



Historic England

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Direct Dial: 01904 601961

Our ref: L01567874

14 November 2023

Dear Mr Daniel

Arrangements for Handling Heritage Applications Direction 2021

**CRAWSHAW WOOD OVERBRIDGE, LAND SOUTH OF MANSTON LANE,
THORPE PARK, LEEDS, LS15 8AB
Application No. 23/04388/LI**

Thank you for your letter of 31 October 2023 regarding the above application for listed building consent. On the basis of the information available to date, we offer the following advice to assist your authority in determining the application.

Summary

The original Leeds to Selby Railway of 1830-34 is one of the earliest railways in the world. It is a key part of the first 'pioneering' phase of the railway network. Crawshaw Woods Bridge is an intact example of an early cast iron, single-span, segmental arched bridge spanning an impressive 15.6m. It has wrought iron railing balustrades and curved mushroom-top stone piers. It is a remarkable survival and the earliest such bridge on a working railway. It is designated a Grade II listed building in recognition of its special architectural and historic interest at a national level.

The proposal is to dismantle the bridge, raise the abutments by 1.4 metres and then reinstate the refurbished cast iron superstructure at the higher level will cause harm to the significance of the largely unaltered Grade II listed structure. The raising of the bridge is necessary to allow the TransPennine Route Upgrade (TRU) Scheme which will electrify the route to improve journey times and reduce carbon emissions.

We have been involved in detailed pre-application discussions regarding the TRU for several years. We have worked closely with Network Rail, their heritage consultants and your Conservation Officer, to interrogate the justification and to explore ways to mitigate the harm and to maximise public benefits through a quality design that re-uses historic fabric as much as possible.



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We therefore do not object to the application and consider that the proposal addresses the requirements of section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have 'special regard' to the listed building and Chapters 12 and 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Historic England Advice

Significance

The TransPennine Route has evolved from an historic network of railways, principally the Leeds to Selby Railway which was conceived and built in the 1830s. It was constructed at the start of the Railway Age, conceived prior to the completion of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway. Being completed prior to the railway mania of the 1840s and 50s, it represents a significant heritage asset in its own right.

Crawshaw Woods Bridge is an intact example of an early cast iron, single-span, segmental arched bridge spanning an impressive 15.6m. It has wrought iron railing balustrades and curved mushroom-top stone piers. It is a remarkable survival and the earliest such bridge on a working railway.

The line was constructed with a total of 43 bridges and 16 level crossings. Originally it was proposed to construct twin arch bridges to accommodate the four lines, but instead a single span bridge which chosen which led to its own inherent problems, particularly in the stabilisation of the embankments and cuttings. A number of the bridges also failed and had to be rebuilt. Walker also favoured stone for his structures, using a combination of sandstone for the decorative elements and limestone for the facing. He did incorporate two iron bridges along the route, of which only Crawshaw Woods bridge survives. The reason for using metal here remains unclear, but may have been due to concerns over the stability of the foundations (Baxter et al, 2014).

The bridge is Grade II listed in recognition of its special architectural and historic interest at a national level. The bridge was listed in 2015 after a comprehensive review of the line.

Our pre-application engagement in the TRU is well documented in the Heritage Statement accompanying this application. The importance of having comprehensive understanding of the heritage significance of the route and each of its designated heritage assets is noted in the 'TransPennine Route Upgrade Route-wide Statement of Significance (Alan Baxter, August 2019)'.

The proposal

The proposal is to dismantle the bridge, raise the abutments by 1.4 metres and then reinstate the refurbished cast iron superstructure at the higher level. This is required



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because it is not possible to achieve the clearance required for the OLE (overhead line equipment) due to the position of the track in relation to the bridge structure.

Impact

It is understood that Crawshaw Woods Bridge will be significantly altered as part of the scheme, but that the works proposed are necessary in order to deliver the electrification of the line. A process of optioneering was therefore undertaken to ensure that the most appropriate and least harmful solution to adapt the structure was pursued.

The heightening of the abutments and the reconstruction of the deck will involve permanent physical changes to the structure; however, the works will result in the retention and restoration of the key historic ironwork element of the structure. We support proposed condition 3 relating to materials regarding the re-use of stone in the abutments which will help to ensure that the overall aesthetic of the structure is maintained.

The West Yorkshire Archaeology Service (WYAS) has provided detailed comments on this application and we fully support their engagement with the suggested condition for historic structures recording (number 4).

Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) para 189 states that heritage assets are an 'irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations'.

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 (para 200, NPPF).

The Conservation Implementation Management Plan (CIMP) proposed condition 5, will be an important tool to be used by your Conservation Officer and WYAS during the course of the works. We suggest that this offers a great opportunity to use innovative techniques, such as time-lapse photography etc, to record the works in progress and add quality and depth to the archive. This is in order to address para 205 of the NPPF which states that 'local planning authorities should require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible'.

Position



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The major works proposed to Crawshaw Woods Bridge are regrettable. However, we understand that without lifting the bridge the upgrading of the TransPennine Route and all of the public benefits that go with it, would not be possible. We also note the efforts that have been made by the applicant to understand the heritage significance of the bridge itself and its group value as part of the wider historic railway route. Overall, when considering this application holistically with the TransPennine Route Upgrade scheme, we do not object to the application.

The sensitive repairs and refurbishment of the cast iron superstructure will be a public benefit. In order to ensure that this is undertaken in an appropriate and timely manner, the use of the CIMP will be important given the particularly high heritage significance of the bridge, the fact that historic engineering is a core aspect of its heritage significance and due to the bespoke structural approach being taken.

Recommendation

We consider that the issues and safeguards outlined in our advice need to be addressed in order for the application to meet the requirements of paragraphs 200 and 205 of the NPPF.

In determining this application you should bear in mind the statutory duty of section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.

Your authority should take these representations into account in determining the application. If there are any material changes to the proposals, or you would like further advice, please contact us. Please advise us of the decision in due course.

Yours sincerely

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Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas

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