

**The Network Rail (Stalybridge to Diggle (Saddleworth) Enhancements) Order  
Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20) – Heritage Statement  
October 2025**

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## **TRANSPORT AND WORKS ACT 1992**

### **Transport and Works (Applications and Objections Procedure) (England and Wales) Rules 2006**

### **THE NETWORK RAIL (STALYBRIDGE TO DIGGLE (SADDLEWORTH) ENHANCEMENTS) ORDER**

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#### **DOCUMENT: Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20) – Heritage Statement**

#### **Rule 10(6)(d)**

|                    |                                        |
|--------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Author             | Network Rail                           |
| Date               | October 2025                           |
| Document Reference | 167037-NWR-W2B-TRU-REP-W-<br>EN-000022 |
| Revision Number    | Revision 1 – Final                     |

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***Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20) – Heritage Statement***  
***October 2025***

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Transpennine Route Upgrade**

- 1.1.1 The Transpennine Route Upgrade (TRU) is a major, multi-billion pound program of improvements to increase capacity, improve journey time and reliability performance of rail services on the Transpennine Route.
- 1.1.2 The TRU will aim to deliver:
- An improved journey time for Leeds – Manchester Victoria of 42-44mins;
  - An improved journey time for York to Manchester Victoria of 65-67mins;
  - Capability to operate four 'express' and two 'semi-express' services an hour;
  - Capability to operate up to two 'local services' an hour on the route;(subject to future operating timetables);
  - Performance of the Transpennine Route to be 92.5% or higher each period;
  - Larger freight containerisation capability (W12 gauge);
  - Freight paths/rights to be retained as existing; and
  - A contribution to Network Rail's Decarbonisation Strategy and climate policy.
- 1.1.3 The Network Rail (Stalybridge to Diggle (Saddleworth) Enhancement) Order extends from Stalybridge Tunnel in the west, through to the western portal of Standedge Tunnel (the "Scheme"). This section of the Transpennine Route follows the Tame Valley from Stalybridge to Diggle, and is referred to hereafter as Route Section W2B.
- 1.1.4 The TRU programme in Route Section W2B involves a variety of works including the electrification of the railway (installation of overhead line equipment (OLE) and associated infrastructure), reconstruction and modification of existing bridges to facilitate electrification of the railway, construction of a new station at Mossley, closure of Stockport Road Level Crossing and Moorgate Halt Level Crossing, railway works at Greenfield Station to support the upgrade and electrification of the railway track reconfiguration works and track lowering works through Stalybridge and Scout Tunnels.
- 1.1.5 Under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, consent is required from the local planning authority for any proposed works that would affect the character of a listed building.

The Transport and Works Act 1992 introduced section 12(3A) into the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the effect of which is to 'call-in' for determination by the Secretary of State applications to the local planning authority for listed building consent where such consent is required in consequence of proposals included in an application for a Transport and Works Act Order (TWAo). The procedures in the Transport and Works Applications (Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and Ancient Monuments Procedure) Regulations 1992 then apply to the call in of such listed building consent applications.

- 1.1.6 This Heritage Statement has been compiled in support of an application for listed building consent by Network Rail in respect of the proposed works on the grade II listed Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20) (NHLE 1452406). Wright's Mill Overbridge (NGR SD9786003652) is located in Mossley on the border of Oldham Borough Metropolitan Council (OMBC) and Tameside Borough Metropolitan Council (TMBC), approximately 1.6km to the south of Greenfield Station. A location plan is provided in Appendix A. Due to the structure straddling the boundary of two Local Planning Authorities, identical applications for listed building consent are being submitted to both OMBC and TMBC.
- 1.1.7 The Historic England list description (included in full in Appendix B) names the listed building as "Railway Overbridge MVL3/20 Wright's". Throughout this Heritage Statement the structure is referred to as "Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20)".
- 1.1.8 The preparation of this assessment has been informed by the Statement of History and Significance: West of Leeds (Alan Baxter Associates, 2024) and the Route-wide Statement of Significance (Alan Baxter Associates, 2019).

## **1.2 Scope**

- 1.2.1 The requirement for this assessment and its scope is guided by policy contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2025), specifically paragraph 207, which seeks an assessment proportionate to the importance of the affected heritage asset and sufficient to understand the potential impacts of development. The specific scope of this assessment is determined by Network Rail's requirement to provide an objective assessment of the heritage value of assets that may be affected by the Scheme, and to appraise the nature and extent of any impact upon setting and significance.
- 1.2.2 This Heritage Statement will:

- Identify and discuss the heritage significance of the listed structure, including the contribution of setting;
- Present the design requirements of the Scheme at the structure;
- Present the process of development and optioneering which has led to the design proposal for the Scheme in relation to the structure;
- Identify the impacts of the design proposal on the significance of the structure, in the context of current national and local planning policy and guidance;
- Discuss any mitigation recommended in relation to the structure; and
- Consider the public benefits to be gained from the Scheme weighed against the impact on the significance of the structure, in line with the NPPF, the Tameside Unitary Development Plan (2004), and the Oldham Local Development Framework (2011).

### **1.3 Current Conditions**

- 1.3.1 Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20) is a mid to late 1840s masonry overbridge, designed by Alfred Stanistreet (A.S.) Jee for the Huddersfield and Manchester Railway (Insert 1-1). The overbridge is situated in the Roaches / Quick area to the north of Mossley, c. 6.7 km east of Oldham and comprises a single segmental-arched bridge, currently carrying a footpath over the Transpennine Route.



**Insert 1-1 Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20) lower mileage (south) elevation**

1.3.2 The structure was subject to detailed examination as part of the Network Rail's maintenance regime in August 2017, which identified that structure is in fair condition albeit with minor defects. A more recent visual inspection was undertaken in July 2022 identified no change in the overall condition of the structure. Minor defects identified in the detailed report include:

- Open joints, seepage and soot staining on the arch soffits (Insert 1-2);
- General weathering on the arch wing, abutments, bedstones, cills and wingwalls;.
- Scraped stonework on the upside haunch of the arch soffit;
- Isolated open joints on the parapets and spandrel walls (Insert 1-4);
- Signs of waterproof failure and seepage to the soffit and down the abutment; and
- General weathering, isolated joints, and dense vegetation on the wing walls.



**Insert 1-2 Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20), water seepage visible on arch soffit.**



Insert 1-3 Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20), spalling on soffits.



Insert 1-4 Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20), open joints and vegetation to southern parapet

## **1.4 Summary of proposal**

- 1.4.1 In order to achieve the TRU Programme objectives, electrification of the Route is required. This would require the alteration of a number of existing bridges, including Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20) to accommodate OLE, higher line speed and increased freight trains. Following optioneering, it has been determined to be necessary to reconstruct Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20). The works will therefore enable the implementation of the Order Scheme.

## 2. LEGISLATION AND POLICY CONTEXT

### 2.1 Legislation

2.1.1 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) ("Act") governs the designation and works to listed buildings in England.

2.1.2 The Act states in s.1 (5):

*'In this Act "listed building" means a building which is for the time being included in a list compiled or approved by the Secretary of State under this section; and for the purposes of this Act—*

*a) any object or structure fixed to the building;*

*b) any object or structure within the curtilage of the building which, although not fixed to the building, forms part of the land and has done so since before 1st July 1948, shall be treated as part of the building.'*

2.1.3 Under the Act, no one is permitted to undertake or cause to be undertaken any works that would affect the character of a listed building unless the works are authorised. Section 16 of the Act identifies that whether such works can be carried out is determined by the local planning authority or the Secretary of State:

*'(1) Subject to the previous provisions of this Part, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State may grant or refuse an application for listed building consent and, if they grant consent, may grant it subject to conditions.*

*(2) In considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority or the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving and enhancing the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.*

*(3) Any listed building consent shall (except in so far as it otherwise provides) ensure for the benefit of the building and of all persons for the time being interested in it.'*

2.1.4 In relation to the granting of listed building consent, Section 17 of the Act stipulates listed building consent that conditions attached may include those with respect to:

*a) 'the preservation of particular features of the building, either as part of it or after severance from it;*

- b) *the making good, after the works are completed, of any damage caused to the building by the works; [and]*
- c) *the reconstruction of the building or any part of it following the execution of any works, with the use of original materials so far as practicable and with such alterations of the interior of the building as may be specified in the conditions’.*
- 2.1.5 It is also defined in s.17 (2) that a condition ‘*may also be imposed requiring specified details of the works (whether or not set out in the application) to be approved subsequently by the local planning authority or, in the case of consent granted by the Secretary of State, specifying whether such details are to be approved by the local planning authority or by him’.*
- 2.1.6 The Act also states in s.66 (1):
- ‘In considering whether to grant planning permission or permission in principle for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses’.*

## 2.2 National Policy

- 2.2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2025) sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these should be applied to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, supported by the Planning Practice Guidance (updated July 2019) (MHCLG, 2019).
- 2.2.2 Section 2 of the NPPF outlines the principles of achieving sustainable development including, in Paragraph 8, an environmental objective ‘to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment’. Paragraph 9 sets out that these objectives should be delivered through the preparation and implementation of plans and the application of the policies within the NPPF. Section 16 of the NPPF deals specifically with the historic environment. Where changes are proposed, the NPPF sets out a clear framework to ensure that heritage assets are conserved, and where appropriate enhanced, in a manner that is consistent with their significance.
- 2.2.3 This Heritage Statement aims to address relevant policy within the NPPF in relation to Section 16 ‘Conserving and enhancing the historic environment’ which includes guidance on plan making, managing Historic Environment Records; how to determine proposals affecting the historic environment; and how to consider potential impacts on significance.

2.2.4 The following paragraphs as set out in the NPPF include key provisions considered of particular importance to this application:

- Paragraph 207 – *'In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.'*
- Paragraph 212 – *'When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss, or less than substantial harm to its significance.'*
- Paragraph 213 – *'Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:*
  - a) *Grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks and gardens, should be exceptional.'*
  - b) *Assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wrecks, registered battlefields, grade I and II\* listed buildings, grade I and II\* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.*
- Paragraph 214 – *'Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:*
  - a) *the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and*
  - b) *no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and*
  - c) *conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and*

*d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.'*

- Paragraph 215 – *'Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.'*
- Paragraph 216 – *'The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgment will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.'*
- Paragraph 219 - *'Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.'*

### **Planning Practice Guidance**

- 2.2.5 The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (MHCLG, 2019) provides further advice and guidance that expands the policy outlined in the NPPF. It expands on terms such as 'significance' and its importance in decision making. The PPG clarifies that being able to properly assess the nature, extent and the importance of the significance of the heritage asset and the contribution of its setting, is very important to understanding the potential impact and acceptability of development proposals (paragraph 008 Reference ID: 18a-008-20190723).
- 2.2.6 The PPG states that in relation to setting, a thorough assessment of the impact on setting needs to take in to account, and be proportionate to, the significance of the heritage asset under consideration and the degree to which proposed changes enhance or detract from that significance and the ability to appreciate it (paragraph 009 Reference ID: 18a-009-20190723).
- 2.2.7 The extent and importance of setting is often expressed by reference to visual considerations. Although views of or from an asset will play an important part, the way in which an asset is experienced in its setting is also influenced by other environmental factors such as noise, dust and vibration from other land uses in the vicinity, and by our understanding of the historic relationship between places.

- 2.2.8 Paragraph 013 of the PPG recognises that the contribution that setting makes to the significance of the heritage asset does not depend on there being public right or the ability to experience that setting. When assessing any application for development which may affect the setting of a heritage asset, local planning authorities may also need to consider the implications of cumulative change (Paragraph: 013 Reference ID: 18a-013-20190723 Revision date: 23 07 2019).
- 2.2.9 In relation to substantial harm, the PPG states that 'it is the degree of harm to the asset's significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed' (paragraph 017). Harm to heritage assets can be avoided or minimised if proposals are based on a clear understanding of the heritage asset and its setting (paragraph 008 Reference ID: 18a-008-20190723). The NPPF indicates that the degree of harm should be considered alongside any public benefits that can be delivered by development.

## **2.3 Local planning policy**

- 2.3.1 Oldham Joint Core Strategy and Development Management Policies
- 2.3.2 Local planning policy for Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council (OMBC) is provided by the Joint Core Strategy and Development Management Policies of the Oldham Local Development Framework, adopted in November 2011, and a small number of retained policies from the Unitary Development Plan (2006).
- 2.3.3 Policy 24 relates to the Historic Environment and is reproduced in full below:

### *Policy 24 Historic Environment*

*'Oldham has a rich historic environment with many significant and valuable features, structures and characteristics. The council will protect, conserve and enhance these heritage assets and their settings which adds to the borough's sense of place and identity.'*

*Development proposals must have regard to:*

- National and local guidance and policies on the historic environment.
- Oldham Rochdale Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder Heritage Assessments.
- Greater Manchester and Oldham Urban Historic Landscape Characterisation Study.
- Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans, where appropriate.

*When allocating sites and determining applications for planning and advertisement consents, the council will seek to protect, conserve and enhance the architectural features, structures, settings, historic character and significance of the borough's heritage assets and designations including:*

- a) Listed buildings.*
  - b) Conservation areas.*
  - c) Registered parks and gardens (their historic character and setting).*
  - d) Scheduled ancient monuments (their archaeological value and interest).*
  - e) Significant archaeological remains.*
- 2.3.4 *Locally significant buildings, structures, areas or landscapes of architectural or historic interest (including non-designated locally significant assets identified in the local lists compiled by the council).*

*The council will support heritage-led regeneration, including the reuse of historic buildings such as mills, to achieve economic, community and regeneration objectives, where appropriate.*

#### *Listed Buildings*

*Development to, or within the curtilage or vicinity of, a listed building or structure must serve to preserve or enhance its special interest and its setting. There will be a strong presumption against proposals involving the demolition of listed buildings or structures. Proposals which would lead to the loss or cause harm to grade I and II\* listed buildings should be wholly exceptional. Development proposals for a building incorporating a historic shop front should make provision for its retention, restoration and repair.*

#### *Local Designations*

*Development which would affect the following designations will only be permitted in cases where it can be demonstrated that the benefits of the development brings substantial benefits to the community which outweigh the preservation of the heritage asset:*

*Significant archaeological remains.*

*Locally significant buildings, structures, areas or landscapes of architectural or historic interest'.*

### **Tameside Unitary Development Plan**

- 2.3.5 The Tameside Unitary Development Plan is part of the statutory Local Plan policies for the Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council (TMBC) which provides the set of planning policies which make up the current local plan.
- 2.3.6 The Tameside Unitary Development Plan sets out local planning policies that 'provide a framework for development and conservation over the whole of the Tameside area, to set out the main considerations on which planning applications in the Borough are determined, and to guide land use decisions by the Council and other agencies'.
- 2.3.7 Policies within the framework which are relevant to this Heritage Statement are outlined below.

