



Settle-Carlisle Railway Development Company Limited

Settle Station Café Bar
“The Station Porter”

Project Outline



Background & Context

What is a Micro Pub?

The model for a micro pub is: small size, maximum use of space, real ales, no music and no electronic gaming machines. This results in: low rent, no complicated cellar equipment, no music licences and therefore lower running costs. The customer benefits from a friendly atmosphere where conversation with other customers is encouraged, and regularly changing ales are sold at a reasonable price.

Growth of the Phenomenon

In 2011, there was only a handful of micro pubs in the UK. Today, there are 55 and the number continues to increase at a steady rate. The received wisdom is: if you don't open a micro pub in your town, somebody else will!

Location

Settle station is a Grade II listed Victorian station building on the historic Settle-Carlisle Railway, which carries over 800,000 passengers every year. Settle station has a manned ticket office and is the southern base for the on-train trolley refreshment service. The station is well used by local residents, commuters, coach parties, walkers and other tourists.

At present, the former 'Ladies Waiting Room' is used as a passenger information area. A computer screen was installed some years ago to show live running information. With CIS screens being installed by Northern Rail in the near future, this room will lose that particular function.

What the station lacks, however, is a quality outlet serving a range of refreshments. This proposal is to convert the redundant passenger information room into a micro pub/café bar which can retain the role of a space for passengers to wait for the train. It is proposed to call this "The Station Porter".



Settle station

Opening Times & Staffing

The Station Porter's opening times will be tailored to meet demand which is largely driven by the train timetable. On weekdays, it will open at approximately 1120 to coincide with the arrival of the 1146 from Leeds. The lunchtime period will be boosted by the arrival of train from the north at 1332 and the south at 1348. We anticipate that there may be a period of an hour when the café bar is closed during the afternoon prior to reopening at approximately 1600. The evening session will end at 2120 after the last train has departed south. On Saturdays, it will remain open throughout between 1100 and 2130 with a shorter time on a Sunday in the core of the day. We are considering promoting it for private hire on Sunday evenings, albeit staffed by the Development Company.

We anticipate that at least two part-time positions will be created by the opening of The Station Porter. Existing members of Development Company staff will also be invited to come forward for training if they wish to be part of the Station Porter team.

Exact details of staffing and opening hours will inevitably be influenced by the level of demand, once up and running. It may well be that the café bar remains open throughout the afternoon on weekdays as well as at weekends, but some seasonal variation is anticipated.

Range of Beverages

Good quality teas and coffees will be served. To minimise any impact on the train trolley service or Friends' shop, these will be restricted to consumption on the premises only (ie, served in china cups) and priced to differentiate.

There will be four hand pumps on the bar, selling a constantly changing variety of real ales. The house ale will be brewed by the Settle Brewing Company, based in the Sidings adjacent to the station. The remaining three pumps will serve ales sourced from other local brewers, and some further afield. The range will change from day to day, thus encouraging regular visits from ale enthusiasts.

Alongside the hand-pulled ales, there will be a range of high quality soft drinks (such as Fentiman's), a bottled cider and our own bottled lager, brewed by the Eden Brewery.

It is also intended to offer a choice of red, white or rosé wine, which will come from a local supplier – featured on a blackboard as 'Wines of the Week'.

Food Offering

We intend to offer a very limited range of simple snacks: hot pork pie & peas on a daily basis and hot soup in the winter alongside a small range of traditional bar snacks (crisps/nuts). There will also be a homemade 'Cake of the Day'. We are conscious of the high profit margin that can be made on the sales of hot snacks and want to make the most of that opportunity.

Proposed Style & Layout

At present, there is bench seating down two sides of the room. This is functional, but not particularly comfortable. It is not an original part of the station fixtures, so it is proposed that this should be removed. An existing pellet burner stove will also be removed. While practical, this is unsightly and very large.

Having opened up the space, the room will be furnished with a selection of small round pub tables with heavy cast iron bases. A variety of comfortable chairs and pews will provide seating. In addition to this, shelving can be fitted around the room at which people can sit on high stools.

The bar will be fitted in the corner, diagonally facing the entrance door. This will give access through the existing doorway in to the back room, which will be the service area.

Victorian-style light fittings will be installed, to create a cosy atmosphere, and a heritage style heater will be set into the existing fireplace. Decoration in the form of vintage railway posters and perhaps some railway memorabilia will complete the scene.

In keeping with other micro pubs, there will be no recorded music playing. This will encourage conversation and a friendly, sociable atmosphere.

Mood Board



The Practicalities

There is a narrow room that runs the whole width of the waiting room and is accessed via a door. This doorway will become the way through from the bar to the back bar/kitchenette. A stud wall and door will be fitted, as in the Friends shop, dividing the back room into two separate areas. This will give a contained space which can be used as a cellar. By installing a chiller unit and insulating the window, this can be kept at a constant temperature of 10-12 degrees centigrade. Pipework will run through to the bar where the beer is dispensed.

Glass washing and preparation of simple snacks, teas and coffees will be done in the back bar.

A glass-fronted refrigerator, visible to the customers, will be used to store all bottled cold drinks.

Building Work

Some minor alteration work (all of which would be easily reversible) will be required.

This will include the following:

WAITING ROOM:

- Removal of existing bench seating
- Removal of door through to back room
- Installation of bar across corner of room and shelving
- Re-decoration in appropriate heritage colours
- New lighting fittings
- New heater
- New flooring (specification subject to investigation of existing)

BACK ROOM:

- Installation of stud wall to create cold room area
- Installation of chiller unit
- Insulation of the windows in the cold room
- Alterations to plumbing in back room
- Fitting kitchenette in back room

The above works will be subject to Listed Planning Permission from Craven District Council and Landlord's Consent from Network Rail.

Marketing

To ensure the success of the venture we will implement a full marketing plan. Ongoing activities will drive revenue as well as usage of the railway and visits to Settle.

The following activities have been initially identified to build into a plan:

- Social media – Twitter, Blog, Facebook
- Group travel promotions
- Publications – Timetable, Black Book
- Settle-Carlisle website information
- FoSCL members offers
- Promote a Settle Beer Festival
- Promotion to hikers groups
- Ride and Stride users
- CAMRA members
- PR Plan
- Dales Railcard holders
- Dev Co subscriber newsletter
- Private events Sunday PM
- Complimentary groups promotions – steam railways, heritage associations
- High profile launch event

Benefits

The following benefits have been identified:

- Job creation
- High quality refreshments for rail users and tourists visiting the station
- Micro pub as a destination will generate new rail users
- Heated, pleasant waiting environment outside normal station opening hours
- Access to the station's WC facilities outside normal station opening hours
- Rail information will be available outside station opening hours (via staff and literature)
- Quirky destination will appeal to Settle residents and bring tourists to the town
- Policy of sourcing all supplies locally will benefit the local economy