

News

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Morgan Sindall begins £3 million Ballater station restoration

Morgan Sindall has started a high-profile, £3 million project to restore Ballater Old Royal Station in Aberdeenshire, Scotland.

The listed building is an important heritage asset, historically used by the Royal Family when travelling to nearby Balmoral Castle, but it was almost completely destroyed following a fire in May 2015.

The station ceased to operate as a functioning railway station in 1966, but for the last 15 years the building has been leased to VisitScotland – the country’s national tourism agency – functioning as a tourist information centre and a museum celebrating the station's rich cultural history.

Although much of the building was destroyed by fire, a replica royal carriage survived, as well as various undamaged display cases, which will be reinstated as part of the restoration.

Plans will also see a new library and larger exhibition space added to a visitor information centre and restaurant.

The principle elevations of the original building will be reinstated, matching the original Victorian architecture and detailing, including a faithful restoration of Queen Victoria’s waiting room.

The start of work on site was marked by a traditional turf cutting ceremony, attended by Aberdeenshire Council Provost Hamish Vernal along with representatives from Morgan Sindall, architects Halliday Fraser Munro and VisitScotland.

Provost Hamish Vernal cut the first turf with a ceremonial spade and wheelbarrow, which was originally used to start the construction of Ballater Railway Station by the Great North of Scotland Railway Company in 1865.

He said: “Ballater has had a tough time lately. The fire was a terrible tragedy along with the devastation suffered as a consequence of Storm Frank.

“However, I can see real progress with many shops open for business again and more and more residents returned to their homes. Therefore, it is great to see another milestone achieved through the start of the construction work to redevelop the Old Royal Station.”

Jo Robinson, VisitScotland Regional Director, said: “I am delighted that real progress is being made with bringing Ballater’s Old Royal Station back to life, as is evidenced by the cutting of the first turf today.

“The redeveloped station - incorporating the VisitScotland iCentre - will be the jewel in the crown of the tourism offering in Upper Deeside and I very much look forward to seeing this come to fruition, thanks to the strength of the partners behind this project.”

Morgan Sindall area director, Mark McBride, said: “Morgan Sindall has a successful track record of delivering public sector projects and we’re proud to have been selected for one that has such significance to people not only in the local area, but across Scotland as a whole.

“It’s our first contract awarded through Aberdeenshire Council’s Main Contractor Framework and we’re pleased to get work underway.

“Ballater Old Royal Station has a rich cultural history and is integral to the region’s tourism industry. We’re mindful of the need to retain as many of the original heritage features as possible during the restoration process and confident that the finished building will be well received.”

Work is expected to be completed by the end of the year.

For more information about this news release please contact Jonathan Daly or Steve Sanders at Influential on 0161 935 8474 or email daly@thisisinfluential.com