



Lostwithiel Railway Station

Erection Footbridge

Application for Prior Approval - Supporting Statement

Date: OCTOBER 2025



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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Statement has been prepared by Network Rail in support of an application for Prior Approval for the erection of footbridge to provide access to Platforms 1 and 2 at Lostwithiel station and over Grenville Road whilst the level crossing is down and the road is closed. The development comprises: *“Erection of footbridge”*.
- 1.2 Lostwithiel station is located within Lostwithiel Conservation Area and has a Signal Box which is listed, Grade II on 30 April 2013. This was following a review of signal boxes by English Heritage. A report was produced by John Minnis in 2012 which recommended a section of signal boxes to be listed; Lostwithiel Signal Box was selected and subsequently listed.
- 1.3 This Supporting Statement incorporates an assessment of policy, heritage and design and access. It is divided into the following sections:
- Site description, historical context and background;
 - Proposed development;
 - Planning policy framework;
 - Assessment of the proposals; and
 - Conclusion.

2 Site Description, Historical context and Background

Lostwithiel Railway Station

- 2.1 Located in the town of Lostwithiel, Cornwall, to the south of the A390, the station can be accessed via Grenville Road.
- 2.2 Lostwithiel Station comprises two platforms, parking (vehicles and cycle), waiting area, seating and information point. To the north of the station is Grenville Road which crosses over the railway via a manually controlled barrier level crossing.
- 2.3 Lostwithiel railway station serves the town of Lostwithiel. Great Western Railway operates the station along with every other station in Cornwall.
- 2.4 The station is on the banks of the River Fowey. At the east end of the station is a level crossing while at the west end the line is carried over the river, beyond which is the junction for the Fowey branch which is now used by china clay trains only. Between the station and the river stand the remains of the Cornwall Railway workshops, converted and extended in 2004 as a housing development.
- 2.5 The main entrance is on the platform served by trains to Plymouth, this is the platform nearest the town. A second platform for trains to Penzance is reached from the level crossing.

Figure 1: Ariel view of Lostwithiel station



- 2.6 Lostwithiel signal box is a Grade II listed, situated at the northern end of Platform 1, adjacent to the level crossing.
- 2.7 The station is located within Lostwithiel Conservation Area and whilst there is no available appraisal for this, there is a “Lostwithiel Historic Characterisation” report which outlines the evolution of the town, of which was first recorded in 1189, regarded as a medieval town. The town had a market at this point (1189), a chapel by 1202, annual fair by 1224, bridges were built and re- built (1437), mills were built and rebuilt (1637), the first of the town quays and lime kiln is first noted in 1676 and the station and Cornwall Railway was opened in 1859. The station is located on the

edge of Lostwithiel, linking with Bridgend.

Historical Context

Lostwithiel Railway Station

- 2.8 Lostwithiel railway station is located on the Main Line (Paddington to Penzance via Bath), St Germans to mileage change point east of Chacewater (MLN3). It is 277 miles (446 km) from London Paddington via Bristol Temple Meads. Great Western Railway (GWR) operates the station along with every other station in Cornwall.
- 2.9 The station is on the banks of the River Fowey in Cornwall. At the east end of the station is a level crossing while at the west end the line is carried over the river, beyond which is the junction for the Fowey branch which is now used by china clay trains only. Between the station and the river stand the remains of the Cornwall Railway workshops, converted and extended in 2004 as a housing development.
- 2.10 Lostwithiel's famous medieval bridge is just outside the station, with the town on the opposite bank of the river.
- 2.11 The station opened with the Cornwall Railway on 4 May 1859. A report at the time claimed that it "is generally admitted being the handsomest station on the line, and looks as gay and bright as fresh paint can make it. It consists, first, of a departure station, a wooden building covered by rusticated boarding, having a projecting verandah, extending eight feet on each side of the carriage approaches, and extending over the railway platform. This contains a spacious first class waiting room, second class waiting room, ticket, and other necessary offices, and conveniences. Immediately opposite to this, is the arrival station, which is also of wooden erection, having spacious waiting rooms, and porter and lamp rooms. The roof also projects over the platform in a similar way to that of the departure station. A short distance lower down the line is a convenient goods shed, 75 feet long by 42 feet span of roof. Near to the departure station is the train shed, 100 feet long, in which, in addition to the engines employed on the line, it is intended to contain first, second, and third class carriages, in order to meet any extra requirements that may at any time arise.
- 2.12 The workshops had been established during the construction of the railway to prepare the timber needed for the wooden viaducts, stations and track. It expanded to also maintain the carriages and wagons of the railway and was retained for some years by the Great Western Railway when the two companies amalgamated on 1 July 1889.
- 2.13 The Lostwithiel and Fowey Railway opened for goods traffic on 1 June 1869. A more direct route from Par to Fowey stole most of the traffic and the trains from Lostwithiel were suspended on 1 January 1880. The Cornwall Railway subsequently leased a part of the line to store rolling stock. The line was reopened by the Cornwall Minerals Railway on 16 September 1895 for both goods and passengers. The passenger service was withdrawn on 4 January 1965 but the line remains open to carry china clay to the jetties at Fowey.
- 2.14 Sidings on the east side of the level crossing came into use on 30 April 1932 to handle milk train traffic from a new Nestle milk factory. It was later sold to Cow & Gate.
- 2.15 The Great Western Railway was nationalised into British Railways from 1 January 1948 which in turn was privatised in the 1990s. British Railways demolished the original station buildings and replaced them with a new booking office on the platform nearest the town, although these are no longer needed.
- 2.16 Lostwithiel signal box is situated at the northern end of Platform 1. Since the Bodmin Road Signal Box was closed, the sidings at Bodmin Parkway connecting to the Bodmin and Wenford Railway are controlled by the box here. It is also used to control the signals and level crossing.
- 2.17 There was a footbridge at Lostwithiel station until the 1980's but this was removed as it had reached the end of its design life. The photo below shows the location, orientation and design of the original footbridge.

