AYR STATION HOTEL
THE NEW JOURNEY
The Station Hotel in Ayr is opulently decorated in a rich French Renaissance style.
Ayr is located about 40 miles to the south of Glasgow on the Scottish west cost. Ayr’s history goes back to the 13th century. Ayr has always been an important market town and port. With the arrival of the railway in the 19th century, Ayr became a popular seaside resort. The grand Station Hotel was built during this period.

Ayr is an important retail town in Scotland. It boasts a charming old town, an attractive seafront and many beautiful historic buildings such as the town hall with its magnificent steeple.
Ayr Station Hotel was designed by renowned Scottish architect Andrew Galloway as an opulent French Renaissance château. The hotel opened in 1885. Its 75 luxurious rooms and lavish facilities catered for an affluent clientele who spent their summer holidays on the Ayrshire coast.

The hotel was designed by Galloway in conjunction with the station building and the impressive ironwork of the station canopies. It is an impressive three-storey building, constructed in solid Ballochmyle sandstone with handsome stone detailing. The pavilion roofs are topped with iron decorations. The interiors boasts many of the original fixtures and fittings, such as the elegant stairs, marble fireplace and the coffered ceiling.

The building’s special interest is reflected by the fact that it was listed (category B) in 1980.

The building
The Station Hotel overlooks Burns Statue Square, an important public space of Ayr surrounded by solid sandstone buildings. It is a key entrance point into the historic town.
The Station Hotel is Ayr’s grandest and oldest hotel. Despite standing vacant for several years, the interiors are in surprisingly good condition as can be seen in these photos taken in February 2018. The photos show the splendid rooms of the Victorian hotel.

The ceilings, wall finishes, carpets and furniture seem to be waiting for the next guests. Water ingress has occurred in some of the corridors and rooms, however.

The hotel changed ownership several times over the years and closed down in 2015. Repair and maintenance had already been reduced to a minimum during the years before closure.

In March 2018, South Ayrshire Council served a second Dangerous Building Notice (DBN) on the hotel owners on the ground of public safety. Contractors identified crumbling and exposed roof areas that presented a significant and immediate danger. The building is now encapsulated. This serves to protect the public, enable full rail services and allow the building to dry out. However, no plan is yet in place for full restoration to commence.

Urgent action is required now to save Ayr Station Hotel!
Case studies

Too many interesting buildings and places are at risk because they are standing empty and, in many cases, being allowed or encouraged to fall into decay. Often this is happening with a clear intent of claiming the properties were beyond economic repair or “at the end of their useful life”. However, if the owners no longer have need of these buildings, this does not exclude the possibility that they might be of value or use to someone else again. Many historic hotel and station buildings across the country have thus been given a new lease of life.

Most hotels have cellular floor plan which would lend themselves to a range of uses, including flats, student residences, and office accommodation. The examples on the next pages demonstrate how a successful conversion can be achieved and how some large historic hotel buildings have been rescued and their life as hotels extended. Some towns and cities have retained their station hotels: an old grand hotel with magnificent architecture and a touch of luxury, quality and dignity welcomes visitors to those places.

“Hope springs exulting on triumphant wing.”
Robert Burns
Central Station is Glasgow’s main train station. It includes the Grand Central Hotel. The station opened in 1879, the hotel a few years later. Recently refurbished, both the hotel and the station building now provide a welcoming grand arrival to visitors to Glasgow.
Great Northern Hotel
London

Designed by Lewis Cubitt and opened in 1854, the hotel was already earmarked for demolition as part of the King’s Cross and St Pancras redevelopment plans. However, when the architect John McAslan conceived a new ticket hall for King’s Cross the historic hotel could be preserved. Now the historic King’s Cross Station and the old hotel form one ensemble again.
The Langham Hotel
London

The Langham Hotel looks back over a long history. Completed in 1865, the hotel quickly earned the reputation as one of London’s most fashionable hotels. However, in the 1930s it had to close down and deteriorated. In the 1980s its future looked doomed. A replacement scheme for the BBC was drawn up by Richard Rogers. This was refused permission and after the site had been sold, the new owners carried out major restoration works which restored the original splendour.
Lime Street Station Hotel
Liverpool

This splendid hotel was designed by Alfred Waterhouse and built in 1868–71. For several decades it was used as railway offices. The building was then vacated and seen as a development site. Salvation came in 1994 when it was bought by John Moores University and converted into a hall of residence for students.
Grand Hotel
Birmingham

Built from 1875-79, this impressive Victorian hotel ceased to operate in 2002. Works have now started to restore this beautiful grade II* listed building back to its former glory.
Station hotels in Scotland

Perth

Opened in 1885, the Station Hotel is an elegant building in a Flemish Gothic style with gables and turrets. After plans fell through to convert the category B listed building into a care home, the hotel reopened as a small boutique hotel.

Aberdeen

The station hotel is formed of two adjoining buildings which were built as railway headquarters around 1900. They were later converted to a hotel. An extension of the hotel is under construction.

Inverness

For over 150 years, the station hotel has welcomed guests. The building is built in an Italianate style and has some lavish interiors. Today the hotel is a grade B listed building.
Canadian Station Hotels

From the 1880s onwards, the Canadian railways built large hotels next to their stations to support the growth of their networks and provide appropriate accommodation for their wealthy customers. They are still in use today and continue to provide first class service. The Château Laurier in Ottawa (pictured here) is particularly enchanting.
Station hotels in Canada

Banff Springs

Opened in 1888, the hotel was extended several times until it partially burnt down in 1926. A replacement building opened shortly afterwards. It is located in the Banff National Park.

Quebec

The Château Frontenac is a hotel in Quebec. It opened in 1893 and has more than 600 rooms. The hotel is designed in a picturesque Gothic style and was designated a National Historic Site of Canada in 1981.

Calgary

In Calgary, the railway company built the Palliser Hotel which opened in 1914. It was since then the city’s grandest and most luxurious hotel.