#### *Policy C Conservation and Enhancement of the Built Environment.*

##### *Policy C1 Townscape and Urban Form*

*In considering proposals for built development, the Council will expect the distinct settlement pattern, open space features, topography, townscape and landscape character of specific areas of the Borough to be understood, and the nature of the surrounding fabric to be respected. The relationship between buildings and their setting should be given particular attention in the design of any proposal for development.*

*Urban design frameworks will be produced for particular areas and corridors in the Borough, as supplementary planning guidance, setting out fundamental principles which should be followed and from which detailed design may be interpreted.*

*The Council will establish a strategy to secure the retention and enhancement of landmark buildings which form a distinctive element of the local skyline or townscape, and which represent a unique part of the heritage of the area. Re-use and conversion of such buildings which become redundant will be permitted, subject to other relevant policies.*

##### *Policy C5 Alternative Uses, Alterations and Additions for Listed Buildings*

*Whilst continuation of the use for which the building was designed is most desirable, the Council will permit alternative uses for Listed Buildings where evidence demonstrates that the existing or original use is unlikely to support the maintenance and preservation of the building.*

*The Council will require that proposed new uses, or other alterations and additions to Listed Buildings, should not adversely affect the essential character of the building, should be in keeping with its architectural style and features, and should harmonise with its surroundings. The effect of the proposals on any protected species which may be using the Listed Building should also be taken into account.*

*Such development must be of a high standard of design. The external appearance, design and materials will be expected to match as near as possible those of the existing building and, where appropriate, new internal features should also harmonise with the existing.*

*Extensions and additions should be secondary in scale, design and location to the principal building and standard solutions or modern features which fail to relate to the character of the building will not be permitted*

#### **Policy C6: Setting of Listed Buildings**

*New development, including any proposed as a result of a new use for a Listed Building, which fails to preserve, or detracts from, the setting of a Listed Building or structure will not be permitted.*

#### **Policy C8 Demolition of Listed Buildings**

*The Council will not recommend the demolition of Listed Buildings, apart from in exceptional circumstances after the following considerations have been assessed:*

*the condition of the building and the cost of repairing and maintaining it in relation to its importance and to the value derived from its continued use, and*

*the adequacy of efforts that have been made to retain the building in its present use or to find compatible alternative uses, and*

*the merits of alternative proposals for the site.*

*In such circumstances the Council will also need to be satisfied that an acceptable alternative form of development can go ahead on the site as soon as practical following demolition, that any use of the building by protected species has been taken into account, and that provision can be made to record the detail of the building prior to demolition*

### **Places for Everyone**

- 2.3.8 Places for Everyone (Greater Manchester Combined Authority 2024) is a joint development plan covering nine Greater Manchester districts including Tameside and Oldham, setting out a framework for sustainable development. Policy JP-P2 concerns Heritage and is of relevance to this assessment:

#### *Policy JP-P2: Heritage*

*We will proactively manage and work with partners to positively conserve, sustain and enhance our historic environment and heritage assets and their settings. Opportunities will be pursued to aid the promotion, enjoyment, understanding and interpretation of heritage assets, as a means of maximising wider public benefits and reinforcing Greater Manchester's distinct character, identity and sense of place.*

*Local Plans will set out the key elements which contribute to the district's identity, character and distinctiveness and which should be the priority for conserving and enhancing in the future and demonstrate a clear understanding of the historic environment and the heritage values of sites, buildings or areas and their relationship with their surroundings. This knowledge should be used to inform the positive management and integration of our heritage by:*

*Setting out a clear vision that recognises and embeds the role of heritage in place-making;*

*Ensuring that the heritage significance of a site or area is considered in accordance with national planning policy in the planning and design process and opportunities for interpretation and local engagement are optimised;*

*Integrating the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets and their settings, with creative contextual architectural responses that contribute to their significance and sense of place;*

*Delivering positive benefits that sustain and enhance the historic environment, as well as contributing to the economic viability, accessibility and environmental quality of a place, and to social wellbeing; and*

*Exploring opportunities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that restoration of historic buildings offer.*

*Particular consideration will be given to ensure that the significance of key elements of the historic environment which contribute to Greater Manchester's distinctive identity and sense of place are*

*protected from harm. These include historic town centres, places of worship, historic transport routes including the canal network, industrial buildings and structures including textile mills, farmsteads and other sites, buildings, and areas of identified archaeological, architectural, artistic and/or historic value. Development proposals affecting designated and non-designated heritage assets and/or their settings will be considered having regard to national planning policy. Where heritage assets have been identified as being at risk, Local Plans should identify specific opportunities for them to contribute to regeneration and place-making, and they should set out strategies for their repair and re-use. Development proposals which will help safeguard the significance of and secure a sustainable future for Greater Manchester's heritage at risk will be supported in principle, provided they are not contrary to national policy or other policies in the development plan. Proposals should be informed, as necessary, by the findings and recommendations of the appropriate heritage assessment(s) in the development plan evidence base and/or any updated heritage assessment submitted as part of the planning application process.*

### **Historic England Guidance**

- 2.3.9 Historic England has published a series of Good Practice Advice (GPA) notes and Advice Notes (AN) of which those of most relevance to this appraisal are GPA2 – Managing Significance in Decision-taking (Historic England, 2015), GPA3 – The Setting of Heritage Assets (Historic England, 2017), and AN12, Statements of Heritage Significance (2019).
- 2.3.10 GPA2 – Managing Significance in Decision-taking emphasises the importance of having a knowledge and understanding of the significance of heritage assets likely to be affected by the development and that the 'first step for all applicants is to understand the significance of any affected heritage asset and, if relevant the contribution of its setting to its significance' (paragraph 4). Early knowledge of this information is also useful to a local planning authority in pre-application engagement with an applicant and ultimately in decision making (paragraph 7).
- 2.3.11 GPA3 – The Setting of Heritage Assets provides advice on the setting of heritage assets. Setting is as defined in the NPPF and comprises the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Elements of a setting can make positive or negative contributions to the significance of an asset and affect the ways in which it is experienced. Historic England state that setting does not have a boundary and what comprises an asset's setting may change as the asset and its surrounding evolve. Setting can be extensive and particularly in urban areas or extensive landscapes can overlap with other assets. The contribution of setting to the significance of an

asset is often expressed by reference to views and the GPA in paragraph 11 identifies those views, such as those that were designed or those that were intended, that contribute to understanding the significance of assets.

- 2.3.12 AN12, Statements of Heritage Significance outlines a recommended approach to assessing the significance of heritage assets in line with the requirements of NPPF. It includes a suggested reporting structure for a 'Statement of Heritage Significance', as well as guidance on creating a statement that is proportionate to the asset's significance and the potential degree of impact of a proposed development. The AN also offers an interpretation of the various forms of heritage interest that an asset can possess, based on the terms provided in the NPPF Glossary (Annex 2); namely archaeological, architectural, artistic, and historic.

### **3. ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Research**

- 3.1.1 In accordance with Historic England guidance and as determined by policy requirements, this assessment identifies the baseline heritage interest of Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20). The historical narrative informing the baseline has been derived from a review of various resources including maps and other cartographic and photographic sources. Statutory information in relation to the designated assets has been obtained from the National Heritage List for England maintained by Historic England and the Historic Environment Record maintained by Greater Manchester Archaeology Advisory Service.
- 3.1.2 Additional information concerning the assets, their condition, use and setting has been obtained from a walkover survey undertaken by suitably qualified and experienced heritage specialists on 21 and 22 of May 2024.

#### **3.2 Significance and setting**

- 3.2.1 Assessment of the significance of heritage assets and their setting has been undertaken in consideration of guidance issued by Historic England. Significance is often established by statutory designations such as listed buildings, scheduled monuments and conservation areas. More particular advice as to what makes up significance is set out in AN12, which establishes a method for thinking consistently about the heritage values that can be ascribed to a place. When making an assessment of significance, numerous aspects are considered including architectural interest, historic interest, group value, social value, former uses and local distinctiveness. These aspects are grouped into four values defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF

as historical interest, archaeological interest, artistic interest, and architectural interest. In assessing whether the setting of an asset contributes to its significance, and in assessing the effect of development, Historic England GPA3 provides a checklist of attributes that may affect setting and significance under five broad categories comprising:

- The location and siting of the development;
- The form and appearance of the development;
- Additional effects (change to skyline etc.);
- Permanence; and
- Consequential effects.

#### **4. CONSULTATION**

- 4.1.1 Historic England, Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council (OMBC) and Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council (TMBC) have been involved in ongoing stakeholder consultation with Network Rail through the development of Route Section W2B of TRU.
- 4.1.2 Regular meetings with both Historic England, OMBC and TMBC have been held to discuss design development of the proposals in relation to Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20). Initial meetings were held periodically throughout 2021 and resumed in 2024 to discuss the overall route and design development for all listed structures within Route Section W2B.
- 4.1.3 The design development of the Scheme in relation to Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20) was discussed during meetings with the statutory stakeholders on the dates outlined in Table 4 1

**Table 4-1 Consultation for Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20)**

| <b>Date</b>  | <b>Stakeholder in attendance</b>                                                     | <b>Key agreements/items discussed</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2 March 2021 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OMBC</li> <li>• Historic England</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An overview of the optioneering for MVL3/23 which also included some optioneering for MVL3/20.</li> <li>• Presentation of options to stakeholders comprising: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Track Lower and retention of bridge with raised parapets;</li> <li>○ Footbridge reconstruction; and</li> <li>○ Bridge reconstruction.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |

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| Date            | Stakeholder in attendance                                                                                                        | Key agreements/items discussed                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2 March 2021    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TMBC</li> </ul>                                                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview of structures at GRIP 3 stage including Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20) and presentation of preferred option which included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Sympathetic reconstruction of arch, while retaining existing parapets. Use of bridge as a bridleway will be taken into consideration with the parapet heights.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 26 May 2021     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historic England</li> <li>• OMBC</li> <li>• TMBC</li> <li>• Kirklees Council</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview of the structures along Route Section W2B which are of historic interest, including the grade II overbridges and underbridges which are noted for their inherent significance, particularly as essential railway structures. The group value of the bridges was identified as a key contributor to significance.</li> <li>• Presentation of the purpose of Heritage Statements and their assessment of impact with the emerging GRIP 3 designs</li> <li>• Early-stage recommendations to minimise harm to significance against the requirements for justification of proposals and opportunities to pursue sensitive design and compensation.</li> <li>• Early-stage recommendations to minimise harm to significance against the requirements for justification of proposals and opportunities to pursue sensitive design and compensation. The proposed reconstruction of MVL3/20 was presented, due to the potential level of impact this structure was flagged as red on a RAG scale. Reassurance was provided to the councils that they will be involved in the GRIP 3 design process which will be used within the detailed design development of GRIP 4 (Single Option Development). Clarification was also provided on the sustainable heritage initiatives.</li> <li>• Historic England stated that they expect to get an understanding of significance at this stage and that they anticipate options to be shared for comment. Also stressed the importance of minimising harm.</li> </ul> |
| 2 February 2024 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TMBC</li> </ul>                                                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This meeting was used to outline to members of the Local Planning Authority the significance of MVL3/20, along with site specific constraints and the feasibility study of potential options.</li> <li>• The principle for reconstructing the bridge as the preferred option was established.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

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| Date            | Stakeholder in attendance                                            | Key agreements/items discussed                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                 |                                                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion took place regarding the proposed form of the reconstructed deck, with a filler beam being the preferred option.</li> <li>• The options for parapet construction were presented. However, given that MVL3/20 is an active bridleway it is acknowledged that the height of the parapet will need to be 1.8 m.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 6 February 2024 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historic England</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Details of the challenges of the electrification of the route in relation to listed overbridges were presented. Design measures under consideration for addressing these challenges noted to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Reduced voltage clearances;</li> <li>○ Development of scheme-specific pantograph, reducing electrical clearances to a minimum;</li> <li>○ Site specific risk assessments of bridges due to reduced overhead wire heights;</li> <li>○ Electrical protection works; and</li> <li>○ Risk-based approach to raising parapets. Where safe to do so, 1.5 m height parapets may be employed, rather than standard 1.8 m height.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• This approach has been embedded in designs for W2B.</li> <li>• The design approach for electrification across / under existing railway bridges was noted to have agreed in principle by Network Rail and following consultation with the Local Authorities &amp; Historic England at the preceding design stage.</li> <li>• The approach to bridge reconstruction was outlined, with key design aspects discussed including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Retention of existing approach walls;</li> <li>○ Visibility of new concrete elements to be minimised through the use of masonry cladding;</li> <li>○ Stringcourse detail incorporated into the form of the edge beam;</li> <li>○ Reclaimed stone used to clad interior of parapet; natural stone used to clad exterior;</li> <li>○ Coursing of cladding to tie in with existing stonework as far as reasonably practicable; and</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |

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| Date          | Stakeholder in attendance                                          | Key agreements/items discussed                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|               |                                                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where reclaimed stone cannot be reused, natural stone of matching size and colour will be used.</li> </ul> <p>Confirmation that the design optioneering will be undertaken in consultation with Historic England.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 5 March 2024  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Historic England</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presentation of information on the background and optioneering process for Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20) including the justification for the preferred option.</li> <li>Network Rail presented discussion about parapet height given that the bridge is used by equestrians which would require the parapet to be 1.8 m however seeking opportunity to reduce height to 1.5m to minimise visual impact.</li> </ul> |
| 9 April 2024  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Historic England</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presentation of information on proposals for the bridge, identifying that works to Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20) would require a reconstruction.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 15 April 2024 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Historic England</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Letter provided to Historic England summarising outcome of meetings on 5th March and 6th April 2024 which discussed proposals for MVL3/20 and sets out the matters agreed.</li> <li>Agreement that MVL3/20 is not suitable for retention due to existing constraints and challenges, and the identification of reconstruction as the preferred option being agreed with Historic England.</li> </ul>                    |
| 7 May 2024    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Historic England</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agreement in principle with Historic England on the principle of reconstruction at Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 14 May 2024   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TMBC</li> </ul>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presentation of approach for copers for MVL3/20. As part of the reconstruction of the bridge, the new copers will be designed to tie in with the existing approach walls.</li> <li>Preferred solution for new copers is coloured concrete which was in support by Historic England.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                          |
| 24 May 2024   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TMBC</li> </ul>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This meeting was used to outline to members of the Local Planning Authority (following changes in personnel) the significance of Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20), along with site specific constraints and the feasibility study of potential options.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                    |

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|--------------|----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|              |                                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview of listed structures subject to listed building consent, including MVL3/20 Wright's Mill Overbridge and the electrification challenges.</li> <li>• Confirmed that the bridge is not clear for electrification or freight and track lowering is not a viable option given the shallow depth of bedrock and proximity of underbridge and therefore reconstruction design was progressed.</li> <li>• Identification of reconstruction constraints including site access.</li> <li>• Council expressed preference for use of stone on the underside of the bridge, and the retention of as much original material as possible</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 24 June 2024 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OMBC</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation of optioneering of Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20). Challenges and considerations taken into account included the existing electrical clearance, which was found to be foul on both lines, desire to accommodate freight clearance and the geological challenges. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Option 1: Reconstruction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Standard solution for all listed structures and agreed in principle with Historic England. The approach walls would be retained, and the arch span reconstructed as a flat span for better gauge clearance. Stone will be reclaimed and reused where possible for cladding, and matching stonework will be used where this is not possible.</li> <li>- Works would be undertaken track side using railway crane.</li> <li>- Council expressed intention to mitigate potential impacts and to ensure the new construction is as close as possible to the existing. Though there was a desire to retain the string course, it was deemed unsafe by Network Rail standards.</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Option 2 Track Lowering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This option would require significant rock removal, extensive track works, as well as reconstruction of Midge Hall Underbridge (MVL3/19). However, this is not acceptable to Network Rail's stakeholders.</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Option 3 – Footbridge reconstruction:</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |

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|              |                                                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Replace the existing overbridge with a footbridge made of metallic components similar to elsewhere on the railway line.</li> <li>○ Option 4 – Removal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This would require significant diversion of the bridleway.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• It was concluded that option 1 was the preferred option and outstanding question for whether LBC is required for both councils.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 25 June 2024 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historic England</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-application advice letter from Historic England identifies that the reconstruction of MVL3/20 would result in substantial harm to the significance of the bridge (Appendix C.1).</li> <li>• Historic England summarised that substantial harm would arise from the loss of the form of the arched bridges and through the loss of historic fabric, with additional harm identified to the group value of the bridges.</li> <li>• It was agreed that reclaimed stone should be focussed on the inside faces of the parapet to minimise the degree to which the alteration of the bridge is experienced from the deck.</li> <li>• Historic England concluded that it will be for the decision taker to weigh the balance of the identified substantial harm against the public benefit of the Scheme.</li> </ul> |
| 8 July 2024  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TMBC</li> </ul>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written response from TMBC on proposed alteration of listed railway bridges identifying the following requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Proposed works to listed bridges should be kept to the minimum necessary to facilitate the Scheme and ensure their continued use and enjoyment, whilst retaining as much as practicable of their individual character and appearance.</li> <li>○ Any replacement stonework and/or new stonework (copings, for example) should be in natural stone.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

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|                   |                                                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Internal elevations of the bridge should be 'clad' or constructed with natural stone.</li> <li>○ All new stonework at bridge level should respect the colour, texture, form to the existing and follow the same coursing pattern.</li> <li>○ Any application for listed building consent should be supported by a Heritage Statement prepared in accordance with the NPPF.</li> <li>• Listed building consent drawings to clearly identify on plan and in a methodology / specification details of works including repair work, fencing, and the extent of reconstruction of MVL3/7 and MVL3/20.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 27 August 2024    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historic England</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This meeting was used to present the draft listed building consent drawings to Historic England and to discuss the proposals presented in the drawings for MVL3/20.</li> <li>• It was confirmed that the approach to MVL3/20 would take on a similar approach to MVL3/7 which would use natural stone for the cladding and coping of the proposed concrete elements (other than the edge beam which needs to be visible for inspection). Efforts would be made to tie the coursing of cladding in with the retained sections as best as possible, informed by point cloud data held for the existing structure.</li> <li>• There was discussion of potential methodology for bridge demolition and how this may impact on the level of masonry able to be salvaged.</li> <li>• The parapet height for MVL3/20 would need to be 1.8 m given that it remains in active use as a bridleway.</li> </ul> |
| 3 September 2024  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TMBC</li> </ul>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation of visualisations of the structures, including MVL3/20.</li> <li>• Parapet height for the bridge will be required to be 1.8 m to meet the safety requirements given it remains in use as a bridleway.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 17 September 2024 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historic England</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In their pre-application advice letter Historic England confirmed demolition and reconstruction of Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20) would result in substantial harm to the significance of the bridge (see Appendix C.2).</li> <li>• Careful retention and reuse of stonework for reuse in order to reduce harm was highlighted. Where new stone is required, it was noted that this should</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