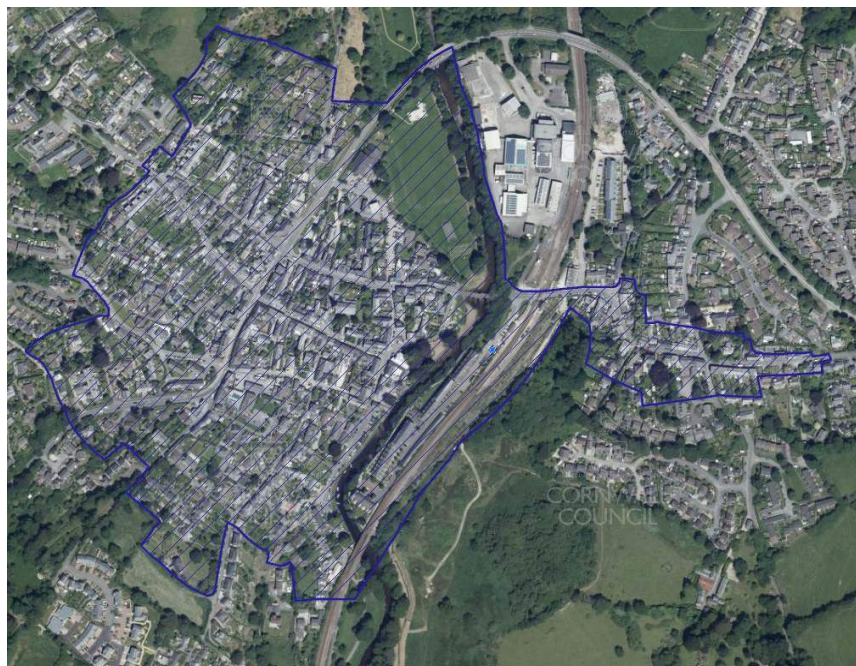
Figure 2: Historic ariel view taken from Britain from above website



Lostwithiel Conservation Area

- 2.18 The station is located within Lostwithiel Conservation Area and whilst there is no available appraisal for this, there is a “Lostwithiel Historic Characterisation” report which outlines the evolution of the town, of which was first recorded in 1189, regarded as a medieval town. The town had a market at this point (1189), a chapel by 1202, annual fair by 1224, bridges were built and re- built (1437), mills were built and rebuilt (1637), the first of the town quays and lime kiln is first noted in 1676 and the station and Cornwall Railway was opened in 1859. The station is located on the edge of Lostwithiel, linking with Bridgend.

Figure 3 – Lostwithiel Conservation Area – outlined and hashed blue



Lostwithiel Signal Box

2.19 Lostwithiel signal box was built in 1893 a Great Western Railway (GWR) design, type 5. Built of brick with timber weather-boarding under a slate-clad roof. It was designated at Grade II for the following principal reasons:

- Intactness: despite the loss of the original fenestration, it remains one of the best- preserved examples of what was once a standard signal box on the GWR network during the late C19;
- Date: it is considered to be the earliest known GWR-designed type 5 surviving;
- Fittings: for the retention of operating equipment including a lever frame and some train control instruments.

Figure 4 – Lostwithiel Signal Box, Grade II Listed



2.20 From the 1840s, huts or cabins were provided for men operating railway signals. These were often located on raised platforms containing levers to operate the signals and in the early 1860s, the fully glazed signal box, initially raised high on stilts to give a good view down the line, emerged. The interlocking of signals and points, perhaps the most important single advance in rail safety, patented by John Saxby in 1856, was the final step in the evolution of railway signalling into a form recognisable today. Signal boxes were built to a great variety of different designs and sizes to meet traffic needs by signalling contractors and the railway companies themselves.

