

The Network Rail (Stalybridge to Diggle (Saddleworth) Enhancements) Order
Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29) – Heritage Statement
October 2025

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

DOCUMENT: Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29) - Heritage Statement

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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) Enhancements) Order extends from Stalybridge Tunnel, in the west, through to the western portal of Standedge Tunnel (the “Order 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 Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29) (NHLE 1451854). This bridge is located in Uppermill (NGR SD 99465), Oldham. A location plan is provided in Appendix A.
- 1.1.7 The Historic England list description (included in full in Appendix B) names the listed building as "Railway accommodation underbridge MVL3/29, Wickens". Throughout this Heritage Statement the structure is referred to as "Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29)" in accordance with Network Rail's naming of the structure.
- 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 assessment and its scope is guided by policy contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, revised 2025) specifically paragraph 207, which seeks an assessment proportionate to the asset's importance 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 Order 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 Order Scheme at the structure;
- Present the process of development and optioneering which has led to the design proposal for the Order 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 Order Scheme weighed against the impact on the significance of the structure, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework, 2025 and the Oldham Local Development Framework.

1.3 Current Condition

- 1.3.1 Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29) (grade II listed, NHLE 1451854) is a mid to late 1840s masonry bridge, built to the design of Alfred Stanistreet (A.S.) Jee for the Huddersfield and Manchester Railway. The underbridge is located to the west of Uppermill and comprises a single span segmental-arched bridge which spans a footpath under the Transpennine route.
- 1.3.2 Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29) was subject to detailed examination in June 2016 as part of Network Rail's maintenance regime which identified that the general condition of the structure was fair. A visual inspection was most recently undertaken in September 2021 and identified outstanding defects including:
- Defects in pointing;
 - Fractures in stonework (Insert 1-1);
 - Loose, displaced and bulging stonework (Insert 1-2);
 - Overgrown vegetation around the structure including invasive species (Insert 1-3);
 - High levels of ballast with potential to fall on the footpath; and
 - Loose, corroded and missing sections of parapet handrails and safety fencing.

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 underbridges, including Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29) to accommodate OLE, higher line speed and increased freight trains. It has been determined necessary to strengthen the underbridge using precast reinforced units as well as replace the handrails with GRP in line with Network Rail safety regulations. These works will therefore enable the implementation of the Order Scheme.



Insert 1-1 South elevation of Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29)

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Insert 1-2 Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29), loose, displaced and bulging stonework.



Insert 1-3 Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29) fracture in masonry on arch.

2. LEGISLATION AND POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 Legislation

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

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

2.1.3 ‘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.’

2.1.4 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.’

2.1.5 In relation to the granting of listed building consent, Section 17 of the Act stipulates that conditions attached to listed building consent 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’.*

2.1.6 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’.

2.1.7 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’.

2.1.8 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) also governs duties of the local planning authority relating to conservation areas, particularly Sections 69, 72 and 74.

- Section 69 requires local planning authorities to define as conservation areas any ‘*areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*’.
- Section 72 confers a general duty ‘*with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area... special attention shall be paid to the desirability or preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area*’.
- Section 74 defines that demolition of a building in a conservation area is not permitted ‘*without the consent of the appropriate authority*’.

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’ and 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 or gardens, should be exceptional;*
 - b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, 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

Oldham Joint Core Strategy and Development Policies

- 2.3.1 Local planning policy for Oldham is provided by the Joint Core Strategy and Development Management Policies of the Oldham Local Development Framework, adopted in November 2011 (Oldham Council, 2011), and a small number of retained policies from the Unitary Development Plan (2006) (Oldham Council, 2009).
- 2.3.2 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.*

2.3.3 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.*

Conservation Areas

Development within or affecting the setting of a conservation area, including views in or out, must serve to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area. Proposals for all new development, including alterations and extensions to buildings and their re-use, must have a sensitive and appropriate response to context and good attention to detail. Proposals must not adversely affect important architectural or historic features or distinctive local features or structures unless it can be demonstrated that the development brings substantial benefits to the community. Proposals for the demolition of a building in a conservation area must demonstrate that it is unrealistic for the building to continue in its existing use and a suitable alternative use cannot be found, or the building is in poor structural condition and the cost of repairing and maintaining it would be disproportionate to its importance and value and the demolition would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area. In exceptional circumstances, the fact that a demolition would bring substantial benefits to the local community may outweigh the balance in favour of the preservation of the building.

Registered Parks and Gardens

Development which would lead to the loss of, or cause harm to, the historic character or setting of any part of registered park and garden will not be permitted.

Scheduled Monuments

Development which would lead to the loss of, or cause harm to, scheduled ancient monuments should be wholly exceptional.

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:

Places for Everyone

- 2.3.5 Places for Everyone (Greater Manchester Combined Authority 2024) is a joint development plan covering nine Greater Manchester districts including 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:

- 1. Setting out a clear vision that recognises and embeds the role of heritage in place-making;*
- 2. 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;*
- 3. 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;*
- 4. 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*
- 5. 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

- 2.3.6 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 (Historic England, 2019).
- 2.3.7 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).
- 2.3.8 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.

- 2.3.9 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 Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29). 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 asset, its condition, use and setting has been obtained from a survey undertaken by suitably qualified and experienced heritage specialists on 21 and 22 May 2024, including observation from surrounding vantage points and informed by appraisal and observation derived from close working with other disciplines within the project team.

3.2 Significance and setting

- 3.2.1 Assessment of the significance of the heritage asset and its 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.
- 3.2.2 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 and OMBC have been involved in ongoing stakeholder consultation with Network Rail through the development of Route Section W2B of the TRU.
- 4.1.2 Regular meetings with Historic England and OMBC have been held to discuss the design development of the proposal in relation to Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29). Initial meetings were held periodically throughout 2021 and resumed in 2024 to discuss the overall route and design development for all structures along Route Section W2B.
- 4.1.3 The design development for Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29) was presented and discussed with historic environment stakeholders on the following dates:

The Network Rail (Stalybridge to Diggle (Saddleworth) Enhancements) Order
Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29) – Heritage Statement
October 2025

Table 4-1 Consultations for Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29)

Date	Stakeholder in attendance	Key agreements/items discussed
15 February 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OMBC 	<p>Project briefing on the bridge structures in order to identify the location and Order Scheme output, Network Rail electrification challenge, structures overview and next steps.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structures presentation included MVL3/29 and identified the need to upgrade the handrails with a non-conductive material. Given that this would result in a change to the structure which is not like-for-like, this was identified to require listed building consent.
May 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic England • OMBC • Kirklees Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 heritage significance, particularly as essential railway structures. The group value of the bridges was identified as a key contributor to significance. • Presentation of the purpose of Heritage Statements and their assessment of impact with the emerging GRIP 3 designs • Early-stage recommendations to minimise harm to significance against the requirements for justification of proposals and opportunities to pursue sensitive design and compensation. • 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. • 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.