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|---------------|----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|               |                                                          | <p>be as close a match as possible to the original fabric.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coursing should match existing fabric to minimise the visual impact of the works.</li> <li>• The use of natural stone cut copers would be welcomed.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 28 March 2025 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TMBC</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation to go over the draft Heritage Statements. Comments raised, during this meeting and have since been actioned include:</li> <li>• Request for inclusion of Historic England feedback in appendix to the Heritage Statements</li> <li>• Request for condition surveys subject to Network Rail's approval</li> <li>• Request for further emphasis of public engagement in the reports</li> <li>• Given that Wright's Mill Overbridge lies within the jurisdiction of both TMBC and OMBC, it was suggested by OMBC that a single local authority take on the LBC application in which TMBC agreed.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 2 April 2025  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OMBC</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation of overview of the aims and objectives of TRU to OMBC heritage officers, with emphasis on the historic context of Route Section W2B and the 12 listed building consents applications which are being prepared for the various works to the grade II listed bridges and viaduct along the route section.</li> <li>• Presentation of overview of electrification challenges caused by the existing arch profile of a number of existing bridges and have developed bespoke solutions for these to achieve the required clearance.</li> <li>• Overview of the current status of each structure within OMBC's jurisdiction, including the reconstruction of Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20).</li> <li>• Network Rail explained that the current structure is not clear for electrification or freight, and track lower is not viable at its location, as such the removal and reconstruction of the structure is the preferred option. The design for the new would tie into the existing wing walls and have parapet heights of 1.8m given that it is a bridleway.</li> </ul> |

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| Date         | Stakeholder in attendance                                          | Key agreements/items discussed                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 4 April 2025 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Historic England</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overview of draft comments from Historic England. Request to draw out the heritage interpretation in the reports as part of the heritage benefits.</li> <li>Historic England were content with the assessment of significance for all structures, and noted that the optioneering tables were helpful. Historic England request for further details on the heritage interpretation as part of the heritage benefits.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 12 May 2025  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>OMBC</li> </ul>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presentation of proposals for Wrights Overbridge (MVL3/20) to OMBC heritage officers which were noted to be justified and required.</li> <li>Level of harm to the structure noted to be substantial, but weighed against the substantial public benefits delivered by the Scheme.</li> <li>Need for protection of reclaimed stone during demolition and transport noted by OMBC, along with the need for sample panels to demonstrate quality of pointing for reconstruction.</li> <li>Position of the bridge on the boundary of Tameside and Oldham Metropolitan Councils noted to potentially require submission of consent applications to both councils.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 24 June 2025 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>OMBC</li> </ul>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pre-application advice letter received from OMBC outlining local planning authority advice following review of the draft listed building consent application material.</li> <li>OMBC found that the reconstruction of Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20) would result in substantial harm through the loss of its historic form and much of the original fabric.</li> <li>OMBC highlight that clear and convincing justification will be required for any harm arising to designated heritage assets, with substantial benefits required to outweigh substantial harm.</li> <li>A high level of harm was also found to the group value of the bridges designed by A.S Jee on the TransPennine Route, due to the proposed demolition of Wright's Overbridge (MVL3/23) and reconstruction of four other bridges (including Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20), and a limited</li> </ul> |

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|--------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|              |                                                                      | level of harm to group value arising from the alteration of three other structures.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 18 July 2025 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historic England</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-application advice letter received from Historic England providing overarching feedback on proposals affecting listed bridges between Stalybridge and Standedge Tunnel (see Appendix C).</li> <li>• Acknowledgment given to the collaborative approach taken at pre-application stage, to fully explore alternative options to reconstruction and for the opportunity for Historic England to feed into design plans.</li> <li>• The heritage statements adjudged to be well considered with clear justification having been provided for the substantial harm identified to those structures proposed for removal or reconstruction.</li> <li>• The inclusion of interpretation at Greenfield Station is welcomed by Historic England.</li> </ul> |

## **5. HERITAGE ASSETS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE**

### **5.1 History of the W2B Transpennine Route**

- 5.1.1 The railway connecting Stalybridge to Huddersfield, which runs under Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20) was constructed by the Huddersfield & Manchester Railway Company between 1846 and 1849. The mid-1840s was a period of commercial confidence and massive expansion in the railway network across England, known as 'Railway Mania' which has been described by Historic England as the Heroic Age (1841-50) of railway building (Historic England, 2017). Between 1845 and 1852 the railway network expanded from 2,345 miles to 7,272 miles (3774km to 11,703km) (Alan Baxter Associates, 2019). Constructed at the height of this boom, the Stalybridge to Leeds line was a product of this trend. Traversing a challenging landscape through the Pennines, the line was planned to follow the route of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal for much of its length, with the canal acquired by the Railway Company the year after its authorisation (Alan Baxter Associates, 2019). These difficult landscape conditions resulted in the need to build several major viaducts and tunnels. These included Standedge Tunnel through the Pennines, which was constructed alongside the 1811 canal tunnel and is 'indisputably significant as a major engineering achievement' (Alan Baxter associates, 2024).
- 5.1.2 The development and expansion of the railways during the 19th century transformed the landscape and settlements through which they passed, fuelling industrial growth and settlement expansion. The impact of improved communications, first with the arrival of the canal in 1811, and then the railway in 1849, provided valuable links with Huddersfield, Manchester and Leeds, enabling import of raw materials and export of manufactured goods. This fuelled the gradual industrialisation and settlement expansion along the Tame Valley. This can be seen on historic Ordnance Survey maps dating from the 19th and early 20th century where industrial development including mills, dyeworks, printworks and quarries, is shown to have been present along the route of the railway and extending into the more upland areas around Saddleworth and Harrop Dale, whilst settlements such as Mossley and Dobcross gradually expanded.
- 5.1.3 Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20) was constructed for the Huddersfield & Manchester Railway Company in the mid to late 1840s. The principal engineer for the Huddersfield & Manchester Railway was Alfred Stanistreet (A. S.) Jee (1816–1858), who was assisted by the more renowned engineer Joseph Locke (1805–1860). Jee's work on the Huddersfield & Manchester Railway represents, arguably, his greatest achievement. This can be seen particularly in the construction of the Standedge Tunnel, which at over three miles long was one of the longest and most difficult in

England, but also through the various large-scale viaducts along the route. In the 1850s, he worked internationally on the Spanish line from Alar-del-Rey to Reynosa where his skill in design, his accuracy and his completeness of the details earned him high praise. He died in a fatal accident upon the opening of the second portion of that line.

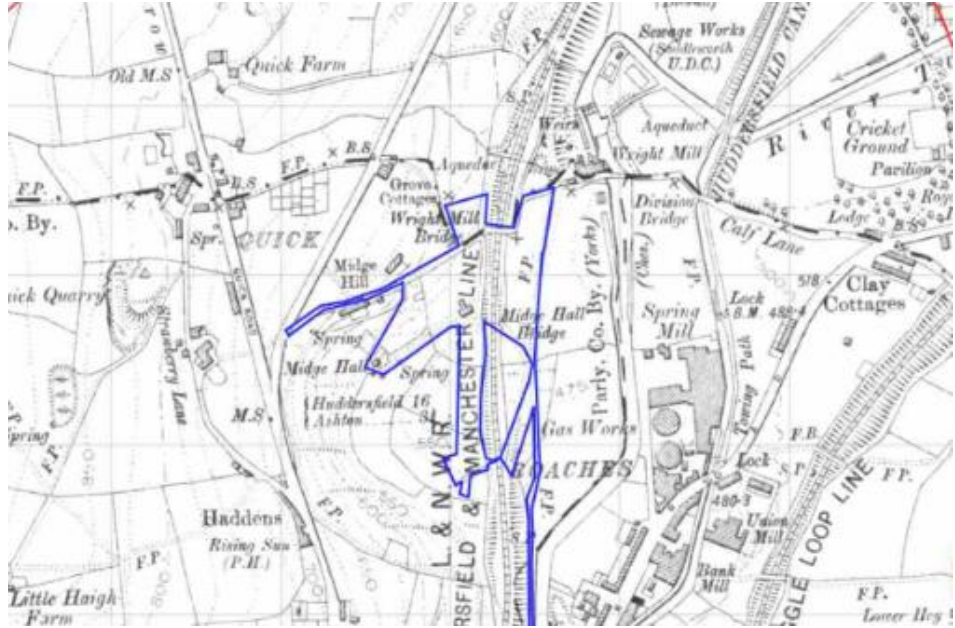
- 5.1.4 In 1847, prior to the opening of the line, the Huddersfield & Manchester Railway Company was taken over by the London and North Western Railway (LNWR). As part of the LNWR network, the Huddersfield & Manchester Railway formed part of a direct route from Manchester to the West Riding, enabling the LNWR to access the textile and coal industries of West Yorkshire. By 1851, the LNWR was the most prominent railway company of the period, with over 800 miles of track and was the largest joint-stock concern of its time, capitalised at £29 million. The line was acquired by the London Midland and Scottish Railway in 1923, before being nationalised in 1948.
- 5.1.5 Whilst other parts of the Transpennine Route were subject to significant alterations, the Huddersfield & Manchester Railway between Standedge Tunnel and Stalybridge was subject to relatively limited alteration. The Micklehurst Loop was constructed from 1881-85 to provide additional capacity, and diverged from the existing railway to the east of the Tame Vally, avoiding physical interaction with the majority of its alignment. A new junction to the south of Greenfield Station is shown on historic maps from the early 20th century as additional tracks toward Oldham were established from this station. However similarly to the Micklehurst loop, the additional lines diverged from the main Huddersfield line, running westwards at its intersection with Shaw Hall Bank Road Footway (MVL3/26). The railway was also widened to the east of Diggle to accommodate additional tracks serving new bores for the Standedge Tunnel which were added in 1868-71 and 1894, necessitating widening of bridges to the east of the route.
- 5.1.6 Piecemeal change has occurred on the Huddersfield & Manchester Railway most notably with the closure of a small number of stations along the route, such as Diggle and Saddleworth Stations. The route today forms part of the wider Transpennine Route between York, Selby and Manchester, which comprises sections of rail line developed by different railway companies.
- 5.1.7 The history and significance of the Transpennine Route is discussed at more length in the Route-Wide Statement of Significance (Alan Baxter Associated, 2019). This was produced to characterise the overall heritage significance of the Transpennine Route as a whole.

## 5.2 Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20)

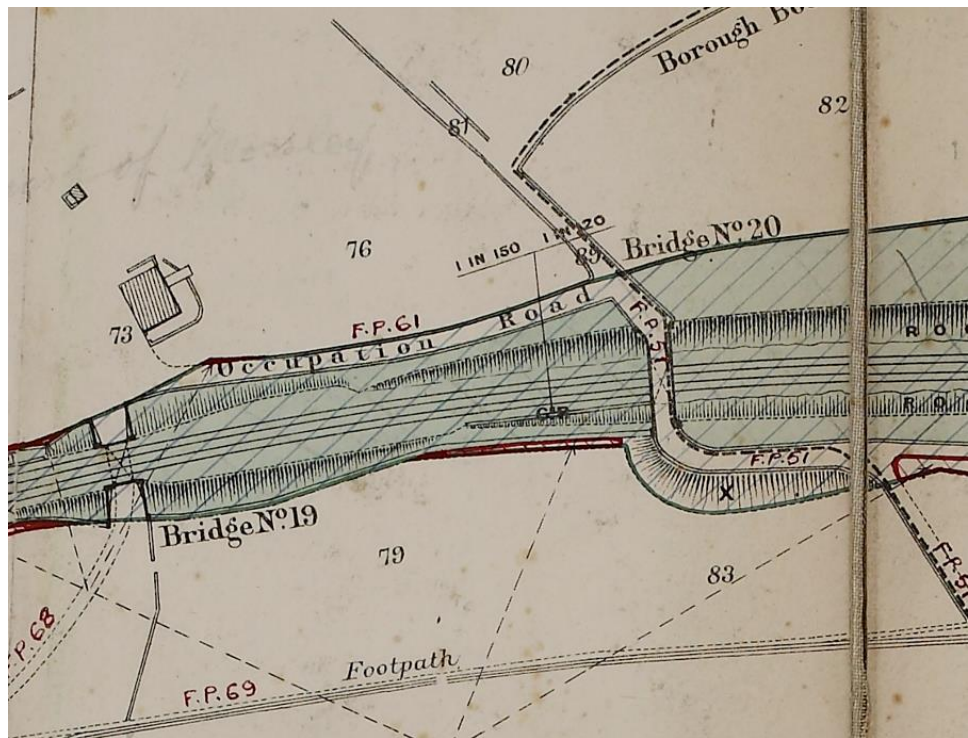
### History

- 5.2.1 Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20) was constructed between 1845 and 1849 during the Heroic Age of railway building. The single-span bridge was designed by A.S. Jee for the Huddersfield & Manchester Railway and is situated on the historic county boundary which today forms the boundary between Tameside and Oldham.
- 5.2.2 The bridge is shown carrying a track labelled as Quick Mill Bridge on OS map of 1854 (not reproduced here), likely due to its proximity to Quick Mills, a small cotton mill to the north east of the overbridge, and some development along Midge Hill. At this time, the overbridge was named Quick Mill Bridge. It was located within a predominantly rural environment with dispersed settlement and some small scale industrialisation which forms part of the wider industrial character of the area. A similar situation is shown on the County Series Map of 1899 (Insert 5-1), when the bridge is labelled as Wright Mill Bridge, due to its proximity to the woollen mill to the east of the bridge which is now labelled as Lower Quick or Wright Mill.
- 5.2.3 Subsequent map editions reveal a similar morphology, with industrial development and gravel extraction focussed along the valley bottom, adjacent to the River Tame and the Huddersfield Narrow Canal, and the surrounding hills remaining as enclosed fields with a dispersed pattern of farms and houses (see Insert 5-3). Insert 5-3 1:10,560 County Series Map 1904-1907 showing Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20) to Insert 5-7). By the early 21st century, the industrial sites along the valley bottom were largely redeveloped with housing, with the building of Wright's Mill to the east of the bridge converted to residential use. Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20) is shown to have remained in use carrying a bridleway over the railway line.

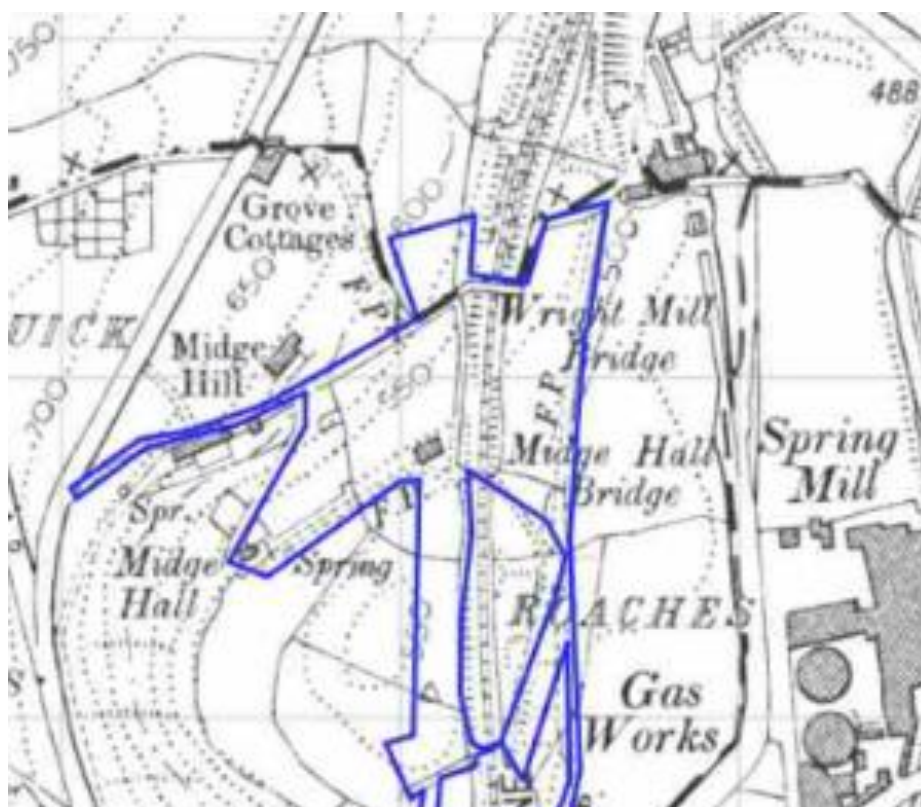
**The Network Rail (Stalybridge to Diggle (Saddleworth) Enhancements) Order**  
***Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20) – Heritage Statement***  
***October 2025***