2.21 Signal box numbers peaked at around 12,000-13,000 for Great Britain just prior to the First World War and successive economies in working led to large reductions in their numbers from the 1920s onwards. British Railways inherited around 10,000 in 1948 and numbers dwindled rapidly to about 4000 by 1970. In 2012, about 750 remained in use; it was anticipated that most would be rendered redundant over the next decade.

2.22 The Great Western Railway (GWR) type 5 design was the first standard system-wide box used by the GWR. It was built in large numbers from 1889 to 1896. Lostwithiel station was opened in 1859 as part of the Cornwall Railway and amalgamated with the Great Western Railway in 1889. The signal box was built in 1893 to the north of the station buildings. It remains operational, controlling a section of the Cornish main line and also overseeing china clay traffic on the branch line to Fowey Docks. It is adjacent to the level crossing, one of only six crossings between Plymouth and Penzance. The original station buildings have been demolished and replaced with modern structures in the late C20. Following a signal box study by English Heritage in 2012 Totnes Signal Box was listed, Grade II on 30 April 2013. The study was undertaken by English Heritage as a response to re-signalling plans announced by Network Rail in 2011 which would involve the closure of all remaining mechanical signal boxes on the national rail network. English Heritage reviewed both operational and non-operational signal boxes. The report produced identified the most significant remaining examples and made recommendations of boxes to go forward for assessment for listing.

Lostwithiel Bridge

- 2.23 Lostwithiel bridge was listed Grade I on 18 October 1949. The 14th century bridge is the lowest crossing point of the river Fowey. It was built by request of Edmund, Earl of Cornwall with additional flood arch of C18 and later repairs.
- 2.24 Slatestone rubble with chamfered granite copings to parapet walls. The bridge runs east/west across the river, with the C18 works to east. There are 5 pointed arches, with relieving arches; from the south, there is a low 4-centred arch to left, and then the 4 main arches, 2 to left slightly taller, with cutwaters between the refuges on top. The 5 old arches are 13 feet in span; the roadway is 11 feet wide and the parapets were added in 1676; these are splayed back at the west end, and extend overall about 30 feet. To the right, there is a taller round flood arch with buttress to left and smaller round floor arch, rebuilt in the C18.

Figure 5 – Lostwithiel Bridge, Grade I Listed



Background to the Proposal

- 2.25 Lostwithiel is a mainline station between Plymouth and Penzance. Lostwithiel station is positioned in the centre of the town, the railway itself divides the town in two and the only road and pedestrian access within the town that crosses the railway is via the Level Crossing (LX) which is adjacent to the rail station.
- 2.26 Lostwithiel Station only has access between platforms via a level crossing. It is proposed to install a new footbridge at the station which will greatly improve passenger safety, and their experience, when the level crossing is unavailable to pedestrians.
- 2.27 The aim of the project is to provide improved access to the platform at Lostwithiel by overcoming the increased level crossing barrier down time created by the 2019 timetable introduction. It will also allow the general public to by-pass the crossing and reduce the instances of level crossing misuse.
- 2.28 In 2023 Prior Approval was given for a footbridge at the station to be built reference PA23/01843, unfortunately we were unable to build this. The approved footbridge was designed to be built using permanent fibre-reinforced polymer (FRP). The use of FRP for footbridges is very new and whilst there are many benefits unfortunately following further development it was found to have a number

of significant technical challenges. This is with the FRP material needing to overcome various issues such as fire/smoke performance, demonstration of the materials sustainability, cost and structural performance, as such, it is currently not approved for use at any station.

- 2.29 Following discussions between Network Rail and Cornwall Council, it was agreed that a temporary scaffold bridge was installed in order that a new design can be progressed.

Planning History

- 2.30 The following is relevant planning history for this site.

Planning Reference	Description of development	Decision
PA23/01843	Prior Approval application for the provision of a stepped footbridge at Lostwithiel Station under Part 18 Class A to Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning General Permitted Development Order 2015	Prior approval not req'd(PA/AF/TEL/DEM/) Fri 28 Apr 2023

- 2.31 Application reference PA23/01843 includes a ramp from Grenville Road on the east side of the station up to Platform 2. This ramp has been constructed and is currently in use.

