company on the 1st December 1977 and the Station became the property of the M.E.R. Board on the 13th January 1978.

In possible preparation of its being offered for sale, the Station was transferred from the ownership of the M.E.R. to the Government Property Trustees. When it was finally sold in late 1984, for £15,000, it was described as near derelict; but was sold on the proviso that the new owner had to retain the character of the building.

Some time during the mid 1980's a mezzanine floor was installed, and other minor alterations took place. Externally, there appears to be very few differences today to the original structure, the tall chimney stack at the front of the building has been partially removed, probably after the sale in 1984, it still being visible in the late sixties when the building was painted grey with red woodwork; & shown on the 1979 Ellis Brown drawings.

Despite extensive searches, at the Museum, it has not been possible to find the Deed recording the sale, of the land the station stands on, to the railway company. The current owners abstract of title begins in 1981 when the GPT gained the title. However, it is believed that the station was built on a part of the Ballavere Estate that, certainly in the 1880's, was owned by a William Moore.

Architectural Interest

This building is clearly interesting because of its association with other railway buildings on the line. When opened it was described as 'not very beautiful or ornamental' but this was probably to distinguish it from the greater effort put into Douglas and the other 'town' stations. The building has much which is aesthetically pleasing and which is of interest being planned as both a railway building and a residence. It would have appeared very modern using vertical window divisions and front facing gables as well as the castellation, which were very popular following buildings such as Greeba Castle and the Nunnery.

The use of the casement windows was entirely compatible with other railway buildings but less usual in Manx houses of the period where sliding sash windows would be the norm. It was however during this period the casement design became increasingly popular encouraged by the new designers like Baillie Scott and Armitage Rigby who designed in the Arts and Crafts style.

The strange castellated 'ears' either side of the gables seem to be devised to accommodate the chimney required for the third bedroom. The rhythm of the upper storey, set up by the gables and window openings, is not rigidly followed by the openings on the ground floor. The distinctive ivy covered lower storey, was already established in 1907 (photo - Manx National Heritage) and may be to accommodate and to disguise this fact. The ivy is carried on a metal frame and was recently pulled forward to release trapped debris, which was causing damp in the building. The very neat green boundary between public and residential domains is a very satisfying detail and is judged to be a distinctive feature of the building.

The original plans are not available at present, nor has any research that may reveal brief given to the designer. It would be interesting to know if the sized was determined by a standard waiting room size, buy budget or indeed by the need to provide a full three bed-roomed apartment. Census information regarding the occupancy (and need for a third bedroom and all castellations) will not be released until Jan 2002.

Conclusions

Although the building is described by its original owners as “not very beautiful or ornamental” this is much too simplistic a view. Compared to the ‘Gothic’ styled station building in Douglas it is plain but, when their settings are taken into account, both fit in comfortably with their surroundings.

Additionally, its conversion to a private dwelling has been accomplished relatively easily and its association, and proximity, to the steam railway has often been the attraction to more recent owners.

Even the original proposed private use, that of an adventure holiday camp, shows how existing buildings can be adapted to a variety of suitable and versatile uses. Port Soderick Station is a good example of how ‘redundant’ buildings can be ‘recycled’, satisfactorily converted and reused for other purposes.

The building by its proximity to the track, its continuity with the original track side accommodation building of 1897 and the association with other railway buildings and the present Port Soderick Halt, makes this a building of special Architectural interest.

The building, although not longer servicing the railway, is still an important part of the Victorian built heritage of the Island and the Steam railway; and especially as its external appearance remains very similar to when it was built over a hundred years ago.

The Port Soderick House is judged worthy of entry into Protected Buildings Register on the following grounds:-

- 1) the buildings special architectural interest and aesthetic quality;
- 2) the buildings historical association with the development of the Isle of Man Steam Railway system;
- 3) the buildings landmark qualities and the contribution which it makes to the rural landscape of the Isle of Man.

SEPTEMBER 2000