**Insert 5-1 1:10,560 County Series 1899-1904 Map showing Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20)**



**Insert 5-2 1905 Historic Line Plans produced by LNWR showing Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20)**

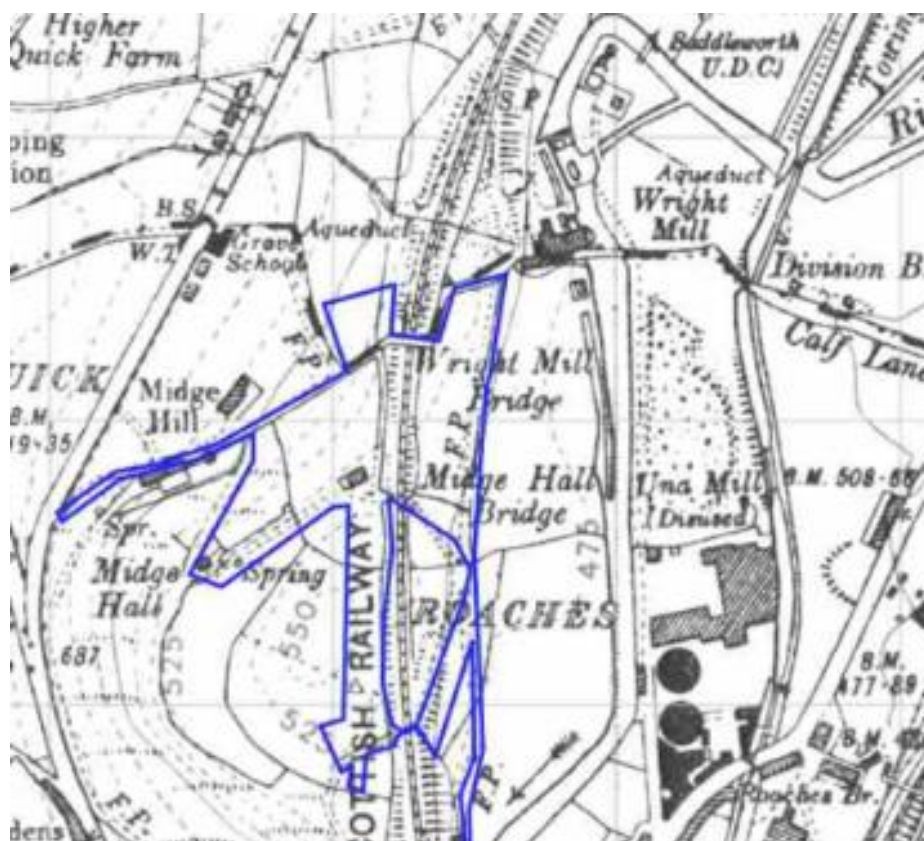


Insert 5-3 1:10,560 County Series Map 1904-1907 showing Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20)

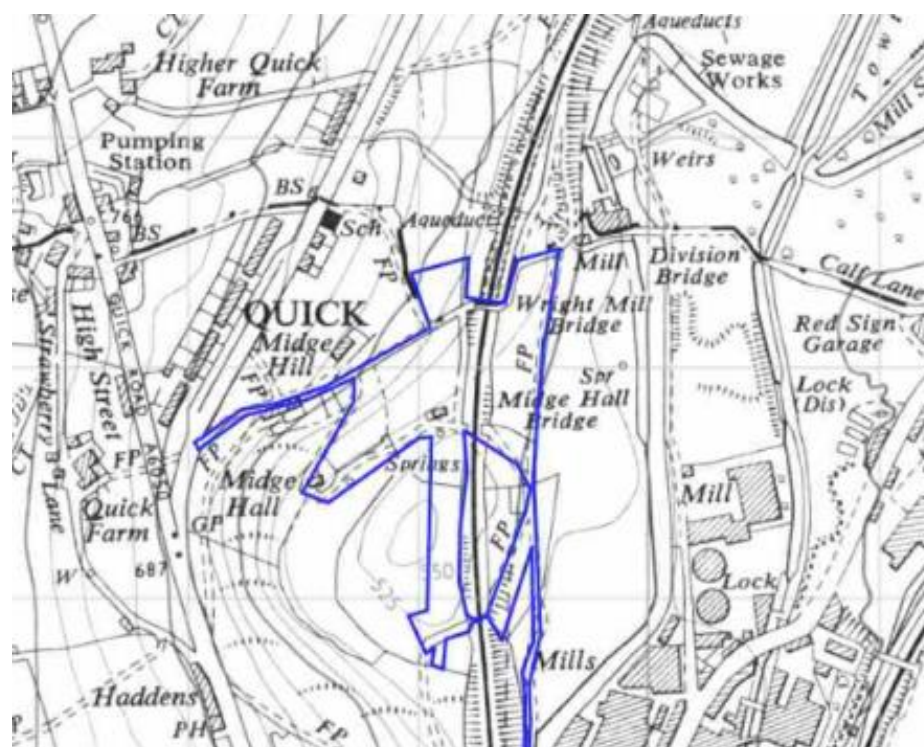


Insert 5-4 1:10,560 County Series Map 1923 showing Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20)

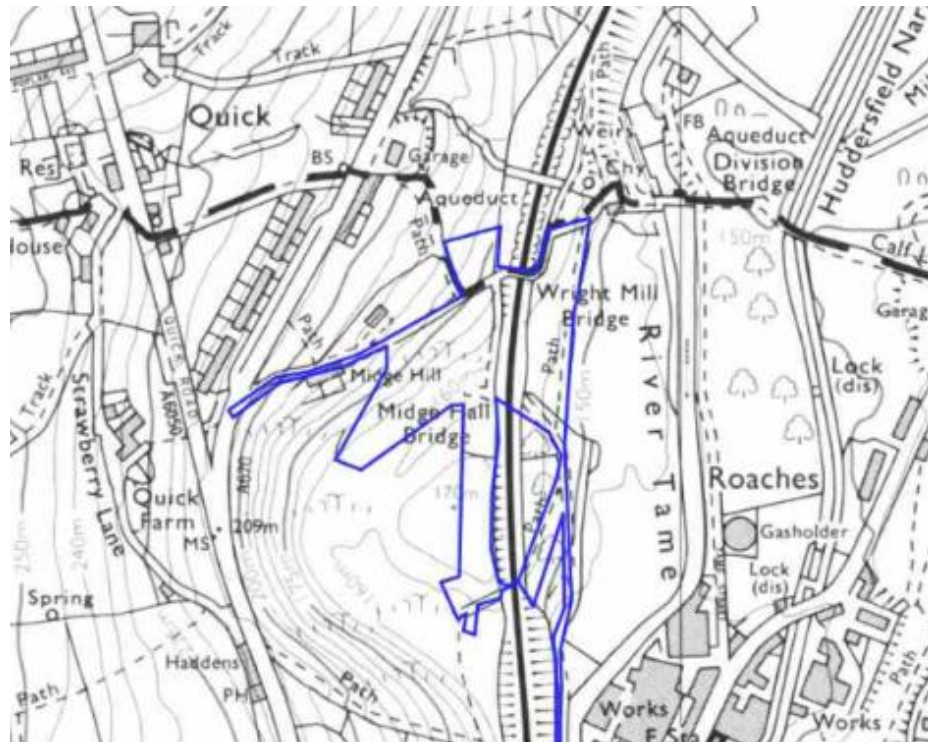
**The Network Rail (Stalybridge to Diggle (Saddleworth) Enhancements) Order**  
**Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20) – Heritage Statement**  
**October 2025**



**Insert 5-5 1:10,560 County Series Map 1938 showing Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20)**



**Insert 5-6 1:10,560 County Series Map 1956 showing Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20)**



Insert 5-7 1:10,560 County Series Map 1982 showing Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20)

### **Description**

- 5.2.4 Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20) comprises a single segmental-arched bridge with battered abutments. The overbridge is aligned east to west, sloping downwards towards the east due to the gradient of the local topography, and spans the two-track railway line which is set within a steep cutting. The bridge survives in its original form, with limited evidence of alteration.
- 5.2.5 The overbridge is constructed in regular-coursed, quarry-faced buff sandstone. It is formed by a segmental arch, which springs from ashlar impost bands. The arch is formed by rusticated v-jointed gritstone voussoirs the keystone of which breaks the line of the arch both above and below, a common design feature with bridges on this route. The voussoirs continue as quoins to each corner of the abutments. The abutments are raked with squared and coursed quarry-faced spandrels. Above the segmental arch is a squared ashlar string course with coped parapet. The abutments terminate in shallow piers with pyramidal caps. The bridge deck is now much overgrown with vegetation (Insert 5-10).
- 5.2.6 The setting of Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20) has undergone some change since it was first constructed. The overbridge would have historically been associated with Wright's Mill as per their shared name. However, the removal of the mill in the mid-20th

century, and subsequent development along Midge Hill would have removed some of the historic integrity of its setting. That being said, the overbridge continues to provide a historic linkage between Calf Lane and Midge Hill over the railway and retains its historic use as a bridleway/footbridge. Views to and from the bridge also enable for an appreciation of its rural setting and location within a cutting of the Pennine landscape. Views north and south from the bridge deck also enabled an appreciation of its relationship with the historic railway.



**Insert 5-8 Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20), south elevation (Network Rail, 2022).**



**Insert 5-9 Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20), north elevation (Network Rail, 2022).**



Insert 5-10 View east across the deck of Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20).

### **Significance**

5.2.7 Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20) was designated as a grade II listed building in March 2018. The Historic England List Entry description identifies the bridge to be of special interest for to the following reasons:

- Historic interest:
  - Constructed during the Heroic Age of railway building and a little-altered example of an 1840s overbridge on what is now one of the main railway lines in northern England.
  - Designed by the notable railway engineer Alfred Stanistreet Jee.
- Architectural interest:
  - The bridge is well-detailed with ashlar impost bands and string course, and piers and voussoirs with tooled margins, that lift its design above the purely functional.
- Group value:
  - With the other listed structures designed by Jee on the Huddersfield & Manchester Railway line.

5.2.8 Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20) is of significance as a largely unaltered example of an 1840s overbridge, dating from the Heroic

Age (1841–50) of railway building and the period of ‘railway mania’ which marked a time of commercial confidence and expansion in the railways. The bridge’s direct historic relationship with historic railway companies of the period, comprising the Huddersfield & Manchester Railway and LNWR, and the notable railway engineer A. S. Jee, who also designed similar structures along the route (see paragraphs 5.2.11 to 5.2.14), give the structure historical value from which it derives significance. The bridge remains in use as a part of the operational railway network and, together with surviving contemporary structures, evidences the historic infrastructure of the Huddersfield & Manchester Railway.

- 5.2.9 Wright’s Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20) derives significance from the quality of its architecture and construction, a characteristic feature of Jee’s work for the Huddersfield & Manchester Railway. Architectural elements such as the ashlar impost bands and string course as well as piers and voussoirs with tooled margins and the quality of workmanship across the structure are notable features of Jee’s design which elevates the structure above the purely functional. The design language used is consistent with other bridges along this section of the Huddersfield & Manchester Railway, contributing to the understanding of the group value of these related structures. The bridge survives in its original form, with limited evidence of intervention or alteration, and remains in use for its original purpose. The structure still reveals Jee’s original design intent and this is a strong contributing factor to its significance.
- 5.2.10 Wright’s Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20) does not derive particular significance from its setting. Its relationship with the railway is a key component of its setting given that the bridge continues to span the railway cutting, retaining a close physical and functional relationship with the railway. Given its location within a deep cutting, views of the bridge are limited, however it is an active bridleway and footpath which enables appreciation of its relationship with the railway looking north and south. To this effect, the setting of Wright’s Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20) makes a minor contribution to its overall significance.

### **Group value**

- 5.2.11 As identified in the list description, Wright’s Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20) is recognised to be of group value with other listed structures designed by A.S. Jee on the Huddersfield & Manchester Railway<sup>1</sup>. These comprise:

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<sup>1</sup> Wheatley’s Overbridge (MVL3/103) (grade II listed NHLE 1450537) was designed by A.S. Jee for the Huddersfield & Manchester Railway. The Overbridge was granted consent for extensive change as part of the Huddersfield to Westtown (Dewsbury) Order section of the Transpennine Route Upgrade, and will be demolished and replaced with a new structure (ref

- Heyrod Hall Overbridge (MVL3/7) (grade II listed, NHLE 1449242);
- Springbank Lane Footbridge (MVL3/8) (grade II listed, NHLE 1452382);
- Spring Bank Lane Overbridge (MVL3/9) (grade II listed, NHLE 1449241);
- Manchester Road Underbridge (MVL3/10) (grade II listed, NHLE 1452392);
- Roughtown Road Overbridge (MVL3/17) (grade II listed, NHLE 1452405);
- Wrights Overbridge (MVL3/23) (grade II listed, NHLE 1452409);
- Royal George Underbridge (MVL3/25) (grade II listed, NHLE 1451848);
- Shaw Hall Bank Road Footway (MVL3/26) (grade II listed, NHLE 1451852);
- Oldham Road Overbridge (MVL3/28) (grade II listed, NHLE 1451853);
- Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29) (grade II listed, NHLE 1451854);
- Saddleworth Viaduct (MVL3/31) (grade II listed, NHLE 1068120);
- Slaithwaite Viaduct (MVL3/61) (grade II listed, NHLE 1224049);
- Golcar Viaduct (MVL3/70) (grade II listed, NHLE 1276344);
- Milne Viaduct (MVL3/76) (Longwood Viaduct) (grade II listed, NHLE 1220121);
- Church Street (MVL3/82) (grade II listed, NHLE 1452083);
- Huddersfield Viaduct (MVL3/92) (grade II listed, NHLE 1223531);
- Hillhouse Lane Underbridge (MVL3/94) (Willow Lane East) (grade II listed, NHLE 1432641);and
- B6118 Colne Bridge Road Overbridge (MVL3/107) (grade II, NHLE 1450265)<sup>2</sup>.

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2021/91337). This is likely to result in de-listing. As such its contribution to group value has therefore been excluded from this assessment.

<sup>2</sup> B6118 Colne Bridge Road Overbridge (MVL3/107) ) (grade II, NHLE 1450265) will be partially demolished and rebuilt with a supplementary structure replacing its spans over the railway. Listed building consent has been granted for this considerable intervention (ref: 2021/91330), and as a result may limit the contribution that this bridge makes towards the group value with the Jee bridges.

- 5.2.12 Of these bridges, four are of particularly similar form to Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/10). These bridges comprise segmental arched bridges of stone construction, which are similarly detailed architecturally. These four overbridges comprise:
- Heyrod Hall Overbridge (MVL3/7) (grade II listed, NHLE 1449242).
  - Spring Bank Lane Overbridge (MVL3/9) (grade II listed, NHLE 1449241).
  - Roughtown Road Overbridge (MVL3/17) (grade II listed, NHLE 1452405).
  - Wrights Overbridge (MVL3/23) (grade II listed, NHLE 1452409).
- 5.2.13 The group value which Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20) derives from these relationships provides an understanding of the wider trends and engineering achievement which characterise both the Huddersfield & Manchester Railway and the Heroic Age of railway building (1841-50) more generally. This group value is enhanced by the structures continuing to form part of the operational railway; as a collective group of assets, they are experienced by those following the rail line (traveling on it, or near it) as coherent features of a single historic route.
- 5.2.14 Masonry railway bridges across the historic Huddersfield & Manchester Railway route have been characterised as being of local or regional interest, depending on their architectural quality, contribution to wider historical interest of the route, and their group value. It has been noted however that, as a group, they are not of substantial national interest due to their dating from a period of railway development when thousands of similar structures were erected (Alan Baxter Associates, 2019).

### **5.3 Surrounding heritage assets**

- 5.3.1 The location of the designated and non-designated heritage assets discussed below are shown in Appendix A.

#### **Designated heritage assets**

- 5.3.2 A total of two listed buildings are present within 250m of Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20). These comprise:
- 7, 9, 11 and 11A, Midge Hill (grade II listed, NHLE 1162827), a terrace of three, polite three-storey houses built in the late 18th century, located c.160m to the south-west.
  - Huddersfield Narrow Canal Division Bridge (grade II, NHLE 1309462), a roving canal bridge built between 1794 and 1797

to the design of the engineer Benjamin Outram, located c.240m west.

- Numbers 7, 9, 11 and 11A, Midge Hill (NHLE 1162827) are located on the bridleway to the west of Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20).

5.3.3 The houses do not draw any contribution to their significance from the presence of the bridge. Predating the railway by c. 50 years, views from their principal elevations look to the south, away from the bridge.

5.3.4 The setting of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal Division Bridge (NHLE 1309462) is defined by its position on the canal, and it does not have any visual relationship with the railway bridge. As such, these structures do not have any relationship with Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20) and do not contribute to each other's significance.