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Date	Stakeholder in attendance	Key agreements/items discussed
6 February 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Historic England 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overview of listed structure, and details of the challenges of the electrification of the route in relation to listed overbridges were presented. The design approach for electrification across / under existing railway bridges was noted to have been agreed in principal by Network Rail and following consultation with the Local Authorities & Historic England at the preceding design stage.
22 April 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OMBC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overview of preferred options for structures along the route within Oldham. This included the preferred option for Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29) which consists of installation of GRP handrails and potential spandrel strengthening and ballast retention.
7 May 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Historic England 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation of development of next steps for the underbridges, including Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29). All of the underbridges are of masonry arch construction (apart from MVL3/25) and would be progressed once the track designs are received.
6 November 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Historic England 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft listed building consent drawings presented for discussion Presentation of interventions required to strengthen Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29) and replace handrails in compliance with Network Rail safety standards. Acknowledgement that there will be minimal change to the bridge's appearance. Confirmation that this will not entail raising the parapet, and no additional OLE equipment will be required.

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Date	Stakeholder in attendance	Key agreements/items discussed
29 November 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Historic England 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In their formal pre-application advice letter, Historic England confirmed that proposals for Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29) would result in '<i>a very low level of less than substantial harm</i>' (Appendix C.1).
2 April 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OMBC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. Network Rail requested for the draft Heritage Statement to be reviewed by the Council for comment and feedback. 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.
4 April 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Historic England 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overview of draft comments from Historic England. Request to draw out the heritage interpretation in the reports as part of the heritage benefits. 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.
12 May 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OMBC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposals for Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29) presented to OMBC heritage officers, noting less than substantial harm to the structures. Existing handrail across the structure noted to be modern and metallic, and proposed to be replaced with non-metallic fitting of similar appearance.
24 June 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OMBC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-application advice letter received from OMBC outlining local planning authority advice following review of the draft listed building consent application material. OMBC found that the proposals at Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29) would result in a low level of less than substantial harm arising from minor physical intervention.

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Date	Stakeholder in attendance	Key agreements/items discussed
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • 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 Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20) and reconstruction of four other bridges and a limited level of harm to group value arising from the alteration of three other structures (including Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29)).
18 July 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic England 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-application advice letter received from Historic England providing overarching feedback on proposals affecting listed bridges between Stalybridge and Standedge Tunnel (See Appendix C). • 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. • 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. • The inclusion of interpretation at Greenfield Station is very much welcomed by Historic England.

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 over Upper Mill Viaduct (MVL3/31) in Upper Mill, 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 of railway building (Historic England, 2017b). 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 Upper Mill Viaduct (MVL3/31) 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 Associates, 2019). This was produced to characterise the overall heritage significance of the Transpennine route.

5.2 Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29)

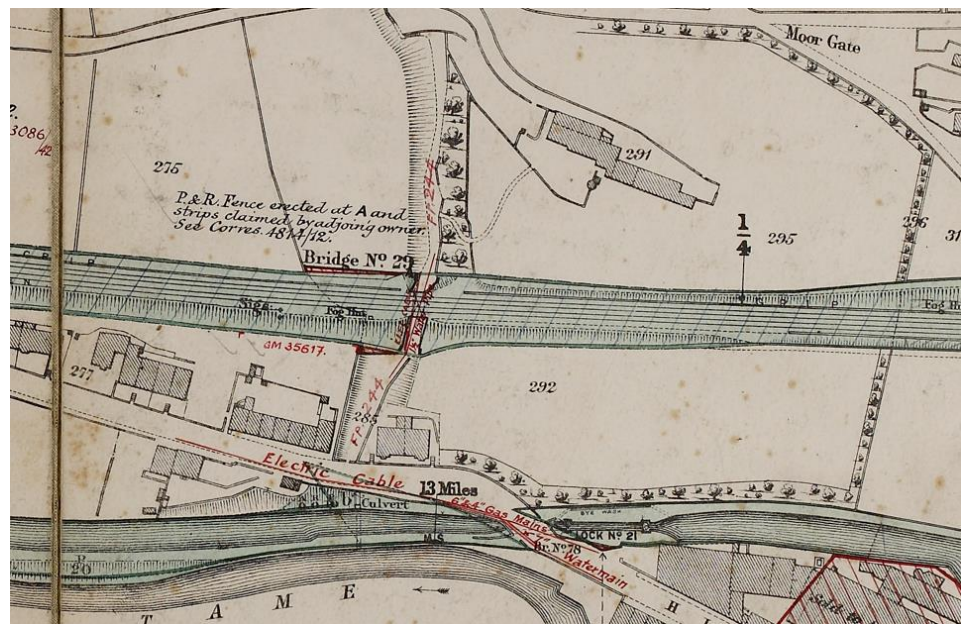
History

- 5.2.1 Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29) was constructed between 1845 and 1849 during the Heroic Age of railway building. The single-span accommodation bridge was designed by A.S. Jee for the Huddersfield & Manchester Railway.
- 5.2.2 In the mid-19th century, the village of Uppermill was industrial in character. Within Uppermill there were numerous textile mills, the growth of which had been fuelled by the position of the settlement on the Huddersfield Narrow Canal which opened in 1811. Located on the south edge of the village, Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29) is not depicted on the 1st edition 6" Ordnance Survey map of 1854, although the footpath to the bridge is indicated (Insert 5-1). This is likely to be a drafting error, as construction of the underbridge was undertaken as an integral part of the railway embankment's construction between 1845 and 1849. To the west of the railway line a large building named as Wickens is labelled to the north-west of the underbridge. The building remains extant today, continuing in use as a farm. Wickens also gave its name to a sandstone quarry located to the south of the building and a watercourse running down the hillside to the west of this which is labelled as Wickens Clough. To the east of the line, the River Tame and Huddersfield Canal run in proximity to the end of High Street. Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29) provided access from Wickens Farm and Wickens Quarry to the base of High Street and the Huddersfield Narrow Canal, providing an important link through the railway embankment to enable access to these important communication routes.
- 5.2.3 Subsequent Ordnance Survey map editions show a similar situation, through fully depicting the underbridge. Residential development is shown to gradually extend southwards from Uppermill, with the land to the west of the railway remaining undeveloped, likely due to its steep topography.

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Insert 5-1 Extract from the 1st edition 6" Ordnance Survey map of 1854. Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/28) is located just below the label for Wade Lock Bridge on the railway line.



Insert 5-2 Historic line plan of Huddersfield and Manchester Railway and Canal by LNWR in 1905 in which Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29) is illustrated. Wickens is annotated 29 on the map.

