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PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) ACT 1990

16th AMENDMENT OF THE 13<sup>TH</sup> LIST OF BUILDINGS OF SPECIAL

ARCHITECTURAL OR HISTORIC INTEREST

SOUTH HAMS (DEVON)

WHEREAS:

1. Section 1 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 ("the Act") requires the Secretary of State, for the purposes of the Act and with a view to the guidance of local planning authorities in the performance of their functions under the Act and the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 in relation to buildings of special architectural or historic interest, to compile lists of such buildings, and he may amend any list so compiled.
2. On 16 March 1978, the Secretary of State compiled a list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest situate in the District of South Hams (that part including the parish of Totnes).
3. The Secretary of State, having consulted with the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England and such other persons or bodies of persons who appear to him appropriate as having special knowledge of, and interest in, such buildings, considers that the said list should be amended in the manner set out in the Schedule hereto.

NOW THEREFORE the Secretary of State, in exercise of the powers conferred on him by Section 1 of the Act, hereby amends the said list in the manner set out in the Schedule hereto.

HSD DOC 2



## SCHEDULE

The following building has been added to the list:-

### TOTNES

504135

#### Totnes Pumping Station

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Atmospheric Railway pumping house. 1848 for the South Devon Railway by IK Brunel. It comprises two blocks, the pumping engine house and the boiler house, set at right angles to the railway line at the east end of the Totnes station up platform. They are in an Italianate style and of coursed squared limestone with red sandstone dressings and pitched slate roof. The south east gable end of the engine house has an altered opening to the ground floor and a large arched opening with rusticated voussoirs and a metal-framed window above. A sandstone band at sill level continues through the south gable wall of the attached former boiler house. There are four arched openings to the ground floor of the boiler house which are not blocked; the two left hand openings are obscured by a modern addition. There is a central keyed circular opening in the gable above. The projecting eaves to the south east gable ends are supported on brackets which are in turn supported on stone corbels.

The south west elevation of the engine house is of five bays. Historical photos indicate that it comprised five round-headed openings which are now blocked and the wall rendered. The rear (north west) gable end of the engine house has a similar opening to that of its opposing gable end but is far plainer. A tall round-headed opening is largely obscured by later additions and plant, and there is a circular opening in the gable; both openings have limestone surrounds. A historical photograph of the pumping house shows several contemporary attached structures running at right angles to the boiler house but these have been demolished as has its campanile chimney.

The interior of the engine house originally comprised a single large space to accommodate a beam engine. This has been subdivided by a mezzanine floor.

#### HISTORY

The South Devon atmospheric railway was designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel. Brunel was appointed to the South Devon Railway in 1844 after the 52 mile project for the construction of a railway between Exeter and Plymouth was given Royal Assent. The Totnes pumping house was never fitted out with a steam engine, although boilers were installed. Although never functioning as part of the atmospheric railway, its construction clearly demonstrates that Brunel intended to extend atmospheric working to Plymouth. The atmospheric system of traction involves the train being drawn along by a piston in a tube laid between the rails. Air was evacuated from the tube by a system of pumping stations along the route. To operate the system eight pumping houses were constructed along the



proposed Exeter to Plymouth route. The line functioned atmospherically for a period in 1846-48 between Exeter and Newton Abbot. However serious problems befell the project due to atmospheric leakage, water ingress and faults with the equipment and it was abandoned and replaced by locomotive power. The South Devon Railway became part of the Great Western Railway in 1878. In 1934 the site, including the pumping house, was purchased by Daws Dairy and incorporated into a milk processing factory, a use which continued until 2007.

#### Reasons for Designation Decision

- Despite alterations, the Totnes pumping station is a very rare survival of a small number of buildings associated with Brunel's internationally renowned technological development of an atmospheric railway system
- It is an important reminder of the dramatic changes in mid-C19 transport, science and society and stands as a testimonial to the key pioneering and innovative role played by England and in particular Brunel in this prequel to the modern industrialised world
- Brunel's distinctive use of a rustic Italianate style which he chose as the common style for the South Devon Atmospheric Railway buildings reflects the Mediterranean qualities of the South Devon coastal landscape and contributes to its identification of as part of the 'English Riviera'.

Dated:- 7<sup>th</sup> March 2008

Signed by authority of the  
Secretary of State

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Elaine Pearce'.

**ELAINE PEARCE**  
Department for Culture, Media  
and Sport