### **Non-designated heritage assets**

5.3.5 The Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record (HER) records six non-designated heritage assets within 250m of Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20), two of which duplicate the listed buildings identified under Designated Assets above. The remaining asset comprise the following:

- Wright Mill (6045.1.0) is located c. 130 m north-east of the overbridge. This mill complex has largely been demolished and the remaining structures converted to residential use. It does however have a historic relationship with the railway bridge given that it was named after the mill, likely due to their proximity.
- Midge Hall (site of) (17442.1.0) is located c. 210 m to the south west of the overbridge. The hall was first identified on OS Map of 1854 and appears in subsequent maps throughout the 20th century. The structure, however was cleared in the late 1970s to early 80s and remains an undeveloped site.
- Grove Sunday School (former) (17909.1.0) is located c. 150 m to the north west of the overbridge. The structure was established in 1843 to accommodate the New Connexion Methodists Sunday School until 1845 when the building was sold and converted to residential accommodation. The structure is two storeys with attic and stone slate roof and its main entrance fronts onto Mosley Road facing north.
- County boundary stone (former) (17910.1.0) is located c.175m to the north west of the overbridge. It would have been established in 1885 by Mossley Borough Council to identify the boundary between Lancashire and Yorkshire and featured

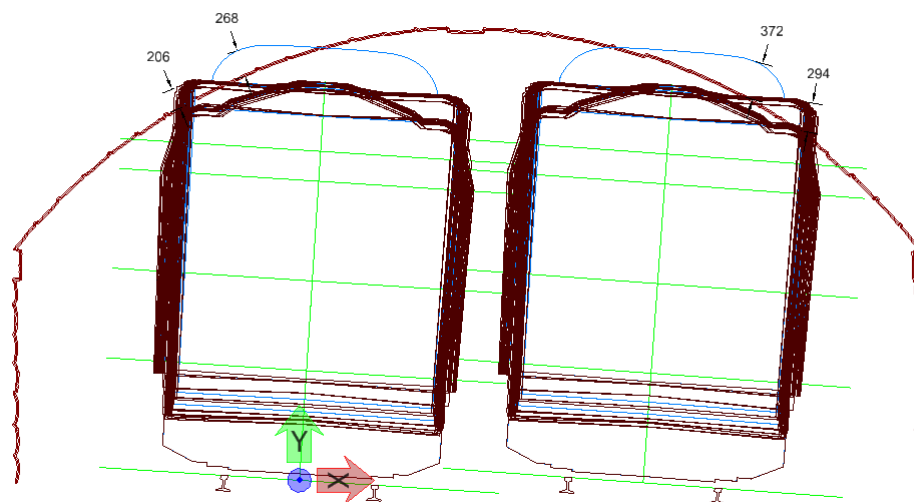
inscriptions which identified this. The stone was defaced in the Second World War. The boundary stone remains in-situ, though its inscriptions are not as visible.

- 5.3.6 Midge Hall (17442.1.0), Grove Sunday School (former) (17909.1.0) and The County Boundary Stone (former) (17910.1.0) do not retain a historic relationship with the railway or Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20). Though glimpses of the bridge can be seen, the overbridge does not make any contribution to its setting given the intervening landscape features and distance between these.
- 5.3.7 In addition to the non-designated assets recorded by the Greater Manchester HER, two additional non-designated heritage assets have been identified on the Transpennine route. These comprise:
- Midge Hall Underbridge (MVL3/19) is located over the railway alignment c. 100 m to the south of Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20). The underbridge consists of semi-circular arch which is stepped with rusticated quarry-faced voussoirs with a continuous tooled margin. The soffits have been lined with concrete, and modern railings were added to the ashlar parapets. The underbridge remains visible from the setting of Wright's Mill Overbridge and contributes towards the legibility of the historic railway.
  - Water Trough (MVL3/21) is located c. 90m to the north of Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20). The water trough was established in the c. 1900 and was rebuilt in c. 2005 with a steel replacement. The water trough remains visible within the setting of the overbridge.
- 5.3.8 Midge Hall Underbridge (MVL3/19) and the Water Trough (MVL3/21) are located along the railway and contribute towards the legibility of the historic railway alignment. Though both structures have limited significance given that they have been subject to unsympathetic works, their retention within the landscape and operational use as part of the contemporary railway network contributes towards the legibility of the historic railway.

## 6. PROPOSALS

### 6.1 Background to proposals

- 6.1.1 In order to achieve the TRU Programme objectives of improving journey times, capacity, overall reliability and resilience, and delivering environmental benefits, the electrification of the railway line and achievement of increased line speed is required. This necessitates the installation of overhead lines along Route Section W2B.
- 6.1.2 Inadequate clearances to safely install OLE has been recognised as a challenge across much of TRU, preventing the installation of overhead lines below some existing overbridges. To reduce the requirement for intervention into the structures along the route as far as possible, a Scheme-specific pantograph has been developed which enables the use of reduced overhead line wire height under structures, subject to site-specific risk assessment. A number of structures along the route also do not provide adequate gauge clearance for the required freight trains on the route, the requirement for which has been considered as part of the design development process.
- 6.1.3 Insert 6-1 shows that even with use of the Scheme-specific pantograph, there would still be significant clash between OLE and Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20). Similarly, the bridge does not have the required freight gauge clearance. A process of design optioneering to identify the optimal solution has been undertaken.



Insert 6-1 Drawing showing the clash between existing structure and proposed pantograph level.

## **6.2 Design development and justification**

- 6.2.1 Design development for Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20) has taken into consideration a number of factors including the significance of the listed structure, operational requirements and constructability. The design development process has also involved engagement with Historic England, TMBC and OMBC. This iterative and robust process ensured the rigorous exploration of available options, incorporating multi-disciplinary review and ongoing engagement with the heritage consultees.
- 6.2.2 Based on Network Rail's extensive experience delivering comparable schemes, six options were identified for further consideration. As introduced in 6.1, the option of retaining the structure without undertaking any works would prevent the delivery of the TRU Scheme. This option was therefore discounted at an early stage. The remaining five options comprised:
1. Track lower: lowering the height of the track to achieve the required headroom while retaining the existing bridge.
  2. Bridge jacking: increasing the height of the bridge through structurally lifting the arch barrel up from the abutments. This would require diagonal cuts to be made to separate the arch barrel from the abutments, lifting the arch, infilling of the resulting gaps and refacing.
  3. Bridge reconstruction: removal of the bridge arch and replacement with a deck providing sufficient clearance
  4. Footbridge reconstruction: replacing the existing overbridge with a basic footbridge to meet Network Rail standards.
  5. Bridge removal. Demolition of the existing bridge and divert the footpath/bridgeway from Midge Hill to the west to Calf Lane to the east.
- 6.2.3 A summary of the optioneering undertaken for these options is summarised in Table 6-1 Optioneering for Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20).

Table 6-1 Optioneering for Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20)

| Option                    | Key Considerations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Advantages                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Disadvantages                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Preferred |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1) Track lower            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sufficient clearance needs to be achieved to enable electrification of the line and allow freight gauge clearance.</li> <li>Time required working within the railway corridor is required to be minimised as far as possible to reduce risk to construction staff and the length of line possession (closure of the railway) and resulting disruption to railway service.</li> </ul>                                                                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lowering of the track would enable retention of the bridge with raising of the parapets undertaken prevent access to OLE.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To achieve the required vertical minimum clearance of 4665mm, the track would have to be lowered by 500mm for a distance of 260m. Due to the shallow depth of rock at this location, this is a substantial engineering operation.</li> <li>Underpinning of the bridge and stabilisation of the retaining wall would be required due to the shallow depth of their foundations. Underpinning may present risks to the listed building due to changes to the structural performance of the historic structure.</li> <li>These interventions would require lengthy line possessions to remove the rock, underpin the bridge and stabilise the retaining walls. This would result in significant disruption to the railway and incur considerable public expenditure.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                | N         |
| 2) Bridge jacking         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The bridge spans a railway cutting with a steep hillside on its eastern extent and is only accessible from narrow lanes and pedestrian/bridleway paths. This would restricts the accessibility of construction vehicles and the delivery of materials / components getting to the site.</li> <li>Ground investigation has revealed rock to be present at shallow depth within the railway cutting. There is currently no functional track drainage at this location.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This option would enable the retention of the listed bridge. The abutments, deck and parapet would be retained, although in altered form.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bridge jacking for masonry arch bridges is a relatively untested methodology, having been delivered on very few historic structures to date. The feasibility of jacking masonry arch structures relies on optimal site conditions, where a high level of control can be achieved and long timescales allowed for implementation. The long-term viability of this option is currently unknown..</li> <li>Bridge jacking would incur extensive disruption to railway users, requiring all works be delivered on site and little scope for off-site construction.</li> <li>The location of the bridge over a cutting with limited access has significant limitations for execution of a bridge jacking operation.</li> <li>Raising of the bridge arch would impact the form and appearance of the structure, interrupting architectural features such as the stringcourse and the stone coursing pattern across the parapet, detracting from its architectural value and integrity.</li> </ul> | N         |
| 3) Bridge Removal         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lowering of ground level within the cutting has the potential to undermine the bridge foundations and cutting retaining walls or to necessitate significant engineering works to ensure their stability.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Removal of the bridge would minimise disruption to the railway network and provide a cost effective solution</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This option would result in the complete removal of the bridge and the loss of a grade II listed structure.</li> <li>Removal of the bridge would permanently remove road access between Midge Hill and Calf Lane and would necessitate the provision of new road access across the railway.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | N         |
| 4) Footbridge replacement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The designation of the bridge as a grade II listed structure places a requirement on Network Rail to have special regard for its preservation under the Planning (Listed Buildings &amp; Conservation Areas) Act 1990.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reconstruction of the existing arch span with a basic footbridge to meet Network Rail standards which would enable continued use pedestrian use over the railway in this location.</li> <li>Historic masonry can be reclaimed from removal of the bridge arch and parapets and reuse on the new footbridge aiding integration of historic and modern fabric and reduce the visual impact of the reconstruction works.</li> <li>Reconstruction as a footbridge can be delivered substantially from track level. This would minimise the need for construction access by road at this constrained site.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reconstruction of the bridge would result in the loss of the historic bridge arch. Though a footbridge would be built in its place which would retain the historic alignment of the bridge this would not be a contributing element of the historic railway.</li> <li>Would not be suitable to be used as a bridleway (which is its current use) given the narrow width of the standardised LMZ bridge form and the natural surface suitable for horses would also be removed.</li> <li>Would result in a difference in form and legibility.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | N         |
| 5) Bridge Reconstruction  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reconstruction of the bridge would enable the preservation of some elements of the historic structure, through the retention and reuse of the bridge abutments in conjunction with the new bridge deck.</li> <li>Historic masonry can potentially be reclaimed from removal of the bridge arch and parapets and reuse on the reconstructed structure aiding integration of historic and modern fabric and reduce the visual impact of the reconstruction works.</li> <li>Reconstruction of the bridge can be delivered substantially from track level. This would minimise the need for construction access by road at this constrained site.</li> <li>The installation of a preconstructed deck would minimise railway possession time and disruption to the railway network.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reconstruction of the bridge would result in the loss of the bridge arch and a portion of the parapets and abutments. This would result in the removal of a significant proportion of the historic bridge, substantially altering its form and appearance, and negatively impacting the integrity of the structure.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Y         |

- 6.2.4 Option 1 track lower, and option 2 bridge jacking would both have enabled retention of the maximum amount of historic fabric. However, these options were discounted due to the difficulty of delivering these at this constrained site and due to the significant cost and disruption required. Additionally, option 2 was also discounted given the uncertainties around the long term viability and largely untested nature of this method. Option 3 bridge removal was discounted on account of the negative impact on the significance of the listed overbridge, the equestrian and pedestrians users, as well as its group value. Option 4 footbridge replacement was discounted due to the impact on heritage significance as a result of the loss of the historic arch span and form. This option was also deemed unsuitable/unsafe for use as a bridleway given that the deck would be too narrow for equestrians and require higher parapet and natural surfacing. As such, Option 5 bridge reconstruction, was identified as the preferred option to achieve the required clearance of Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20). Whilst this option would result in significant alterations to the listed bridge, it was found to represent the most deliverable solution. This took into account the constrained nature of the site; the aims of the TRU Scheme; minimising disruption to the railway network and enabling retention of historic fabric as far as possible.

### **6.3 Development of Preferred Option**

- 6.3.1 Design development was subsequently undertaken to mitigate as much as possible the potential impact of reconstruction on the heritage significance of Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20).
- 6.3.2 The sympathetic approach taken to bridge reconstruction during the restoration of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal prior to its reopening in 2001 was considered as a 'Reference Design'. The reconstructed masonry canal bridges are in proximity to Route Section W2B of the Transpennine route and successfully integrated reconstructed bridges within the historic character of the canal corridor. It was recognised by heritage stakeholders that the reconstruction of these canal bridges had successfully achieved designs which respond to the significance of the historic bridges.

#### **Form of Replacement Deck**

- 6.3.3 A number of constraints which had the potential to influence the feasible options for the replacement deck design were identified. These have shaped the choice of the form of the proposed replacement deck. These constraints can be summarised as follows:
- Geometric constraints

- Gauge clearance – the minimum distance of clearance required between the soffit of the deck and the proposed OLE.
    - Narrow deck width - the width of the deck is dictated by the bridge abutments and alignment of the highway.
  - Construction constraints
    - Lift limit <30t – due to the layout of the site which has limited highway access and its constraints within a cutting, there is limited access for a large capacity crane at road level, therefore all bridge components are proposed to be delivered from the track and installed with use of a railway crane, with a maximum lift weight capacity of 30t.
  - Minimisation of disruption to pedestrians and bridleway users .
    - Minimisation of disruption to railway users caused by railway line closures. Shift hours are limited by the window within which work can be safely completed while minimising impact on railway users.
- 6.3.4 Three forms of bridge deck were considered as potential options for the reconstruction of Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20):
- Network Rail standard Conarch.
  - Portal deck; and
  - Filler beam construction.
- 6.3.5 These are presented in the Table 6-2 below.

Table 6-2 Summary of bridge deck design optioneering

| Option               | Assessment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Preferred | Indicative Photo                                                                      |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 – Standard Conarch | <p>A standard Conarch is a portal bridge consisting of standardised precast concrete frames which conform with Network Rail’s specification. Where the specification requirements are met, these precast units can be transported to site and installed quickly and efficiently to form a portal overbridge, with deck cast <i>in-situ</i> to form a continuous structure.</p> <p>The use of standardised Network Rail Conarch bridge (precast concrete arch) is not considered feasible at this site and was discounted at an early stage, primarily due to its geometric constraints. The required narrow deck and retention of the alignment of the footpath would not allow Network Rail technical standards to be met. The lifting capacity limitations due to the use of a railway crane also discounted the use of standard Conarch edge beams due to their weight.</p>                                                                                                                                           | N         |    |
| 2 – Portal           | <p>A portal bridge consists of a series of precast concrete frames which are then transformed to site and installed, with deck cast <i>in-situ</i> to form a continuous structure. Unlike a standard Conarch, portal bridge can be designed to bespoke dimensions, allowing site specific geometry to be accommodated.</p> <p>A portal would accommodate site geometry and its form would to a degree reference the form of the existing arch form. However, lift weight limitations and the requirement for a separate parapet beam for this option would impact the level of the bridleway and reduce verge width. The portal would result in a larger area of visible concrete, reducing the degree to which they could be sensitively integrated with the retained masonry elements of the structure. Portal structures would also require bespoke beam design at each site, reducing standardisation between the proposed new bridge decks on Route Section W2B, increasing costs of the publicly funded works.</p> | N         |   |
| 3 – Filler beam      | <p>A filler beam deck consists of a concrete slab with longitudinal reinforced steel beams. This form of construction accommodates site geography, minimises the required lift weights, maximises the extent of works that can be undertaken off-site, and standardises the beam design between sites. The potential standardisation offered by sympathetically integrated filler beam decks along Route Section W2B would maintain a degree of consistency of design between the structures. This consistent design response to the challenge of electrifying the route could be viewed as part of the next chapter for the management of this section of the Transpennine route.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Y         |  |

- 6.3.6 The filler beam deck was selected as the preferred design option, and further consideration was given to ensuring the proposed works would be sympathetic to the existing aesthetic of the structure.
- 6.3.7 In order to visually integrate the proposed precast concrete riser unit with the retained masonry abutments, it is proposed to clad their external faces with natural stone. The underside of the new deck would not be clad, the benefit of cladding this element would be extremely limited given the lack of visibility of the underside of the deck. Cladding would also present a number of safety risks namely, the introduction elements that may fall onto the railway corridor should they fail over time, the obscuring of critical structural elements that require routine inspection, and the introduction of an additional construction activity that would be undertaken at height and within the railway corridor. Similarly, it is proposed that the new filler beam deck includes a feature line which would tie in with the stringcourse of the existing structure. These integrated design elements respond to specific features of the existing structure that contributes to its character and architectural interest.

#### **Parapet design**

- 6.3.8 The new parapet design required a height of 1.8 m given that the overbridge remains in active use by pedestrians and horse riders and would need to adhere to Network Rail's safety standards whilst responding to the significance of the existing bridge. Numerous options for the proposed new parapet design were considered, these options are summarised in Table 6-3.
- 6.3.9 Further optioneering was then undertaken to identify a suitable material for the bridge copers, as set out in Table 6-4.