Description

- 5.2.4 Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29; Insert 5-3 and Insert 5-4) comprises a single semi-circular accommodation underbridge which provides access east-west under the embankment for the Transpennine route. The bridge survives in its original form, with no evidence of significant alteration.
- 5.2.5 Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29) is constructed in regular-coursed, quarry-faced buff sandstone, with smaller coursed ashlar blocks employed across the arch soffit. The underbridge is formed by a deep semi-circular arch with rusticated v-joined picked ashlar voussoirs with projecting keystones with diagonal tooling. The arch springs from squared and tooled ashlar impost bands. A square moulded band above the arch supports the deep, plain ashlar parapet across the top of the structure. The parapet is formed of discrete stone blocks and a metallic tubular handrail is fixed into this. The wingwalls project at right angles from the arch, and are raked and splayed, terminating in slightly projecting piers of rock-faced stone blocks with squared-moulded ashlar coping stone.
- 5.2.6 The setting of Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29) is localised due to the presence of mature planting to the east and west of the structure (Insert 5-5 and Insert 5-6). Whilst the underbridge accommodates a pedestrian footpath, it is set back from Oldham Road and is screened from the road by dense vegetation. Views of the underbridge are gradually revealed as one moves along the footpath and under the structure. The relationship of the bridge with the Transpennine route is its key contributor towards its significance and continues to be legible today.



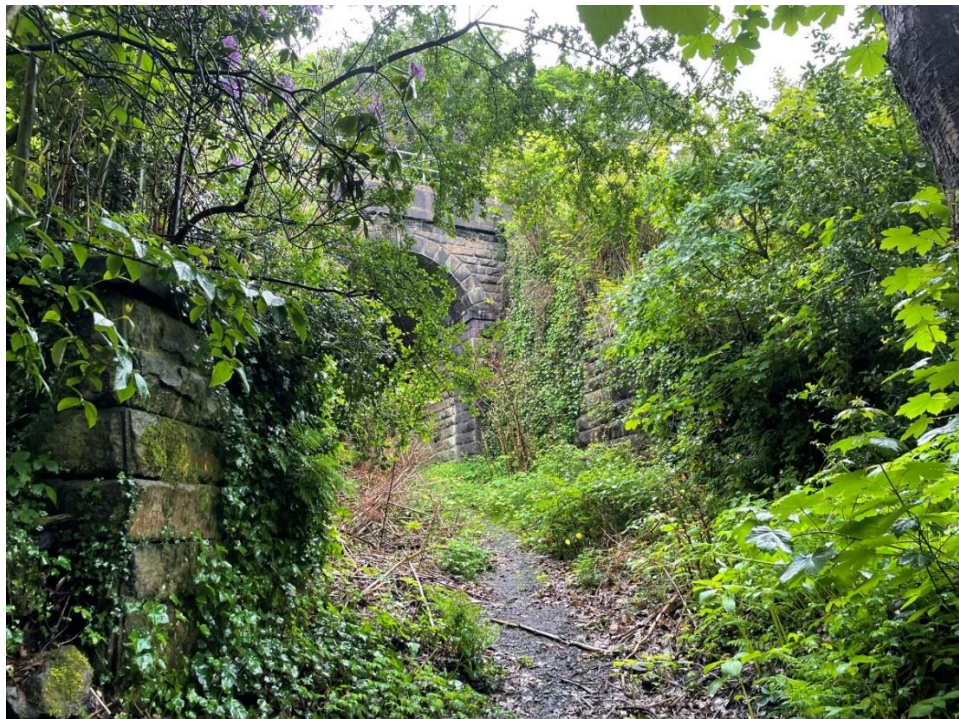
Insert 5-3 Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29) east elevation.



Insert 5-4 Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29) west elevation.



Insert 5-5 The setting of Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29) looking west.



Insert 5-6 Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29) looking west towards its east elevation

Significance

5.2.7 Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29) 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 the following reasons:

- Historic interest:
 - Constructed during the heroic age of railway building and a little altered example of an 1840s accommodation underbridge on what is now one of the main railway lines in northern England;
 - Designed by the notable railway engineer Alfred Stanistreet Jee.
- Architectural interest:
 - As a well-designed bridge, with good quality stone masonry and attention to architectural detail in its use of picked and tooled, v-jointed voussoirs with larger keystones, ashlar impost bands, parapets, coping and soffit and contrasting rock-faced stonework of the spandrels, abutments and raked and splayed wing walls which all lift it above the purely functional.
- Group value:
 - Architecturally inter-related with the other listed structures designed by A S Jee on the Huddersfield and Manchester line.

5.2.8 Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29) is of significance as an unaltered example of an 1840s accommodation underbridge, 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 give the structure historical value from which it derives significance. The underbridge 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 Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29) 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 rusticated voussoirs 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 built by A.S. Jee for the Huddersfield & Manchester Railway, which further contributes towards a consistency in architectural character and an appreciation of their group value. The bridge survives in its original form, with no evidence of significant intervention or alteration, and remains in use for its original purpose. The integrity of the structure enables Jee's original design intent and the historic function of the structure to be understood, contributing to its significance.

- 5.2.10 The setting of Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29) makes a limited contribution to its significance, deriving principally from the continued historic and functional relationship between the bridge and the Transpennine route.

Group value

- 5.2.11 As identified in the list description, Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29) is recognised to be of group value with other listed structures by A.S. Jee on the Huddersfield & Manchester Railway¹. These comprise:

- Heyrod Hall Overbridge (MVL3/7) (grade II listed, NHLE 1449242);
- Springbank Lane Footbridge (MVL3/8) (grade II listed, NHLE 1452382);
- Springbank 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);
- Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20) (grade II listed, NHLE 1452406);
- Wright's 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);

¹ 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 2021/91337). This is likely to result in de-listing. As such its contribution to group value has therefore been excluded from this assessment.

- Oldham Road Overbridge (MVL3/28) (grade II listed, NHLE 1451853);
- Uppermill 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 223531);
- 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)²

5.2.12 Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29) shares a common design language with Heyrod Hall Overbridge (MVL3/7), Springbank Lane Overbridge (MVL3/9), Roughtown Road Overbridge (MVL3/17), Roughtown Road Overbridge (MVL3/17), Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20) and Wright's Overbridge (MVL3/23), all of which utilise the same architectural detailing and architectural articulation to the arch. As a group, these bridges are substantially unaltered, and evidence Jee's characteristic finely detailed construction, with elegantly skewed stone soffits.

5.2.13 The group value which Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29) 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 (1825–41) 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 (Alan Baxter and Associates, 2024). It has been noted in the Route Wide Statement of Significance, however that, as a group,

² 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.

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 and Associates, 2024).

