



Station is front and central



▷ Newcastle Central Station today. Improvements to the station frontage have helped to unlock the potential of the whole area – and it doesn't stop here

WHEN Queen Victoria stepped off the royal train in Newcastle on August 29 1850 she was welcomed – by the firing of guns from the Castle Keep – to what The Journal described as ‘the best railway station in the world’.

Fast forward 167 years and Central Station is once again emerging as a grand gateway to the city, kickstarted by public money and being driven into the future by private investment.

First announced in May 2013, the £20m Central Station Gatesway project – put together by partners Newcastle City Council, BID company NE1 Ltd, East Coast and Network Rail – was signalled as a key economic priority for Newcastle, but it came at a time of city-wide cuts to

The redevelopment of Newcastle's Central Station was billed as a chance to transform the area and attract private sector investment. Three years on, reports COREENA FORD, that promise is being fulfilled.

services in the wake of the recession.

As plans were unveiled to the public, council leaders described the need to invest in the city, not least to bring increase employment and the amount of business rates and to improve revenue streams for the city.

“With Central Station we can improve the economic prospects for Newcastle in the future,” said one councillor.

The regeneration was kickstarted

by the £8.6m makeover of the station itself, designed by Newcastle's Ryder Architects and funded by the Department for Transport's Station Commercial Project Facility Fund, to create the grand, glazed portico entrance.

Council money, as well as a £4.9m grant from the Regional Growth Fund, also paid for improvements to the area in front of the station, including changes to the taxi rank, as well as changes to the flow of traf-

fic at the front of the station.

Early artists' impressions of what was to come pretty much match the current reality – though without the traffic, which is arguably a continuing issue.

The redevelopment has helped to unlock the multi-million pound regeneration of the Stephenson Quarter development behind the station and has also attracted numerous businesses into and around the station, including the

nearby archways which are now home to all manner of quirky industries.

Adrian Waddell, director of operations at NE1 LTD, said: “The redevelopment of the Central Station was pivotal to NE1's capital investment programme and a key strand of our business plan.”

“The John Dobson-designed Central Station has always been a significant architectural gem in the city with a Grade I listed status, as well as being a crucial station on the east coast main line and the gateway to the North.

“However, everyone with a vested interest in the station would admit that, before the investment pro-

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TIME OUT EXTRA

who what where when?

- WHO...succeeded Henry VIII?
- WHAT...is the fourth letter of the Greek alphabet?
- WHERE...did Mark Spitz win 7 Olympic gold medals?
- WHEN...did Samuel Johnson complete his dictionary?

remember when...

The following events all occurred in a year in living memory.

Can you guess the year?

1. Manfred Mann had a U.K. No.1 single with Do Wah Diddy Diddy
2. The Beatles starred in A Hard Day's Night
3. Actor Alan Ladd died
4. Play School was the first programme officially broadcast on BBC2

impossipuzzles

Susan stopped typing. "That's funny," she said. "I've just done two invoices for Lunex, same amounts and both amounts even pounds."

"That moon outfit, eh?" Clem smiled. "What's odd about that if the things are the same?"

"Well, they're for pluters," the girl told him. "But one's for two sizes at 49p and 74p, while the other is for the 59p and 69p sizes."

"All strictly net and no tax, then." Clem glanced at the invoices. "That is really odd, and it could not have been that way for any smaller totals."

What were those totals?

wordwise

The word may sound familiar, but what does it mean?

PURSY

- A Fat and short
- B Children's game
- C Welsh granite

who am I?

A painter, I was born in Wyoming in 1912. An abstract expressionist, I popularised the technique of Action Painting. I was once portrayed in film by the actor Ed Harris, and my major works include Blue Poles and Galaxy.

10 questions

1. Newcastle University began with teaching in what specialised field?
2. Name the football joker who was booked when he picked up the ref's yellow card, which had been dropped, and attempted to book the official in a Rangers vs Hibernian match.
3. Where was the 1966 Roman Polanski film Cul-de-sac, which begins with a gangster's car stuck on a causeway, set?
4. What kind of car has Nissan promised to make by 2020?
5. What was the surname of the father and daughter were both MPs for North West Durham?
6. How many times has Donald Trump been married?
7. "It's a bit of an animal" is an advertising slogan for which product?
8. In what country is the Ian Fleming International Airport, named after the James Bond creator who wrote his novels there?
9. John Wayne won his only Oscar after playing Rooster Cogburn in what 1969 film?
10. Child detectives Peter, Janet, Jack, Pam, Barbara, Colin and George are collectively known as what?

answers

1. Medicine
 2. Paul Gascoigne
 3. Holy Island
 4. Driverless ones
 5. Armstrong - the father was Ernest and the daughter was Hilary
 6. Three
 7. Peperami
 8. Jamaica
 9. True Grit
 10. The Secret Seven
- 10 QUESTIONS:
 WHO AM I: Jackson Pollock.
 WORDWISE: A
 REMEMBER WHEN: 1964
 IMPOSSIPUZZLES: Each invoice is £13.
 WHO WHAT WHERE WHEN: Edward VI, Delta, Munich, 1755.



► Alok Loomba and Sarah Smith of Sintons with Barry Ladhar of Crafted Projects

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gramme, the station was in need of upgrading as the rest of the city underwent investment and regeneration, it was obvious that the station needed work to ease the conflict between pedestrians and vehicles as well as improving the retail offer.

"NE1's contribution working with Newcastle City Council was to secure £5m from the Regional Growth Fund as well as acting as a catalyst for the redevelopment project bringing together Network Rail, Virgin Trains and Newcastle City Council.

"Collectively we invested what amounted to a combined £24.5m in

the station and delivered a station befitting a modern European regional capital city.