Table 6-3 Summary of parapet design options

| Option | Core            | Road Facing Elevation                                                                               | Track Facing Elevation      | Assessment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Preferred | Indicative photo                                                                      |
|--------|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1      | Concrete        | Concrete with liner finish                                                                          | Concrete with liner finish  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-cast concrete parapet with exposed concrete liner on both sides of parapet.</li> <li>• This option would not be considered to result in a sensitive addition, with extensive amounts of concrete visible in views of and across the bridge.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                | N         |    |
| 2      | Concrete        | Natural stone cladding                                                                              | Concrete with liner finish  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-cast concrete parapet with exposed concrete liner on track facing elevation and stone cladding installed to highway-facing elevation.</li> <li>• This option would not be considered to result in a sensitive addition, with extensive amounts of concrete visible in views of the bridge.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                 | N         |    |
| 3      | Concrete        | Reclaimed stone cladding (as far as possible), newly quarried natural stone cladding where required | Natural Stone cladding      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-cast concrete parapet with natural stone pre-cast into track-facing parapet off-site and natural stone cladding installed on brideway side. Stone reclaimed from the existing bridge could be used to clad footpath-facing elevation as far as reasonably practicable.</li> <li>• This option is considered to represent the optimum balance between constructability, safety and a design sensitive to the significance of the structure.</li> </ul> | Y         |   |
| 4      | Steel framework | Natural stone                                                                                       | Natural stone               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This option comprises natural stone blocks built up in courses with joints reinforced by a stainless steel framework which is cast into the concrete edge beam.</li> <li>• Due to the time limitation and safety implications of working in an active railway corridor coupled with the minor difference in appearance between Option 3 and 4, this option has not been progressed.</li> </ul>                                                            | N         |  |
| 5      | Masonry         | Rebuilt from original stone                                                                         | Rebuilt from original stone | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due to the time limitation and safety implications of working in an active railway corridor coupled with the minor difference in appearance between Option 3 and 5, this option has not been progressed. The quantity and quality of the stone able to be reclaimed from the site is also considered a limiting factor.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                        | N         |  |

Table 6-4 Coping stone optioneering

| Option                                    | Advantages                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Disadvantages                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Indicative image                                                                      | Preferred |
|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Option 1 – Natural Stone                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Natural stone would be sympathetic to the historic character of Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20), in keeping with its architectural interest.</li> <li>Natural stone copers would represent an honest intervention, with the form of the stones readable as a response to the electrification challenge, while sympathetically integrating with the existing and historic character of the bridge.</li> <li>Over time, this material would weather to further integrate with the existing and proposed masonry elements.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Natural stone is the heaviest of the three options with a density of 25 kN/m<sup>3</sup>, requiring consideration in the design of the structural elements of the parapet units and connection with deck.</li> <li>The weight of natural stone also requires special consideration be given to manual handling safety protocols.</li> <li>This option is determined to be the most expensive of the three options due to costs for quarrying and fees for masonry contractors.</li> </ul>             |    | Y         |
| Option 2 – Coloured Concrete              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lighter material than natural stone with a density of 18 kN/m<sup>3</sup>.</li> <li>Concrete can be coloured to achieve a close visual match to the adjacent masonry coping stones</li> <li>This material would weather over time, increasing the similarity in appearance between coloured concrete and the existing masonry</li> <li>Coloured concrete copers would be relatively cost effective, reducing the cost of this publicly funded project</li> </ul>                                                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduction of modern material, would represent a departure from the materials historically used for coping stones.</li> <li>While relatively sympathetic this material would risk negatively impacting on the architectural interest of the Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                          |   | N         |
| Option 3 – Glass Reinforced Plastic (GRP) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lighter material than natural stone.</li> <li>Cost effective material, reducing the cost of this publicly funded project.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There would be a stark visual disparity between the GRP copers and historic fabric, detracting from the architectural interest of Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20).</li> <li>GRP copers would not weather or soften in the way natural stone or concrete would, with the difference in material continuing to detract from the character of the historic bridge.</li> <li>Of the options considered, GRP copers would result in the highest level of harm to the character of the bridge</li> </ul> |  | N         |

- 6.3.10 Option 3 parapet design presented in Table 6-3 was selected as the preferred option and progressed to design given that it would ensure the proposed parapets visually integrate with the retained elements of the existing bridge, while enabling a degree of off-site construction and has been progressed to detail design. This approach would realise safe working for operatives constructing the Scheme at this location by avoiding working at height over the railway line. It would also successfully reduce the time required for line possession compared to other options, thereby minimising disruption to railway users. This option also presents the opportunity to use reclaimed stone on the bridleway-facing elevations where possible, which would to a degree, mitigate adverse impacts arising from the work.
- 6.3.11 Option 1 – Natural Stone was determined as the preferred option for the coping stones. As summarised in Table 6-4, the specification of natural stone copers would contribute to the high-quality finish forming one of the factors embedded into the design which partially mitigates against the high level of harm arising from reconstruction. The use of natural stone copers and cladding would provide visual consistency for the reconstructed span and help to integrate the retained masonry structure with the proposed new span.
- 6.3.12 The recommended minimum parapet height required for bridleway bridges over electrified railway is generally 1.8 m. Whilst deviation from this standard can be achieved based on a site-specific risk assessment, due to the narrow width of Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20) and the height of horse riders crossing the bridge, a parapet height of 1.8 m has been identified to be required at this structure to ensure the safety of bridge users.
- 6.3.13 During removal of the existing arch, retention of historic fabric will be maximised as far as possible. Masonry reclaimed from the removal of bridges along the W2B Route will be assessed for its suitability for reuse as cladding.

## **6.4 Description of proposals**

- 6.4.1 It is proposed to remove the existing deck, parapet and arch span of the grade II listed Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20) and reconstruct the bridge using a new filler beam span, with both the new parapets and structural elements designed in a style which responds to the architectural significance of the existing historic structure.
- 6.4.2 Removal of the existing masonry deck, arch and parapet would be undertaken, minimising the extent of demolition as far as possible and retaining any suitable fabric for reuse as far as possible.

- 6.4.3 The reconstructed bridge would consist of retained masonry abutments beneath the level of the existing impost bands, above which natural stone-clad precast concrete risers would be installed to support the stonework. A concrete filler beam deck would be installed on bearings supported by a concrete cill beam. The deck slab would be cast in-situ using permanent formwork situated between weathering steel bottom flanges of the new steel beams. The precast concrete edge beams of the replacement deck would have integral parapets clad with natural stone with natural stone copers. The external parapet elevation would be clad off site with natural stone masonry cast into its fabric. The internal elevation will be clad with masonry in-situ using stone reclaimed from the existing historic bridge as far as reasonably practicable. Two electrification hazard signs would be attached to the inside face of each parapet, along with a bridge strike sign. External and internal elevations of the parapet would match the colouring, size and coursing pattern of the existing fabric as far as possible. The edge beam design also includes a horizontal feature line which will tie in with the modified and retained existing string course. The footpath would be resurfaced using a granular material.

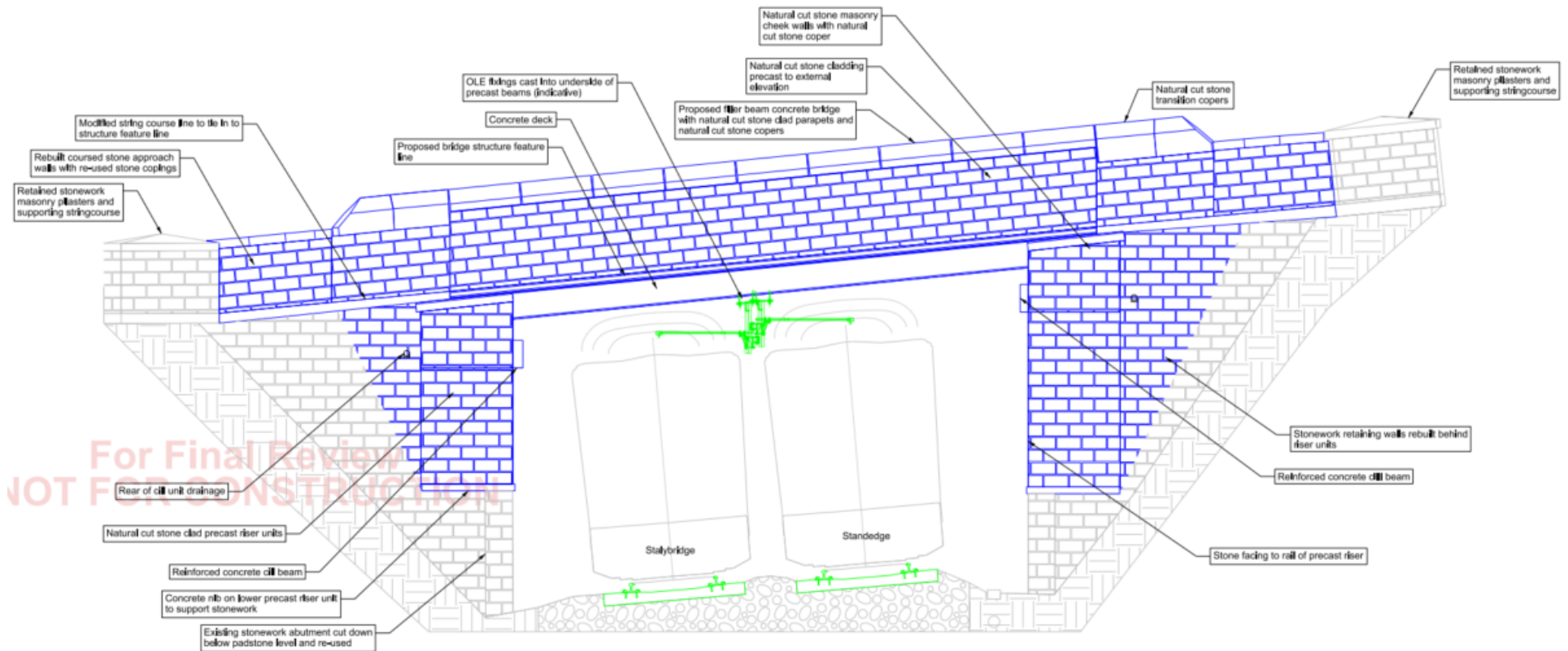


**Insert 6-2 Visualisation of Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20) looking across the bridge deck.**



**Insert 6-3 Visualisation of Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20) from aerial perspective**

**The Network Rail (Stalybridge to Diggle (Saddleworth) Enhancements) Order  
Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20) – Heritage Statement  
October 2025**



### Proposed Elevation F-F

Scale 1:50

**Insert 6-4 Proposed Elevation Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20)**

### **Construction Methodology**

- 6.4.4 The proposed works relating to the reconstruction of the overbridge would comprise:
- Locally break down approach walls and excavate behind deck ends in advance of demolition.
  - Careful demolition of the existing masonry arch span by removing the masonry arch and cutting down the abutment to underside of springing stone level.
  - Reclamation of historic masonry as far as possible with transportation and secure storage at the site construction compound. Stone will be subject to preliminary rapid assessment for potential reuse and then palletised ready for transportation back to site where it will be redressed and used as appropriate.
  - Installation of new bridge elements including precast riser units, cill units, bearings, with materials transported to site by rail.
  - Install prefabricated beam pair sections for filler beam deck, including edge beams with integral parapets.
  - Cast in-situ concrete between beam pairs and topping slab for the bridge deck.
  - The stone wingwalls and approach walls will be rebuilt where taken down locally to enable removal of the deck,
  - Install deck waterproofing and protective finishes.
  - Build in situ stone-facing to interior of the parapets using reclaimed stone as far as possible and install coper units.
  - Backfill with engineered fill behind the structure and on approaches up to underside of footpath formation.
  - The approach stone walls will be rebuilt, stone copers installed. and the new footpath will be surfaced.
- 6.4.5 The proposed works to Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20) are shown in the following drawings which accompany this application:
- Existing and Proposed Plan (167037-TGP-25-MVL3-DRG-T-LP-162013)
  - Existing and Proposed Elevation and Section (167037-TGP-25-MVL3-DRG-T-LP-162014)
  - Existing and Proposed Elevation and Section (167037-TGP-25-MVL3-DRG-T-LP-162015)

- Existing and Proposed Elevation and Section (167037-TGP-25-MVL3-DRG-T-LP-162016)

## **7. IMPACT OF PROPOSALS**

### **7.1 Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20)**

- 7.1.1 The proposed works to the grade II listed Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20) are required in order to accommodate electrification of the Transpennine route as part of the wider TRU Programme. In order to construct the Scheme, the proposed works would require the removal of most of Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20) and its reconstruction. This will result in the loss of the majority of the structure, with the extent of retained fabric confined to the abutments, portions of the wingwalls, and pilasters at each end of the bridge parapets.
- 7.1.2 The proposed works would largely erode the historic and architectural value of Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20) through its substantial removal. The proposed works would retain the pilasters and portions of the wing wall abutments, maintaining an isolated element of the structure's overall architectural interest, however, their context as part of a little altered structure would be lost.
- 7.1.3 The proposed intervention will mean the substantial removal of a historic bridge that is part of the infrastructure associated with the Heroic Age (1841-50) of railway construction. It is not only a loss in its own right but also detrimental to the historic character and group value that this structure contributes to as part of the Transpennine railway line.
- 7.1.4 The proposed reconstruction of the structure would have an impact on the group value of the bridges designed by A.S. Jee on the Transpennine route. The loss of Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20) would remove one element of this group of 18 bridges designed by A.S. Jee and one of the five bridges which share a common design language. Given that these bridges derive a degree of significance from their group value with each other, the significance of each of the other bridges will therefore be slightly diminished by the removal of Wright's Mill Underbridge (MVL3/20). The impact of these demolitions would amount to less than substantial harm to the retained structures arising from a weakening of the extent to which group value contributes to their significance.
- 7.1.5 These proposals would therefore result in substantial harm to the significance of Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20). The development of the design has embedded details to mitigate against this harm wherever possible. Reclaimed masonry cladding and

natural stone copers would visually integrate the new fabric of the proposed deck and parapets with the retained pilasters and approach walls. This consistency of material and finish will reduce the degree to which the proposed change is experienced when moving across the bridge and would realise an opportunity for the sustainable reuse of historic fabric on the reconstructed bridge. Similarly, the inclusion of a stringcourse detail in the proposed concrete edge beam would visually integrate the new structural element with the altered masonry stringcourse. The level of harm arising from the works would remain as substantial, but the careful consideration given to the visual relationship between the proposed and existing elements of the structure would to a small degree offset the potential harm to Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20).

## **7.2 Other heritage assets**

- 7.2.1 The proposals would have no direct physical impact on the designated and non-designated assets within the 250m study area around Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20). Though the reconstruction of the bridge would result in a, albeit minor, change in the setting of 7, 9, 11 and 11A Midge Hill (grade II, NHLE 1162827), such change would not have an appreciable impact given intervisibility is minimal and the bridge would continue to provide bridleway/pedestrian access.
- 7.2.2 The reconstruction of Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20) would impact the settings of the non-designated assets of Midge Hall Underbridge (MVL3/19) and the Water Trough (MVL3/21), detracting to a limited extent the legibility of the historic railway in relation to these assets.

## **7.3 Mitigation**

- 7.3.1 Design proposals were developed through an iterative process which has robustly sought to avoid or reduce the impact on the significance of Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20). Additional information with respect to these elements of design development is included above in Section 6.2.
- 7.3.2 Regular consultation with historic environment stakeholders and the design team were held throughout the new bridge's design development process (see Section 4). Historic environment stakeholders, including Historic England, OMBC and TMBC, have been involved in the development of the design mitigation described below.
- 7.3.3 The design development process has resulted in mitigation being embedded within the design of reconstruction of Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20). The following design considerations have

been taken into account in response to the magnitude of proposed alteration:

- The use of natural stone cladding to minimise the areas of visible concrete, reflecting the materiality of both the original bridge and many of the other retained structures along the Transpennine route. This approach would ensure natural stone remains the dominant material of the exterior faces of the bridge.
- Salvaged stone from the demolished span will also be considered for reuse on the bridleway-facing elevations of the parapet where feasible.
- The proposed feature line in the precast edge beam would help integrate the newly inserted concrete beam with the portions of string course on the retained pilasters.
- A common approach has been taken to the design of both bridge reconstructions of Heyrod Hall Overbridge (MVL3/7), Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20) and Oldham Road Overbridge (MVL3/28). It is considered that progressing comparable designs in tandem would enable a coherent approach and would provide a visible reference to the new phase of design upgrades taking place in the 21st century. This is another chapter in the story of the railway's development and improvement.

7.3.4 During construction of the works, toolbox talks to disseminate best practice for reducing potential impacts in relation to construction activity associated with Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20) would also be delivered, for example to help avoid accidental damage.