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 There are no listed buildings present within 250m of Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29).
- 5.3.3 Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29) is located adjacent to the Uppermill Conservation Area, the boundary of which follows the base of the railway embankment to the east of the Transpennine route. The conservation area covers the core of the historic village of Uppermill and the Huddersfield Narrow Canal which runs parallel to the railway along the west edge of the village. Close to Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29), the conservation area is characterised by the presence of residential buildings of 18th to 20th century date, lining Oldham Road, looking eastwards across the canal and river. The railway does not form a prominent feature in the setting of the conservation area in this locale, being set up a steep slope and largely screened by buildings and mature planting. Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29) is screened by vegetation and buildings along the roadside and does not form a prominent or contributing element in the setting of the conservation area.

Non-designated heritage assets

- 5.3.4 The Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record (HER) records six non-designated heritage assets and 2 findspots within 250m of Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29). These comprise:
- Station Brow, Diggle (stone heads) (9003.1.0) located c. 210 m to the south-east;
 - 146 Carr Lane (stone head) (9017.1.0) located c.165 m to the east;
 - Oldham Road (19032.1.0) located c.20 m to the east;
 - Canal Lock 21W on the Huddersfield Narrow Canal (19036.1.0) located c.85 m to the north-east;
 - Sacred Heart & St William Catholic Church (19046.1.0) located c.230 m to the north-east;

- K6 Telephone Kiosk (19045.1.0) located c.200 m to the north-east;
 - Alexandra Mill (6108.1.0) located c. 210 m to the north-east; and
 - Victoria Mill (6107.1.0) located approximately 200 m to the north-east.
- 5.3.5 2 Oldham Road (19032.1.0) is an early 20th century red brick villa designed in a classical revival style. Sited on the hillslope adjacent to the Transpennine route, the building is oriented to the east to enjoy views across the Tame Valley and form a formal and imposing structure on the approach to Uppermill. Whilst located in proximity to the Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/28), the underbridge does not contribute to the significance of 2 Oldham Road, due to its historic functional association with the railway and screening by vegetation in views to and from the asset.
- 5.3.6 Canal Lock 21W (19036.1.0), the Sacred Heart & St William Catholic Church (19046.1.0), K6 Telephone Kiosk (19045.1.0), Alexandra Mill (6108.1.0) and Victoria Mill (6107.1.0) are located between 150 m and 230 m from Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29) within the built-up townscape of Uppermill. These assets do not enjoy a historic or visual relationship with the bridge and do not derive any contribution to significance from its presence.
- 5.3.7 The remaining records (9003.1.0 and 9017.1.0) comprises findspots of carved stone heads (9003.1.1), which have been removed and therefore do not contribute to setting.

6. PROPOSALS

6.1 Background of 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. Works to the underbridges along the route are required to accommodate the resulting additional loadings on the structures resulting from increased line speeds and increased train loading.
- 6.1.2 Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29) is currently understrength. As such, provisions to safeguard the structure ahead of the increase in line speed are required. The increased line speed and train loading will impose increased forces on the underbridge. Without mitigation, this has the potential to affect the structural condition of the underbridge. The proposed design has therefore been developed to address these considerations, whilst safeguarding the significance of the structure.

6.2 Design development and justification

- 6.2.1 Key constraints taken into consideration during the development of proposals for Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29) comprised:
- Time required working within the railway corridor is required to be minimised as much as possible to reduce risk to construction staff and the length of line possession (closure of the railway) and resulting disruption to railway service.
 - The bridge is location within an area characterised by dense vegetation. This constrains the accessibility of the site to construction vehicles and the delivery of materials/components.
 - The designation of the bridge as a grade II listed structure places a requirement on Network Rail to have special regards for its preservation under the Planning (Listed Building & Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- 6.2.2 During the ES3 design stage³, proposals for Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29) considered only installing upgraded GRP Handrails. During ES4 design stage, a comprehensive review was undertaken of the preferred options identified at ES3 across the Route Section W2B as part of a validation exercise. At this time, the requirement for strengthening of Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29) was identified and proposals for the structure developed. The proposals for these works have been developed to minimise intervention into the historic structure and alteration of its appearance as far as possible, whilst mitigating the impact of increased line speed and heavier trains.
- 6.2.3 The proposals have been developed in consultation with Historic England and OMBC). This iterative and robust design process has been undertaken to minimise the extent of interventions to the grade II listed underbridge in order to maintain the existing appearance and significance of the structure.

