

Willmott Dixon to deliver £35 million Darlington Railway Heritage Quarter

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Willmott Dixon has been appointed by Darlington Borough Council to deliver its cutting-edge £35 million Railway Heritage Quarter.

Procured via the SCAPE framework, the project will transform the Head of Steam railway museum site off North Road, which includes the Goods Shed and Carriage works, into a tourist attraction that will attract visitors from across the UK and overseas.

The project is being supported by £20 million of funding from the Tees Valley Mayor and Combined Authority.

- [Darlington's Railway Heritage Quarter plans to go before council](#)
- [Rail Heritage Quarter for Stockton & Darlington Railway on track](#)

The work involves the design and build of a new Railway Heritage Quarter Museum including the refurbishment of Grade II listed buildings, a new live engineering shed and an immersive experience building which will feature holograms of trains as well as static displays, a café and shop, new public

realm, parking provision and a railway themed children's play area.

Due to complete in 2024, the attraction is anticipated to be ready for the bi-centenary celebrations of the Stockton and Darlington Railway in 2025.

Councillor Jonathan Dulston, leader of Darlington Borough Council said: "This is a once in a lifetime opportunity for us to re-launch Darlington as the birthplace of the railways, the town that financially supported the initial idea of the passenger railway.

"It has taken a great deal of time, passion, energy and ingenuity to reach this stage of the project and it is with a great deal of pride that we set the Railway Heritage Quarter on track for completion in time for the bi-centenary celebrations of the Stockton and Darlington Railway in 2025."

Tees Valley Mayor Ben Houchen said: "It is fantastic to hear that we've got spades in the ground and can officially launch the start of building works on the Darlington Railway Heritage Quarter. This top-quality scheme will include attractions never seen before in our region. It's yet another project we're kick-starting in 2022, our year of construction. This is a bit different to the other schemes we're driving forward this year, from transforming transport to redeveloping Teesworks. It's no less important, though, and that's why we committed £20 million to make it a reality.

"This ambitious attraction will tell the story of how we helped shape the world through our rail heritage and innovation for generations to come, supporting the 200th anniversary celebrations of the Stockton and Darlington Railway. What's more, it'll do so while boosting tourism to support our brilliant local businesses, putting more money in people's pockets."

Anthony Dillon, managing director of Willmott Dixon's Northern operations said: "We are delighted to be once again working in partnership with Darlington Borough Council on an exciting tourist attraction that showcases Darlington's proud railway heritage, which transformed the local area nearly 200 years ago.

"Working with our specialist local supply chain partners, we look forward to supporting local businesses and generating prosperity within the Tees Valley."

Photo credit: Willmott Dixon