### **Recommended Compensation**

7.3.5 In addition to these embedded measures, additional mitigation secured through the use of listed building consent conditions is recommended comprising:

- A scheme of historic building recording to Level 3 standards in accordance with Historic England guidance (Historic England 2016). This would provide a permanent record of Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20) in its current form and be lodged with the Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record. This building recording would help to compensate for the harm to significance resulting from the demolition by providing the opportunity to document the structure which will be largely lost as a result of the proposed works. The historic building recording would include:
  - Drawings.

- Photography.
- Written account.
- A scheme of permanent heritage interpretation would be developed and installed adjacent to Greenfield Station. This would provide the opportunity to engage members of the public with the heritage of the Huddersfield & Manchester Railway including the historic structures designed by A. S. Jee, such as Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20). Further engagement with stakeholders with respect to the content of the interpretation would be undertaken during the detailed design phase.

## **7.4 Public benefit**

- 7.4.1 The reconstruction of Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20) and resulting substantial harm is considered justified to ensure the realisation of the substantial public benefits of the Order Scheme, in accordance with paragraph 214 of the NPPF.
- 7.4.2 As part of the wider TRU Programme, the Order Scheme would directly and indirectly play a role in improving regional connectivity and enhancing of some of Britain's busiest rail network, in turn realising economic, social and environmental objectives of the programme. The Transpennine route is identified as a key transport corridor, providing connections between cities in the North of England. The improvements in connectivity delivered by the TRU programme will support aspirations for economic growth and "levelling up" opportunities across the North of England.
- 7.4.3 The key objectives of the TRU programme are to achieve the part electrification of the Transpennine Route, improve journey times and capacity between key destinations, improve overall reliability and resilience of the route, and provide environmental benefits from modal shift from road to rail freight reducing the number of heavy vehicles on the highway network and associated air pollution. The reconstruction of Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20) would directly facilitate the achievement of these aims by creating sufficient clearance beneath the bridge to accommodate electrification and the use of larger gauge trains, delivering increases in line speed, capacity and resilience.
- 7.4.4 Electrification would deliver faster journey times and improved performance by allowing trains to accelerate faster, and brake more efficiently. The Order Scheme will deliver faster line speeds (80 mph throughout), improving journey times along the Transpennine Route, aiming to provide an improved journey time from Leeds – Manchester Victoria of 42-44 minutes and York to Manchester Victoria of 65-67 minutes. Works to the track and structures along

the Route, including reconstruction of Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20), are required to accommodate this increase, and without these changes the Scheme would be unable to go ahead.

- 7.4.5 As a vital constituent part of the Order Scheme, the proposed reconstruction would also facilitate indirect benefits associated with the wider programme of works, including station upgrades, track renewal and signalling improvements.
- 7.4.6 The reliability and resilience of the route and services operating on it will be improved by replacement of existing infrastructure with electrification equipment, new track drainage and signalling. Modern signalling equipment will reduce the headway between trains, allowing them to run closer together which will in turn provide increased capacity. The Scheme will provide the capability to operate four 'express', two 'semi-express' services and up to two local services an hour on the Route and will provide increased flexibility to timetable more train paths.
- 7.4.7 Electrification of the Scheme would provide substantial environmental and sustainability benefits and is an investment in 'greener' energy technology. This supports Network Rail's Decarbonisation Strategy and is bolstering national targets for reducing harmful emissions that cause climate change, which are set out in Government legislation for achieving net zero carbon by 2050.
- 7.4.8 The Order Scheme will also deliver improved safety through measures including replacement of two level crossings, installation of additional safety measures on existing bridges; enhancements to the local highway networks and new pedestrian crossing points at locations including Greenfield and Mossley Stations. Accessibility of the railway network will also be improved with the provision of fully accessible stations at Greenfield Station and the relocated Mossley Station. These measures are being brought forward as part of the wider TRU Scheme to electrify and modernise the Route, as facilitated, in part, by the reconstruction of Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20).
- 7.4.9 Significant residual beneficial effects arising from the operation of the wider TRU Scheme have been previously identified in the Huddersfield-Westtown TWA Order Inquiry from December 2021. These included recognition of improved journey times, reliability, and capacity at the Local Authority area and in turn the sub-regional and regional level. These improvements will bring direct significant benefits to local businesses and the labour market through improved access to the local regions along the section of the route from Stalybridge to Diggle.

- 7.4.10 To this effect, the proposals at Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20) are therefore essential in achieving the overall substantial public benefits of Route Section W2B and wider objectives of the Order Scheme, and without these interventions, the Order Scheme would not be able to be safely and successfully implemented. Alongside these substantial public benefits, the delivery of heritage interpretation adjacent to Greenfield Station would enable public engagement with the heritage of the Huddersfield & Manchester Railway, its architecture and significance.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

- 8.1.1 The significance of Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20) lies primarily in its historical and architectural interest. The bridge is a largely unaltered example of a masonry underbridge dating to the Heroic Age (1841-1850) of railway building. The high quality of the bridge's architecture together with the quality workmanship of the construction is characteristic of A.S. Jee's work for the Huddersfield & Manchester Railway. The bridge also derives significance from this direct historical relationship with notable railway engineer A.S. Jee and the historic railway companies namely the Huddersfield & Manchester Railway and LNWR. The setting of Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20) makes a minor contribution to the significance of the structure. It also possesses group value as one of a number of A.S. Jee structures on the Transpennine route which share a common design language.
- 8.1.2 A number of design options were pursued to achieve the clearance required for the OLE. The OLE is a fundamental part of the Scheme to deliver a faster service (reduced journey time) and to make provision for electrification and the operation of a 'greener' transport solution. The development of a Scheme-specific pantograph which enables the use of reduced overhead line wire height under structures, subject to a site-specific risk assessment, has not resolved the clash between proposed OLE and the listed structure.
- 8.1.3 The first range of options were focused on the retention of the bridge and employing engineering solutions to facilitate the Scheme within the current physical confines of the structure. These options included:
- Adjusting the vertical rail alignment through track lowering to provide adequate clearance for the required OLE through the arch of the structure;
  - Bridge jacking to increase the height of the arches over the lines to provide sufficient clearances; and

- Footbridge reconstruction with a basic footbridge to meet Network Rail standards, maintaining pedestrian access over the railway in this location.
- 8.1.4 However, as outlined in Section 6.2, these options did not meet with safety regulations, operational drivers and buildability. Local geology, topography, requirements of the bridleway and access constraints limit the feasibility of delivering the other options considered within the context of the operational railway corridor.
- 8.1.5 Options were then pursued which accepted the loss of the historic bridge and made attempts to achieve an optimum reconstructed bridge design solution that retained the relationship with the railway and to an extent compensated for the removal of the existing structure. This was done through material choices (use of natural stone cladding referencing the character of the existing bridge); ambition to salvage masonry from the demolished span for use to clad elements of the reconstructed bridge, formation of a horizontal feature line in the concrete edge beams to tie in with the retained section of stringcourse.
- 8.1.6 The design process has been undertaken in a strongly collaborative manner and has sought historic environment professional support from the outset. The desire to maximise heritage benefits and limit harm was the primary position. Every effort was made to retain this historic structure as part of TRU. However, this was unachievable within the operational parameters set. Regular consultation with historic environment stakeholders and the design team were held throughout the design development process and several mitigation measures have been considered to attempt to avoid or reduce the impact on the significance of Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20). Historic England, TMBC and OMBC have accepted that the approach of reconstructing the structure is necessary to deliver the proposed Scheme, and that alternative approaches are not viable. The design development process, including engagement with historic environment stakeholders, resulted in mitigation being embedded within the design of the reconstruction as well as compensation measures being agreed, to be secured as conditions of the LBC (see Section 7.3).
- 8.1.7 With the reconstruction of Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20), the Scheme can achieve key improvement objectives as outlined in Section 7.4. It would also support the achievement of substantial public benefits related to:
- Improved efficiency and reliability of the railway (in journey time saving and increased capacity);
  - Reduction of delays to trains and other highway users (improved efficiency of the railways means fewer heavy

vehicles on the highway network causing traffic issues and contributing to air pollution);

- Supporting sustainable transport development in line with Network Rail's Decarbonisation Strategy; and
- Improving public health and safety in providing safe routes across the railway.

8.1.8 In addition to this, the delivery of a programme of heritage interpretation at Greenfield Station would provide the opportunity for engagement of the public with the heritage of the Huddersfield & Manchester Railway.

8.1.9 The substantial loss of Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20), which is a grade II listed building, would result in substantial harm to the significance of the listed building and should be considered exceptional. This will mean the loss of an irreplaceable piece of railway infrastructure, dating to the Heroic Age (1841-50) of railway building. It is also a loss to the collection of A.S. Jee bridges that are located along this section of the Transpennine route.

8.1.10 Whilst the reconstruction of Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20) is regrettable its loss would be outweighed by the substantial public benefits that accrue from enabling the Transpennine programme to be achieved. The proposals therefore meet the requirements of the NPPF (paragraph 214) in relation to the justification for substantial harm, complies with policy C5 of the Tameside Unitary Development Plan and policy 24 of the Oldham Joint Core Strategy and Development Management Policies. It would also satisfy Policy JP-P2 contained within Greater Manchester Combined Authority's Places for Everyone (2024). The proposals therefore satisfy both national and local policy requirements in relation to the justification for harm to the significance of Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20).

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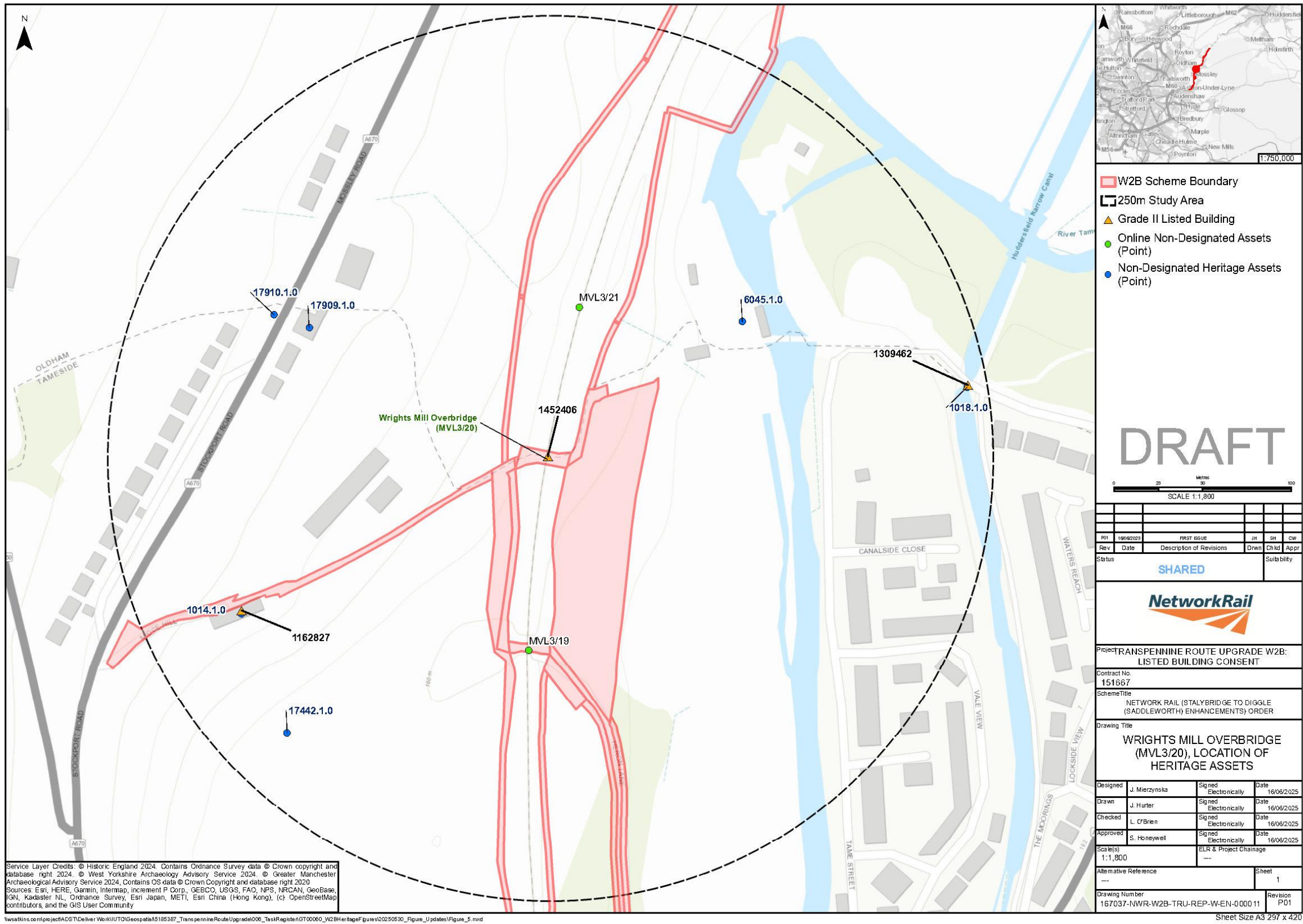
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APPENDIX A – LOCATION PLAN



## **APPENDIX B – NATIONAL HERITAGE LIST DESCRIPTION**

### **Official list entry**

|                       |                                                      |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| Heritage Category:    | Listed Building                                      |
| Grade:                | II                                                   |
| List Entry Number:    | 1452406                                              |
| Date first listed:    | 23-Mar-2018                                          |
| List Entry Name:      | Railway overbridge MVL3/20, Wright's Mill            |
| Location Description: | Footpath from Midge Hill Farm to Calf Lane, Mossley. |

### **Location**

The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

|                          |                                   |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| District:                | Oldham (Metropolitan Authority)   |
| Parish:                  | Saddleworth                       |
| District:                | Tameside (Metropolitan Authority) |
| Parish:                  | Mossley                           |
| National Grid Reference: | SD9786003652                      |

### **Summary**

Railway overbridge, 1845-1849, by AS Jee for the Huddersfield & Manchester Railway.

### **Reasons for Designation**

Wright's Mill Bridge (MVL3/20), constructed in the mid-late 1840s by AS Jee for the Huddersfield & Manchester Railway, is listed at Grade II for the following principal reasons:

Historic interest:

- \* constructed during the heroic age of railway building and a little-altered example of an 1840s overbridge on what is now one of the main railway lines in northern England;
- \* designed by the notable railway engineer Alfred Stanistreet Jee.

Architectural interest:

- \* the bridge is well-detailed with ashlar impost bands and string course, and piers and voussoirs with tooled margins, that lift its design above the purely functional.

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Group value:

\* with the other listed structures designed by Jee on the Huddersfield & Manchester Railway line.

## **History**

In contrast to the main trunk lines of the late 1830s that were constructed by single railway companies the route from Stalybridge to Leeds had fragmented origins and was the work of three different railway companies: the Huddersfield & Manchester Railway, Leeds, Dewsbury & Manchester Railway, and the Manchester & Leeds Railway.

The Huddersfield & Manchester Railway was authorised in 1845 and followed the route of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal for much of its length, including a railway tunnel through the Pennine hills set alongside the earlier Standedge Canal Company tunnel of 1811; in 1846 the railway company also acquired the canal. Joseph Locke and Alfred Stanistreet Jee were appointed to survey and design the new line, the two engineers having already worked together on a major project linking Manchester and Sheffield. Jee became the lead engineer for the Huddersfield line, which passed through challenging terrain, assisted by resident engineers that included his brother Moreland Jee (until 1848) and Herbert F Mackworth. Construction of the line was divided into various contracts, with many contractors being only responsible for a single cutting, viaduct or tunnel portal. The largest contract for the Standedge Tunnel between Diggle and Marsden was let to a single contractor, Thomas Nicholson in 1847. The tunnel's completion in 1849 marked the opening of the line.

The Leeds end of the route, which was also authorised in 1845, was constructed by the Leeds, Dewsbury & Manchester Railway. The engineer was Thomas Grainger who had previously largely worked in Scotland, and the line was completed in 1849.

A short three-mile section of the route between Heaton Lodge Junction and Thornhill Junction near Mirfield was developed by the Manchester & Leeds Railway and was constructed between 1837 and 1840, with George Stephenson as the chief engineer. The structures on this line were designed by Thomas Gooch under the oversight of Stephenson. In 1847 the railway company changed its name to the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway.

In 1847 the Huddersfield & Manchester Railway and the Leeds, Dewsbury & Manchester Railway were acquired by the London & North Western Railway (LNWR) so that the company could access the city of Leeds and the textile towns of West Yorkshire. This pitted them as rivals to the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway, although at points on the route the two companies had to work together. By 1851 the London & North Western Railway had an overall mileage of railway track of 800 miles and it became the most prominent railway company in the country and the largest joint-stock concern in the world in the late C19. Although the LNWR had a general manager, Captain Mark Huish, the lines of the Stalybridge to Leeds route still managed their own affairs. LNWR later carried out expansion works, including the widening of tracks and bridges, the construction of additional tunnels, and station alterations. In 1923 the line became part of the London Midland & Scottish Railway, and subsequently part of the nationalised British Railways in 1948. The line, its

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structures and track are currently (2018) owned by Network Rail, and the passenger services operated by TransPennine Express and Northern Rail.