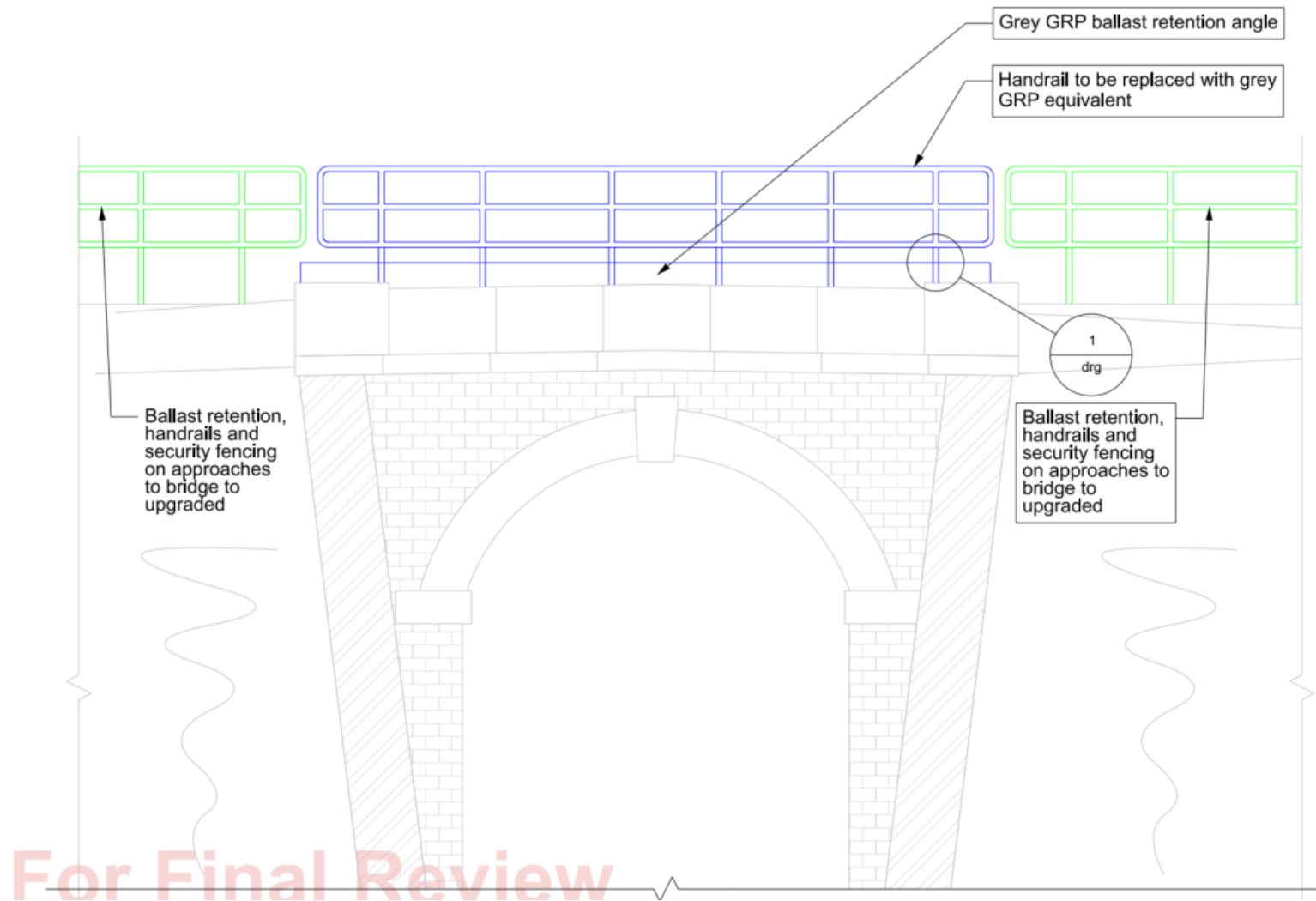
6.3 Description of proposals

- 6.3.1 In order to achieve the aims of the TRU programme it is necessary to re-align the track over Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29), to increase ballast depth and to strengthen the structure to accommodate increased loading resulting from increased line speed and heavier trains (Insert 6-1 and Insert 6-2). It is also proposed to replace the existing modern handrail in compliance with Network Rail safety standards.

³ The delivery of railway investment programmes is managed by Network Rail through the use of PACE (Project Acceleration in a Controlled Environment). This provides a flexible control framework for the delivery of rail projects. Under PACE, ES3 comprises optioneering and identification of a single design option, whilst ES4 is approval of design in principle.

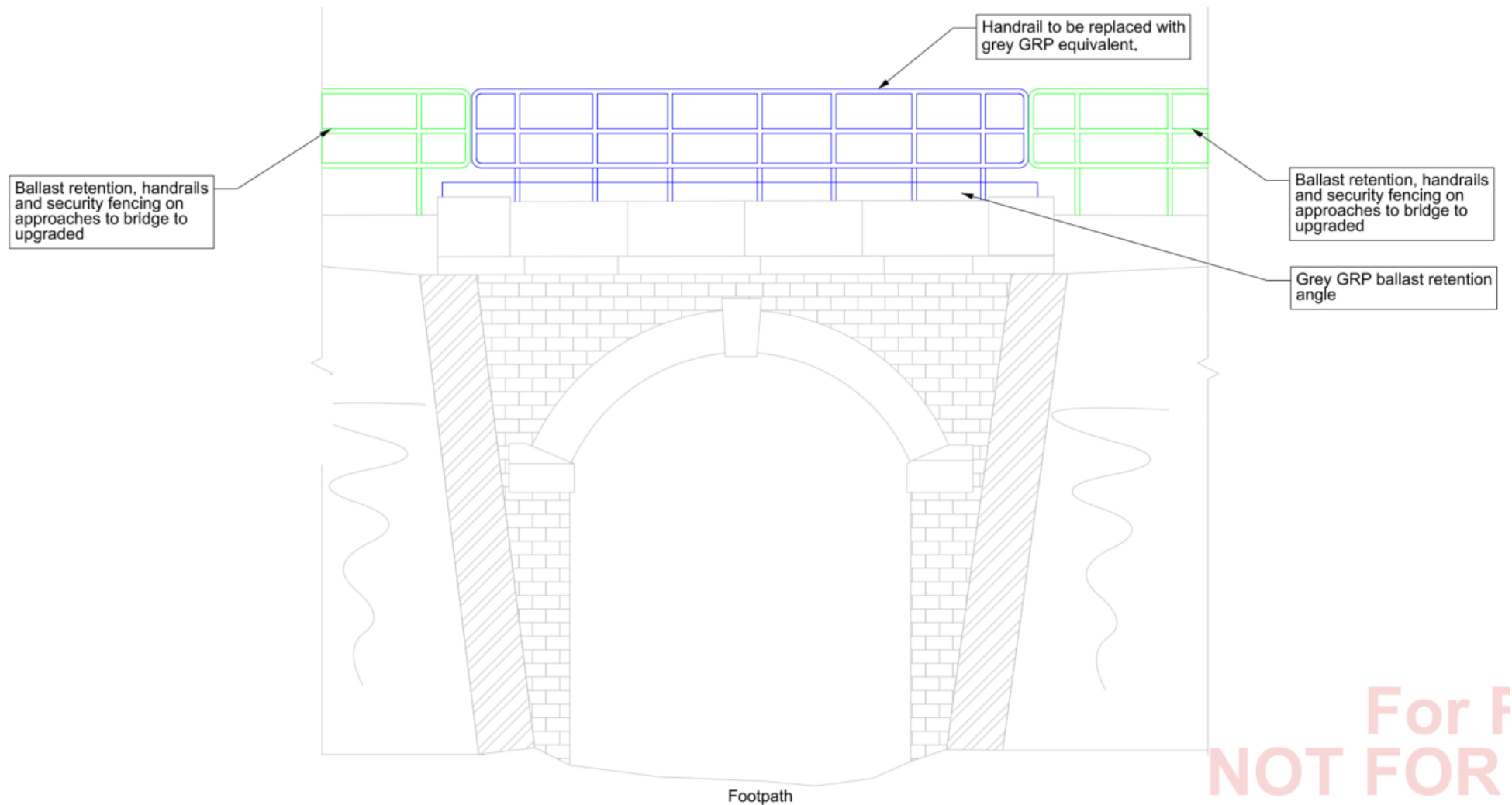
- 6.3.2 The alterations to the listed bridge would comprise the adjustment of the existing track bed on both railway lines to lean into the new line speed. Two precast reinforced 'L' units would be installed to the inside of the underbridge parapets, below ballast level. Grout infill to the rear of the precast reinforced units and sand/cement bedding underneath would secure these in place and would not require drilling into the stone parapet or the stone arch below. An in-situ concrete stitch would be installed between the precast reinforced units to help further secure these. These measures would enable the precast reinforced units to perform as a singular structural unit, increasing the strength of the structure and relieving the load from the existing parapets.
- 6.3.3 The existing tubular metal 'kee klamp' type barrier will be replaced with a grey tubular GRP which will be installed ahead of the electrification of the railway to comply with Network Rail safety standards. These will be attached to the structure by means of stainless steel anchors, resin-fixed into the stone. Holes from the existing fittings would be made good using mortar, colour-matched to the surrounding stone. This will not result in any appreciable visual change to the structure given that the new handrail will follow the same height as the existing.