"We knew that once the first stage of the redevelopment of the Central Station was completed it would have a huge economic impact on the surrounding area and unlock further

Phase 2 of the project will enable a second southern access to the station to be opened up

Adrian Waddell

capital investment and business growth.

"We're delighted that this has been borne out - less than two years after the project's completion - tremendous plans for further investment have been announced or are under way.

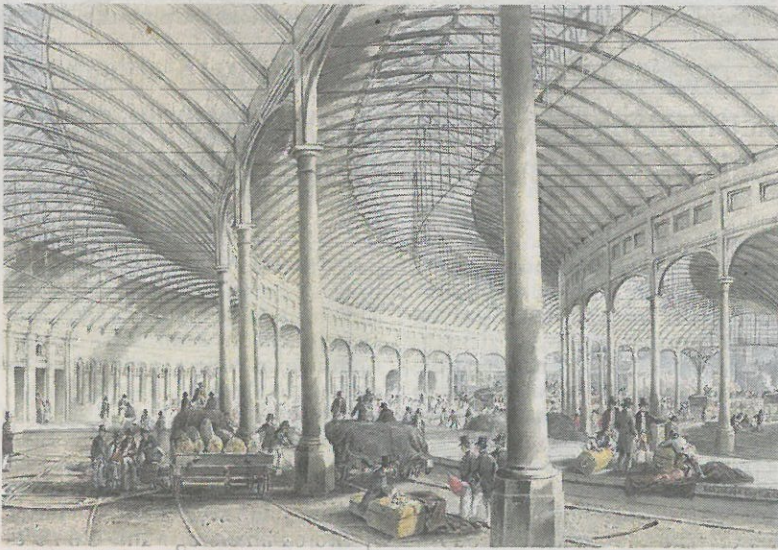
"We already know that the station's renovation has resulted in an additional £10.7m private sector investment and a second phase of development worth a considerable amount.

"Phase 2 of the Central Station project will enable a second southern access to the station to be opened up and aid the redevelopment of land to the west where the new Police Headquarters and the Clouston Group development at Stephenson Quarter to the south of the station are already evident."

A host of food retailers have opened within the station, and plans have been submitted to Newcastle City Council which could soon see the launch of a bottle shop showcasing local micro breweries' bottles and cans at Unit 11 inside the station.

But much of the success of the Central Station scheme has been seen in the revival of the surrounding area.

Investments include the arrival of the Hampton by Hilton Hotel, which opened in March 2015 following the multi-million pound conversion of offices within Baron House, while the former O'Neill's pub was also taken over by Nicholson's Pubs and re-opened as The Victoria Comet.



► Central Station (1850) by John Dobson and John Wilson Carmichael



► Central Station, Newcastle, has stepped into the 21st Century in some style

Simon Greener

But it is independent regional operators who have led the way in helping to reshape the area through investment plans, demonstrating their passion for the architecture and history of the area, while also

clearly recognising the returns they can garner from such investments.

North East leisure groups - including Crafted Projects, Camerons Brewery and the Gainford Group - are ploughing significant sums into

the area.

Camerons Brewery, based in Hartlepool, completed a huge refurbishment of the Head of Steam nearby two summers ago and Gainford Group is believed to have forked out

around £12m for the County Hotel.

Meanwhile Crafted Projects, the leisure arm of the Ladhar group of companies, unveiled a completely new look for The Lounge bar in Baron House last December when it

was turned into the Central Oven and Shaker cocktail and pizza bar and restaurant.

Barry Ladhar, director of Crafted Projects, said: "The development of the Central Station area is very positive for both the city and local businesses. As a company we have owned and operated licensed venues in this area for many years. The key to success is the diversity of the offering.

"When we considered what type of venue would work best at this location we considered carefully how we could complement our existing offering at other sites. Central Oven and Shaker felt like something a bit different which would cater for a number of markets - giving a relaxed casual dining experience throughout the day but offering a more grown up cocktail experience later in the day.

"As the venue historically had a licence we were able to gain the appropriate permissions without too much difficulty. Having said that we have had a very warm response from our neighbours who feel that our investment has added to the vibrancy of the area.

"Both NE1 and the city council deserve enormous credit for the work they are doing - building on the renaissance of the Quayside. Newcastle is a fantastic place to do live, work, visit and do business."

Sarah Smith, head of licensing at Newcastle law firm Sintons, has acted for many of the leisure operators and their new venues in and around the Central Station area.

She said: "Many leisure operators have rightly identified the opportunities created through being based in the Central Station area and have established a presence in the area.

"Serial operators like those behind Central Oven and Shaker, Hadrian's Tipi and The Continental have opened new premises, and Gainford Group has acquired the County Hotel with the intention of investing significantly to make it another desirable location.

"The Stephenson Quarter has brought back into use a whole area of the city which was previously derelict and the Boilershop has already become a thriving and versatile venue on the leisure scene.

"Newcastle is known throughout the country for its reputation as a leisure destination, and through the development of key areas of the city - such as around Central Station, which is very often the first place a visitor will see - is hugely important for our continued success."

The success of the redevelopment so far does not mean the work is completed, and a southern access to the station is a high priority for Phase 2.

Coun Ged Bell, cabinet member for investment and development at Newcastle City Council, said: "Improvements have already resulted in a much more attractive environment for both residents and visitors by prioritising public transport and people on foot, as well as creating more than 200 jobs in the immediate vicinity.

"Further investment is planned, including a new public square around the Stephenson Monument and improvements to the Orchard Street tunnel.

"This is part of plans to improve links to the south of the station in order to ensure that the Stephenson Quarter and land on Forth Yards can be developed to create more job opportunities."