This overbridge was built to carry the footpath from Midge Hill Farm to Wright's Mill over the railway. It was designed by AS Jee (1816-1858) and dates from the line's construction between 1845 and 1849. It remains as built.

**Details**

Railway overbridge, 1845-1849, by AS Jee for the Huddersfield & Manchester Railway.

MATERIALS: buff sandstone.

DESCRIPTION: the bridge carries the footpath from east-west across the railway. Due to gradients it slopes down towards the east. The bridge comprises a single segmental-arched span recessed between battered abutments to either side of the steep cutting, with a parapet.

The stonework is regular-coursed and quarry-faced. The stone of the arch piers and the voussoirs has tooled margins, the keystone breaking the arch above and below. The impost bands, sloping string course above the arch and the chamfered-and-weathered parapet copings are dressed. The abutments curve outwards slightly at all four corners and terminate in slender piers with shallow, pyramidal caps. The arch soffit is narrow-coursed masonry with tooled detailing. The road surface was much overgrown at the date of survey (2017).

**Sources**

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Prepared for Network Rail, March 2017. Alan Baxter Ltd

## **APPENDIX C -HISTORIC ENGLAND PRE-APPLICATION RESPONSE LETTERS**



Historic England

Ms Kate Berry  
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3100 Century Way  
Leeds  
LS15 8ZB

Direct Dial: +447990339949

Our ref: PA01200823

25 June 2024

Dear Kate

**Pre-application Advice**

**TRANSPENNINE ROUTE UPGRADE - STALYBRIDGE TO STANDEDGE**

Thank you for arranging the pre-application meetings over the last five months. These have been extremely useful in explaining the significance of the heritage assets, the design team's approach, and in exploring issues and constraints associated with electrifying the track.

This letter covers our advice regarding proposals for change to eight listed railway structures between Stalybridge and Standedge Tunnel, within the Metropolitan boroughs of Tameside and Oldham in Greater Manchester. This section of the railway is referenced as W2B.

Significance

The section of railway between Stalybridge and Standedge Tunnel was constructed in stages between 1844 and 1849. This was at the height of "railway mania"; an intense period of activity when many competing companies formed and were racing to complete sections of railway. The Stalybridge and Standedge Tunnel railway eventually became part of a wider network of sections of track that extends from Selby and York to Manchester Victoria via Leeds.

The W2B route has considerable heritage value. It traverses areas of dramatic landscape and varied geology, and has remained well preserved and largely unaltered since its opening in the 1840s. The wider railway network from the Yorkshire cities to Manchester contributed hugely to the economic and urban development of the North and was a major factor in the industrial revolution and in the development of towns.



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The tricky geology and terrain of the W2B route presented challenges to the engineers of the 1840s, and many of the most notable surviving features of the railway are the impressively engineered bridge and viaduct structures. These structures are predominantly built from locally sourced stone, meaning they harmonise with the landscape and contribute to local views, adding to the aesthetic value of the route. The significance of the structures also lies in the fact that they survive well and in large numbers. There have been few alterations to bridges, mainly because this section of the line has not been widened as other parts of the wider route have been.

There are eight listed railway structures that will be affected by the proposed electrification works between Stalybridge and Standedge Tunnel; these are:

- Heyrod Hall Overbridge - MVL3/7
- Heyrod Footbridge Overbridge - MVL3/8
- Spring Bank Lane Overbridge - MVL3/9
- Roughtown Road Overbridge - MVL3/17
- Wright's Mill Overbridge - MVL3/20
- Wright's Overbridge - MVL3/23
- Oldham Road Overbridge - MVL3/28
- Saddleworth Viaduct - MVL3/31

All eight of the listed structures were designed by notable railway engineer Alfred Stanistreet Jee, lead engineer for the railway between Huddersfield and Manchester. They were built in the mid-late 1840s and share many architectural characteristics, adding to their group value and enhancing their significance.

Bridges MVL3/7, MVL3/9, MVL3/17, MVL3/20, MVL3/23, and MVL3/28 are all very similar in design. All are made from coursed local sandstone and have segmental arches formed from tooled voussoirs, with larger keystones. Each has dressed ashlar impost bands, sloping string courses above the arch, and parapet copings, with shallow pyramidal caps to the slender piers. They have considerable group value and are easily identifiable in the landscape as bridges associated with the original construction of the railway. The bridges are all well designed and adapted to their individual locations, some being skewed or sloped. High quality workmanship and



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details such as picked and tooled ashlar voussoirs elevate their design above what is purely function, enhancing their significance further.

Heyrod Footbridge (MVL3/8) and Saddleworth Viaduct (MVL3/31) are clearly recognisable as part of the same scheme of work but differ in their form. Heyrod Footbridge features a flat span, and retains its cast-iron edge beams and brick parapets, while Saddleworth Viaduct comprises 23 sandstone arches spanning the River Tame and Huddersfield Narrow Canal.

The structures are all Grade II listed in recognition of their special architectural and historic interest at national level. Saddleworth Viaduct was listed in 1986, while all seven overbridges were listed in 2017 or 2018 after a comprehensive review of the line.

### Impacts

The proposals involve demolition and reconstruction of three structures, total removal of one structure, and modifications to four structures. These works are deemed necessary to achieve the clearance required for the OLE (overhead line equipment) and to ensure safety for bridge users. The impacts of proposed works at each structure are discussed below.

Bridges requiring demolition works:

*Heyrod Hall Overbridge MVL3/7* carries a short section of private road over the railway to Heyrod Hall. This bridge is in a rock cutting with very hard rock beneath the track, prohibiting track lowering.

*Wright's Mill Overbridge MVL3/20* carries the public footpath and bridleway over the railway where it passes through a steep-sided rock cutting. Options to lower the track at this bridge have been investigated but discounted due to the location on the bridge in a rock cutting with very hard rock beneath. Track lowering would also have a knock-on effect to a nearby underbridge.

*Oldham Road Overbridge MVL3/28* is a skew overbridge located on the north-east side of Greenfield Station and carries Oldham Road over the track below. There will be



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the addition of a new footbridge alongside the reconstructed road bridge. Options to lower the track at this bridge have been investigated but would be difficult to achieve due to the proximity to the station.

Proposals at these three bridges involves the complete dismantling of each bridge and reconstruction to create a raised, flat deck with sufficient clearance for OLE. Stone would be reclaimed and used to clad the inside faces of parapet walls; however matching stone is likely to be needed to clad the external sides of the parapets. New copers would also be needed to ensure parapets were the correct height.

The demolition and reconstruction of these bridges will cause substantial harm to their significance through the total loss of historic form and loss of much of their original fabric. The proposals will also diminish the group value of the historic bridges on the railway.

*Wright's Overbridge MVL3/23* is a footbridge that carries a public footpath from north-west to south-east across the railway. The railway here is in a steep cutting and due to gradients, the bridge slopes down towards the south-east. Proposals involve the total removal of this bridge and diversion of the public right of way across the railway at another point.

The removal of Wright's Overbridge will cause substantial harm to its significance through the total loss of its historic form and all original fabric. Its removal will necessitate the re-routing of a historic public footpath, which is part of a network of paths in the area connecting mills and farms with workers' housing, and contributes to the landscape character of the area and to the setting of the bridge. The proposals will also further diminish the group value of the historic bridges on the railway.

Bridges requiring modifications:

*Heyrod Footbridge Overbridge MVL3/8* carries a footpath running east-west over the railway, with steps on the eastern side down to a path running south-east towards Spring Bank Lane which are also listed.

*Spring Bank Lane Overbridge MVL3/9* (also known as Heyrod Bridge) carries Spring Bank Lane over the railway. Due to the lie of the land the bridge slopes down towards the east. The sloped projecting wing walls are also covered by the listing.



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*Roughtown Road Overbridge MVL3/17* carries Roughtown Road north-south across the railway, to the east of Mossley Station. Due to gradients the deck slopes down towards the south. The projecting wing walls are also covered by the listing.

Minimal interventions are proposed at these three bridges, the most significant changes being the introduction of new triangular copers to ensure the correct and safe parapet heights.

The introduction of triangular copers to raise the parapet heights to 1.5m will result in a low level of less than substantial harm to the significance of the bridges through the changes to their appearance and the loss of original copers. This harm could be further lowered by using stone copers instead of concrete, and by undertaking any other restoration works required such as replacing the recently rendered section of parapet copings in the south-west corner of Roughtown Road Bridge.

*Saddleworth Viaduct MVL3/31* (also known as Uppermill Arches and Uppermill Viaduct) carries the railway over a series of roads and lanes, and the River Tame and Huddersfield Narrow Canal. Due to the lack of space available on the viaduct deck, proposals here involve attaching brackets to the exterior of the viaduct for the OLE supports.

The proposed works at Saddleworth Viaduct will result in a low level of less than substantial harm to the significance of the structure through the change to its appearance and in the physical impact on the elevations of the viaduct from the brackets. This harm could be further lowered by ensuring the spacing of the masts responds to the structural and architectural rhythm of the viaduct to lessen their visual impact.

### Policy

National policy relating to the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment is articulated in section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2023). These policies state that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations (NPPF para 195). Also, when considering the impact of a proposed development, great weight should be given to an asset's conservation (NPPF para 205).



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Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification (NPPF 206).

Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss. In practice this means that less harmful alternative solutions should be explored through the pre-application and application processes.

In addition to section 16 of the NPPF, we refer you to Section 12 'Achieving well-designed and beautiful places' when considering the design for replacement bridge structures. Para 132 states that being sympathetic to local character and history is important, along with a consistent and high-quality standard of design (para 133).

#### Position

The proposed works to upgrade the W2B section of the Transpennine route network will be the first major programme of work since its construction in the 1840s. The wider public benefits of the upgrade work to this key transport network will be vast and will have positive knock-on effects across the region. The challenging geology and hydrology across the route still present issues to engineers today, and we welcome the work that has gone into investigating alternative options to demolition and reconstruction for the bridges affected.

The proposals will result in substantial harm to the significance of bridges MVL3/7, MVL3/20, MVL3/23, and MVL3/28, with the highest level of harm to bridge MVL3/23 which will be dismantled and not reconstructed. The proposals will cause harm through the loss of the form of the arched bridges and through the loss of historic fabric. There will be the additional harm to the group value of the bridges.

We agree that the bridges are predominantly experienced from the bridge deck, and that re-use of original fabric should be focussed on the inside faces of the parapet walls to ensure the look of the bridge when crossing it is not unacceptably altered, however this re-use of materials does not lower the harm to less than substantial levels. It will be for decision takers to weigh the balance of this substantial harm against the public benefits of the scheme.



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Works to bridges MVL3/8, MVL3/9 and MVL3/17 is largely limited to raising the parapets to ensure they are the safe and correct height. We acknowledge that Network Rail has a legal obligation to take reasonable steps to prevent people from coming into contact with the OLE by ensuring parapets cannot be climbed or walked on. We appreciate the work undertaken to investigate various options for different types of pantographs to limit the height at which the parapets need to be raised to. The use of triangular copers will introduce a change in the appearance of the bridges and cause a low level of less than substantial harm to their significance, but the impact can be lessened by use of stone rather than concrete copers which will be less visually obtrusive. Parapet design should be tailored to the individual circumstances of each bridge to ensure the least harmful solution is used.

There will also be a low level of less than substantial harm at Saddleworth Viaduct from the introduction of brackets to the structure to support the OLE. This can be further lowered by thoughtful spacing of the brackets.

We welcome the detailed options appraisals undertaken during the design of the proposed works to listed structures on the W2B route. We recommend that details are finalised using bespoke designs that respond to the particular character of each structure and its setting.

### **Next Steps**

Thank you for involving us at the pre-application stage of this project. The above advice is the response that we would give if the same proposals were put forward unamended for statutory approval.

Yours sincerely

Louise Davies  
Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas  
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**The Network Rail (Stalybridge to Diggle (Saddleworth) Enhancements) Order  
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**Appendix C.2 17 September 2024**



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Direct Dial: +447990339949

Our ref: PA01200823

17 September 2024

Dear Kate

**Pre-application Advice**

**TRANSPENNINE ROUTE UPGRADE - STALYBRIDGE TO STANDEDGE**

Thank you for arranging the meeting on 27 August to review the proposals for bridges MVL3/7, 8, 17 and 20. It was useful to see the drawings in advance and then talk through the proposals with the team.

The significance of the affected structures has been set out in our letter of 25 June 2024 and won't be repeated here. The impacts of the proposed changes and our comments are detailed below:

MVL3/7 - Heyrod Hall Overbridge

The changes to this bridge involve demolition and reconstruction of the bridge deck and sections of the abutments, resulting in substantial harm to the significance of the bridge. The bridge is built from coursed local sandstone, and the voussoirs have been lightly tooled around the edges to give them definition and add interest to the arch. The proposed changes will result in the total loss of the historic form of this bridge and much of the original fabric.

In order to reduce harm, every care should be taken when demolishing the bridge so as much original undamaged stonework as possible can be retained for re-use. Where new stonework is needed, this should be as close a match as possible to the original stone, and courses should match up to minimise the visual impact of the works. We welcome the use of natural cut stone copers.

MVL3/8 - Heyrod/Springbank Lane Footbridge

The appearance of this bridge will change slightly through the introduction of new copers which will increase parapet height. The use of natural stone will help to minimise the appearance of the new copers and mean they will be less obvious. Overall, there will be a very low level of less than substantial harm to this bridge.

MVL3/17 - Roughtown Road Overbridge

This is another bridge where the proposals involve the introduction of new copers



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which will increase parapet height. The changes here will be more noticeable than at MVL3/8 but still constitute a low level of less than substantial harm.

In order to minimise harm, it will be necessary to carefully design the ends of the new sections of coping stones to manage how they interact with the piers of the bridge. The piers are topped by shallow pyramidal caps, which currently form a prominent feature of the bridge's architecture. There is a danger that the definition of these caps will become lost if the new copers butt up to them. This mitigation could be achieved by either terminating the new copers short of the piers, or by raising the height of the pier caps so they remain prominent.

Additional mitigation should involve repairs to the fabric of the parapet walls, including removal of the cement kerb section and bollards, which will no longer be needed once the road is one-way.

#### MVL3/20 - Wright's Mill Overbridge

The proposals for demolition and reconstruction of this bridge will result in a substantially altered structure and substantial harm to the significance of the listed asset.

The historic form and materials of this bridge are very similar to MVL3/7, and the proposed construction works are also comparable, however the proposed parapet at MVL3/20 will be noticeably taller due to the bridge's use as a bridleway. The proposal drawings show the ends of the new copers sharply sloping down towards the piers of the bridge.

As advised with MVL3/17 above, care should be taken in the design and integration of these copers so they complement the existing structure and do not appear overly obvious. As with MVL3/7, we advise that every care should be taken when demolishing the bridge so as much original undamaged stonework as possible can be retained for re-use. Where new stonework is needed, this should be as close a match as possible to the original stone, and courses should match up to minimise the visual impact of the works.

#### **Next Steps**

I look forward to reviewing the next series of proposals for other parts of the scheme.

Yours sincerely

Louise Davies



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**TRANSPENNINE ROUTE UPGRADE - STALYBRIDGE TO STANDEDGE  
Pre-application Advice**

**Information Provided**

Draft LBC drawings, Tony Gee and Partners, August 2024



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Historic England

Sarah Coward  
AtkinsRéalis

Direct Dial: +447990339949

Our ref: PA01200823  
18 July 2025

Dear Sarah

**Pre-application Advice**

**TRANSPENNINE ROUTE UPGRADE - STALYBRIDGE TO STANDEDGE**

Thank you for arranging the recent meetings to review the draft Heritage Statements that will be submitted for Listed Building Consent applications for changes to bridges on the proposed Transpennine Route Upgrade line.

The Heritage Statements are well considered and it is clear that alternative options to reconstruction have been investigated in each case, which are helpfully set out in tables in the reports. The proposals will result in substantial harm to listed bridges along the route, however clear justification for this has been set out in the Heritage Statements.

We very much welcome the inclusion of heritage interpretation at Greenfield Station. This is a significant early rail route and there is notable educational potential in the material that has been generated from the research into the railway structures as part of this project.

Regarding Oaklands Road underbridge MVL3/25, we are comfortable with the design of the proposals for the reconstruction of the parapet and stone turrets. These have been carefully considered to minimise the visual impact.

**Next Steps**

We appreciate having been involved at pre-application stage in this important project, and value being able to feed into design plans. If you require further pre-application advice please get in touch.

Yours sincerely



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