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Insert 6-1 Proposed East Elevation Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29)

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Insert 6-2 Proposed west elevation Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29)

Construction Methodology

6.3.4 The proposed works to Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29) will comprise the following:

- Temporarily divert signalling and telecom (S&T) cables on top of the parapet.
- Install lateral restraint to outside of parapet if required.
- Remove track from the Up and Down line.
- Excavate ballast using tracked excavator
- Prepare sand/cement bed ahead of placing precast reinforced concrete units.
- Install precast reinforced units using tracked excavator.
- Fix precast reinforced units and install concrete stitch along centre of precast reinforced concrete units.
- Backfill in-situ grout to rear of precast reinforced units.
- Anchor GRP angle resin into concrete with stainless steel fixings to provide ballast retention.
- Reinstate ballast, S&T cables, and track.
- Replace handrails with GRP equivalent.

6.3.5 The proposed works to Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29) are shown in the following drawings which accompany this application:

- Existing and Proposed Plan (167037-TGP-26-MVL3-DRG-T-LP-162902); and
- Existing and Proposed Elevation and Section (167037-TGP-26-MVL3-DRG-T-LP-162903).

7. IMPACT OF PROPOSALS

7.1 Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29)

7.1.1 The proposed works to the grade II listed Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29) are required in order to safeguard the structure ahead of the upgrade of the line as part of the TRU Programme. These works would result in permanent minor alterations to the underbridge due to the installation of precast reinforced units and new GRP handrails.

7.1.2 Though the installation of reinforced concrete strengthening to the bridge deck and parapets would result in a permanent addition to the underbridge, this would be located on the inside of the bridge deck and substantially below ballast level. The strengthening units would

be secured in place using grout infill and sand/cement bedding, avoiding the need to fix into the masonry parapets. Though these works would result in some minor intervention into the existing underbridge, it would enable for retention of the entire underbridge and would result in only slight physical impacts to the historic fabric.

- 7.1.3 The proposed reinforced concrete units have been sensitively and sympathetically developed to minimise visual impact on the listed underbridge. Whilst the majority of the precast reinforced concrete units would be located below ballast level on the bridge deck, the top portion of these would rise above the ballast along the inside elevation of the parapets and would be visible only from the bridge deck. These would, however, not be visible in views of the external bridge elevations. The design for the reinforced concrete units would retain the ability to appreciate the overall historic form, features and legibility of the underbridge which contributes towards its overall significance. Whilst the ballast retention angles would slightly protrude above the parapets, these would form very small elements in the elevations and would not be prominent or intrusive. Elements of interest recognised by Historic England, including the ashlar impost bands, voussoirs, rock-faced stonework and splayed wing walls, would be wholly retained and unaltered. Given the nature of these works, there would be very limited visual impact to the structure which would not detract from its aesthetic value.
- 7.1.4 The proposed works for the replacement of the existing modern handrails with new GRP handrails would result in some, albeit very light touch, localised physical impact to the masonry parapet. Whilst the handrail will be doveled into existing fixing locations where possible, additional cores into the masonry parapet may be required to fix the new handrail into place. Where existing cores are not used, these will be infilled with mortar, colour-matched to the surrounding fabric to make good these areas. These works will have negligible visual impact as the new handrails would match existing, maintaining the current appearance of the bridge.
- 7.1.5 Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29) derives significance from its association with the historic railway and engineer A.S. Jee, its construction within the Heroic Age (1841-1850) of railway building, and the quality of its architectural design. Though these works would introduce contemporary materials, they would result in only slight physical and visual changes which would not detract from its design, which is a major contributing factor to its significance. Following the implementation of proposals, the historic value derived from associations with the Heroic Age of railway building and, A.S. Jee would continue to be understood and continue to contribute towards the underbridge's overall significance.

- 7.1.6 Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29) does not derive particular significance from its setting, save for its relationship with the historic operational railway. The proposed works would not result in any appreciable change to the relationship between the underbridge and the railway.
- 7.1.7 Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29) also derives significance from its group value with other A.S. Jee structures which share a common design language identifiable across parts of the Huddersfield & Manchester Railway, and particularly Heyrod Hall Overbridge (MVL3/7), Springbank Lane Overbridge (MVL3/9), Roughtown Road Overbridge (MVL3/17), Roughtown Road Overbridge (MVL3/17), Wright's Mill Overbridge (MVL3/20) and Wright's Overbridge (MVL3/23). The proposed works would not have any impact on the ability to appreciate its group value given that the historic form, architectural quality of Jee's design and contribution as part of the historic railway would not be impacted. The proposals have been devised with an appreciation for their group value by ensuring the appearance of the new precast reinforced units and GRP handrails are sensitively incorporated into the historic underbridge.
- 7.1.8 The proposals would therefore result in less than substantial harm at the lower end of the scale as stated in the pre-application advice provided by Historic England on 29 November 24.

7.2 Other heritage assets

- 7.2.1 Due to the minor nature of the works, the proposals would not result in any impact to any surrounding non-designated heritage assets
- 7.2.2 The Uppermill Conservation Area is located to the east of Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29). However, it is not anticipated that these works would have an impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area given that it is significantly screened, and the underbridge does not contribute to its setting, character or appearance.

7.3 Mitigation

- 7.3.1 The design proposals have been developed to minimise impacts on the fabric, form and appearance of Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29). This has been achieved through the design development, undertaken in consultation with Historic England and OMBC. Measures incorporated into the design to mitigate impacts on the significance of the underbridge include:

- Ensure the continued viable use of the structure as a part of the TRU network, and to safeguard it ahead of the electrification of the railway.
- Placement of precast reinforced units on the inside of the bridge deck to minimise visual and physical interventions into the historic structure.
- Replace the current modern handrails to match the appearance of the existing fittings.

7.3.2 In addition to these measures, Toolbox Talks would be undertaken in advance of construction works to Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29). These talks would disseminate best practice for reducing potential impacts in relation to construction activities, for example to help avoid accidental damage.

Recommended compensation

7.3.3 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 1 in accordance with Historic England guidance (Historic England, 2016). This would provide a permanent record of Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29) in its current form and would be lodged with the Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record.
- 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 Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29). 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 works proposed to be undertaken to Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29) are required to ensure the realisation of the substantial public benefits of the Order Scheme.

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 completion of the proposed works to strengthen Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29), would contribute towards 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 Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29), 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 works to Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29) 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 works to Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29).
- 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 Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29) 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 Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29) lies primarily in its historic and architectural interest. The underbridge is a largely unaltered example of a masonry underbridge dating to the Heroic Age (1841-1850) of railway building. The underbridge derives significance from its direct historic relationship with the notable railway engineer A.S. Jee and the historic railway companies namely the Huddersfield & Manchester Railway and LNWR. The high quality of the underbridge's architecture together with the quality of workmanship, are characteristic of A.S. Jee's work recognised across the wider Huddersfield & Manchester Railway. It also retains 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 The proposals for strengthening Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29) have been developed and undertaken in consultation with Historic

England and TMBC and have been developed to minimise the impact on the listed underbridge as far as possible. Special regard has been given to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the structure or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. The proposals therefore comprise:

- Strengthening of the bridge through installation of precast reinforced units to the inside of the ridge parapets, below ballast level;
- Attachment of parapet blocks by steel dowels; and
- Replacement of the existing kee-clamp handrail with new GRP handrails.

8.1.3 These works will result in minor alteration of the structure and will preserve key aspects that contribute to its overall significance including its architectural quality, detailing and construction. Whilst the proposals would introduce modern materials into the historic structure, these works have been developed to be as visually unobtrusive as possible. Additionally, the group value of Manchester Road Underbridge (MVL3/10) with other A.S. Jee bridges for the Huddersfield & Manchester Railway would be maintained.

8.1.4 The proposals would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of the Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29) at the lower end of the scale, as defined under paragraph 215 of the NPPF. These impacts are necessary in order to deliver the TRU programme, and would enable the achievement of 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.
- Improving public health and safety in providing safe routes across the railway.

8.1.5 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.

- 8.1.6 These substantial public benefits would outweigh the less than substantial harm to the significance of the Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29). These proposals therefore meet the requirements of the NPPF (paragraph 215) in relation to the justification for less than substantial harm. The proposals would also satisfy the requirements of Policy 24 of the Oldham Local Development Framework in relation to the impact on the character of the listed building, and preservation of its architectural style and features. 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 Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29).

9. REFERENCES

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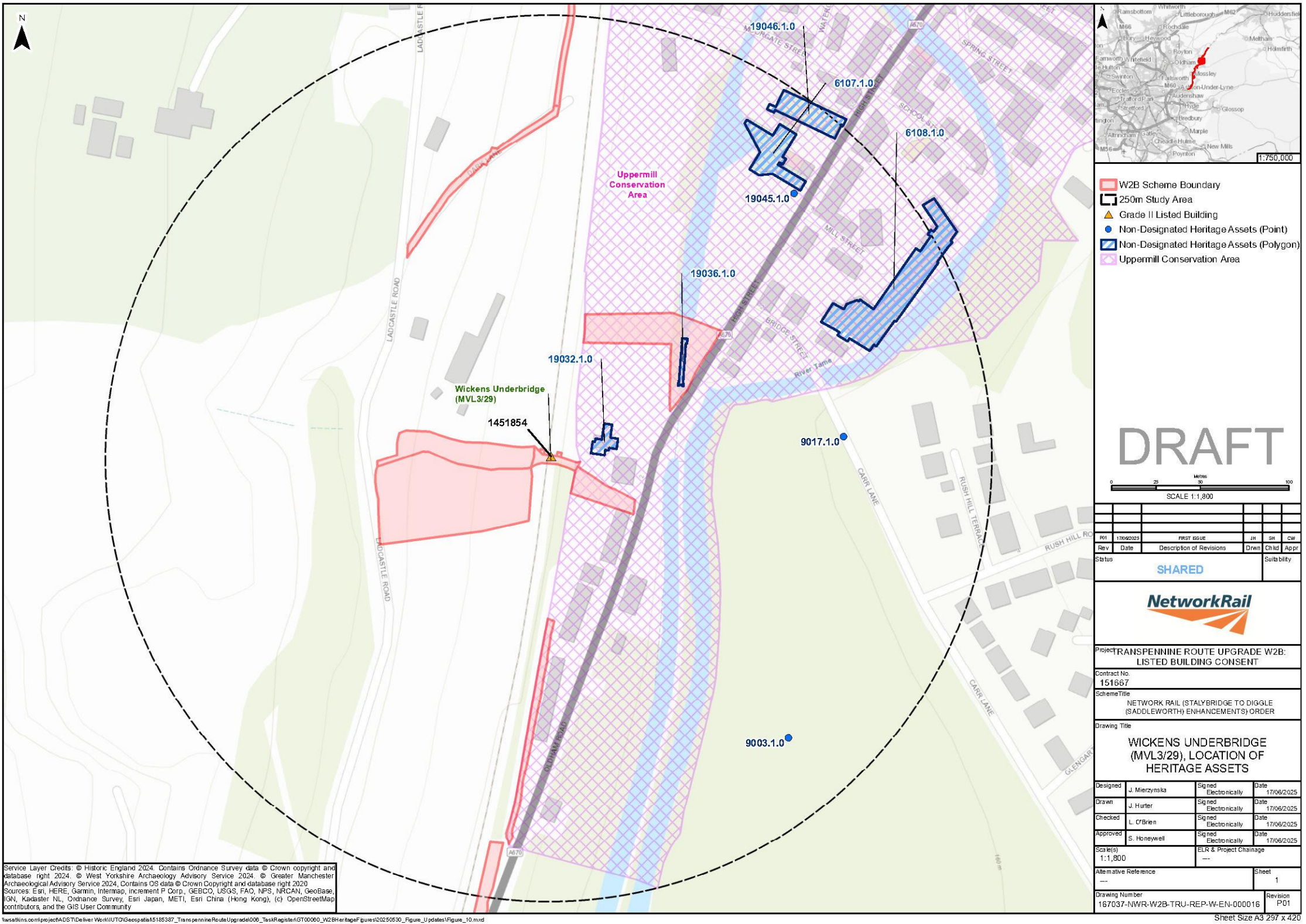
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APPENDIX A – LOCATION PLAN



APPENDIX B – NATIONAL HERITAGE LIST DESCRIPTION

Official list entry

Heritage Category:	Listed Building
Grade:	II
List Entry Number:	1451854
Date first listed:	23-Mar-2018
List Entry Name:	Railway accommodation underbridge MVL3/29, Wickens
Location Description:	Oldham Road, Wickens, Upper Mill.

Location

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

District:	Oldham (Metropolitan Authority)
Parish:	Saddleworth
National Grid Reference:	SD9946505410

Summary

Accommodation underbridge for the Huddersfield & Manchester Railway. Mid-late 1840s by A S Jee.

Reasons for Designation

The accommodation underbridge MVL3/29, Wickens, constructed in the mid-late 1840s by A S 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 accommodation underbridge on what is now one of the main railway lines in northern England;
- * designed by the notable railway engineer Alfred Stanistreet Jee.

Architectural interest:

- * as a well-designed bridge, with good quality stone masonry and attention to architectural detail in its use of picked and tooled, v-jointed voussoirs with larger keystones, ashlar impost bands, parapets, coping and soffit and contrasting rock-faced stonework of the spandrels, abutments and raked and splayed wing walls which all lift it above the purely functional.

Group value:

- * architecturally inter-related with the other listed structures designed by A S Jee on the Huddersfield & Manchester 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 structures and track are currently (2018) owned by Network Rail, and the passenger services operated by TransPennine Express and Northern Rail.

This underbridge accommodates a track beneath the railway line. It was designed by A S Jee and dates to the construction of the Huddersfield & Manchester Railway between 1845 and

1849 (the railway line is shown on the first edition 1:10,560 OS map surveyed between 1849 and 1851 and published in 1854.)

Details

Accommodation underbridge for the Huddersfield & Manchester Railway. Mid-late 1840s by A S Jee.

MATERIALS: rock-faced and ashlar sandstone (shale grit/Kinderscout grit/millstone grit).

DESCRIPTION: the accommodation bridge carries the two-track railway line over a footpath which slopes down to the south. The bridge has deep, segmental arches with v-jointed voussoirs of picked ashlar with tooled margins and slightly projecting, taller keystones with diagonal tooling. They spring from a similarly detailed, ashlar impost band. The bridge abutments and spandrels are of coursed, rock-faced stone blocks and the bridge soffit is of smaller, coursed, ashlar blocks. The ashlar parapets have a slightly projecting, square-moulded band with deeper panels above. The raked and splayed wing walls terminate in slightly projecting, rectangular piers and are of coursed, rock-faced stone blocks with square-moulded ashlar coping.

Sources

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APPENDIX C: HISTORIC ENGLAND PRE-APPLICATION RESPONSE LETTER

**The Network Rail (Stalybridge to Diggle (Saddleworth) Enhancements) Order
Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29) – Heritage Statement
October 2025**



Ms Kate Berry
AtkinsRéalis
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Direct Dial: +447990339949

Our ref: PA01200823

29 November 2024

Dear Kate

Pre-application Advice

TRANSPENNINE ROUTE UPGRADE - STALYBRIDGE TO STANDEDEGE

Thank you for arranging the meetings on 6 and 21 November 2024 to review the proposals for bridges MVL3/9, 10, 23, 25, 26, 28, 29 and 31. As before, it was helpful to see the drawings in advance and then talk through the proposals with the team.

The impacts of the proposed changes and our comments are detailed below:

Proposals at *Manchester Road underbridge MVL3/10*, *Shaw Hall Bank Road underbridge MVL3/26* and *Wickens underbridge MVL3/29* will involve minor works, consisting of renewal of railings and strengthening of parapets with reinforced concrete. Visually, there will be only a minor impact, as the replacement railings are similar to the existing and the concrete strengthening will be hidden from view by the parapets. There will be a very low level of less than substantial harm to the physical fabric of the bridges due to the new railings being grouted into cored holes in the masonry parapet blocks. We do not have concerns over the works at these three bridges and recognise the efforts to maintain the visual appearance on the bridges.

The proposals for *Spring Bank Lane overbridge MVL3/9* and *Uppermill Viaduct MVL3/31* have been discussed at previous meetings, and it was helpful to see further details of the works at these structures. There will be a low level of less than substantial harm to *Spring Bank Lane overbridge* due to the introduction of raised copers, however the use of colour-matched concrete here will help to mitigate some of the harm caused by the visual impact of the new copers. Works to *Uppermill Viaduct* will likewise lead to a low level of less than substantial harm due to the introduction of brackets to support the OLE portals which will have an impact both physically and visually. We appreciate that care has been taken in the spacing of these portals so the rhythm of the bridge arches is not unduly interrupted, and so that the patress plates are not affected.

More considerable impacts will result from proposals at *Wright's overbridge MVL3/23*, *Oaklands Road underbridge MVL3/25* and *Oldham Road overbridge (Greenfield*



SUITES 3.3 AND 3.4 CANADA HOUSE 3 CHEPSTOW STREET MANCHESTER M1 5FW

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Station) MVL3/28, all of which will result in substantial harm to the significance of the designated assets.

As mentioned in previous letters, 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, and through the re-routing of a historic public footpath. Thorough justification will need to be presented in the supporting documentation to provide the reasoning for the total loss of this bridge.

The proposed reconstruction of *Oldham Road Overbridge* has also been discussed previously. This is a skew overbridge located on the north-east side of Greenfield Station which carries Oldham Road over the track below. The bridge currently has a masonry arch which will be dismantled, along with much of the approaching wing walls, resulting in very little historic fabric being retained. The works will also necessitate the removal of the ornate historic iron railway footbridge. There will be substantial harm to the significance of the listed asset due to the severity of changes to its physical appearance and the loss of historic fabric. We recognise that some fabric will be retained for reuse as cladding material, however this will need to be carefully managed to maintain the look of the structure. The stone coursing in the existing bridge runs through the parapets into the wing walls. We would like to see care taken to replicate this effect within the reconstructed bridge to avoid a disjointed appearance to the new structure, which could arise from using mismatched stone-cladded panels. The existing bridge features flat masonry pilasters that project slightly from the bridge to either side of the arch. These have not been articulated in the proposed design and we would like to see further investigation into whether they could be incorporated into the design. This location would be suitable for display of permanent interpretation materials which could help to mitigate some of the harm by informing the public about the history of the route and the upgrade works.

Oaklands Road underbridge MVL3/25 is a skew girder bridge carrying the two-track railway line over a bend in the road below. The angled abutments have distinctive semi-octagonal piers, and the parapets are ornate balustrades of decorative cast-iron panels of Gothic arcading. The craftsmanship of the stonemasonry and attention to architectural detail lifts the design of this bridge above the purely functional and it has considerable architectural interest. There will be substantial harm to the significance of this listed bridge resulting from the proposals to reconstruct and widen the bridge deck and to rebuild the octagonal piers. In order to minimise the harm, the design of the rebuilt piers and abutments will need to be carefully managed to ensure there is meaningful articulation of the distinctive shape of the piers. This includes the contrasting shape and dimensions of the piers where they extend through and above the parapet. We are comfortable with the proposals to replicate the decorative cast-iron panels to minimise the visual impact of the loss of the original fabric here.

Next Steps



SUITES 3.3 AND 3.4 CANADA HOUSE 3 CHEPSTOW STREET MANCHESTER M1 5FW

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**The Network Rail (Stalybridge to Diggle (Saddleworth) Enhancements) Order
Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29) – Heritage Statement
October 2025**



Historic England

We look forward to our continued involvement in the pre-application discussions for this scheme.

Yours sincerely

Louise Davies
Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas
E-mail: louise.davies@historicengland.org.uk

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

Information Provided

Draft LBC drawings, October 2024

MVL3/25 Presentation, November 2024



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**The Network Rail (Stalybridge to Diggle (Saddleworth) Enhancements) Order
Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29) – Heritage Statement
October 2025**



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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**The Network Rail (Stalybridge to Diggle (Saddleworth) Enhancements) Order
Wickens Underbridge (MVL3/29) – Heritage Statement
October 2025**



Historic England

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Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas
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**TRANSPENNINE ROUTE UPGRADE - STALYBRIDGE TO STANDEDGE
Pre-application Advice**



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