3 Proposal Development

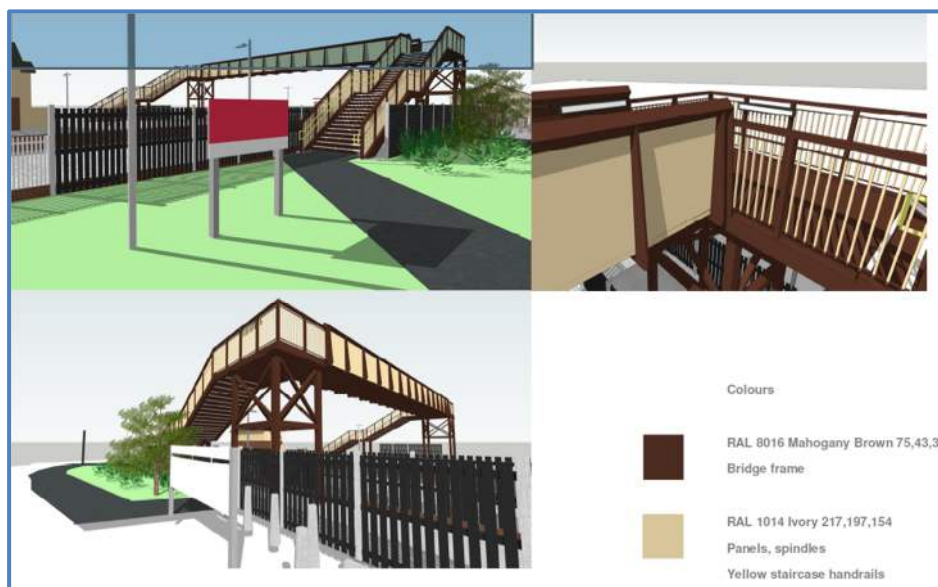
3.1 This application seeks Listed Building Consent for the erection of a footbridge at Lostwithiel station.

3.2 Proposed Development Description: Lostwithiel Footbridge

General Arrangement:

3.3 The new footbridge is a steel structure, based on the Network Rail Series 400 standard design. It will connect from a ramp on Platform 2, crossing over the railway, and link to the existing steel ramp at the rear of Platform 1.

Figure 6 – Visualisations



Bridge Structure:

3.4 The bridge is uncovered (open to the elements, with no roof or canopy). The main span and staircases are constructed from steel, with a robust, modular design for durability and ease of maintenance.

Cycle Provision:

3.5 A removable cycle ramp is included, allowing cyclists to wheel their bikes up and down the stairs when required. This ramp can be detached as needed.

Dimensions:

3.6 The overall bridge width is 2.0 metres. Where the cycle ramp is installed on the stairs, the clear width is reduced to 1.8 metres to accommodate the ramp.

Safety and Accessibility:

3.7 Parapet (side barrier) height is 1.5 metres on both the main span and the stairs, providing safety for all users.

Handrails are provided as follows:

3.8 Double handrail on one side (typically the inside elevation). Single handrail on the opposite side (cycle ramp side).

3.9 A 60x6 mm kicker plate is installed on both sides of all stairs and landings for additional safety.

Clearances:

3.10 The bridge soffit (underside) is set at 5.2 metres above the rail, ensuring sufficient clearance for trains and maintenance.

4 Planning Policy Framework

4.1 This section summarises relevant policy and guidance in the consideration of this application.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

4.2 The revised National Planning Policy Framework, revised in February 2025 and describes the Government's planning policies for England. This document sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework for plan making and development.

4.3 The NPPF outlines the Government's economic, environmental and social planning objectives. Taken together, the NPPF articulates the Government's vision of sustainable development, which should be interpreted and applied to meet local aspirations. It is advised that these three objectives should be pursued in an integrated way, looking for solutions which deliver multiple goals. The following sections of the NPPF are of relevance to this proposal.

High Quality Design

4.4 The NPPF at Section 12 notes the importance attached to the good design of the built environment. It advises at paragraph 127 that planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments meet a number of design characteristics including:

- Will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but for the lifetime of the development;
- are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
- optimise the potential for the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and supporting local facilities and transport networks;

Heritage

4.5 Section 16 of the NPPF sets out national policies in relation to conserving and enhancing the historic environment. Paragraph 189 advises that in determining applications, Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) 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.

4.6 Paragraph 190 states that local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise.

4.7 In determining planning applications, the NPPF advises at Paragraph 192 that LPA's should take account of:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

4.8 Paragraph 193 advises that in 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. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting.

- 4.9 The NPPF advises at paragraph 195 that 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 loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:
- the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and
 - no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and
 - conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
 - the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.”
- 4.10 In cases where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, paragraph 196 of the NPPF states that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

National Planning Practice Guidance

- 4.11 The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) was launched on the Department of Communities and Local Government’s website in March 2014.
- 4.12 The NPPF and NPPG define historic significance as “*The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.*”
- 4.13 When assessing if there is substantial harm to a historic asset as a result of a proposal the guidance states “*While the impact of total destruction is obvious, partial destruction is likely to have a considerable impact but, depending on the circumstances, it may still be less than substantial harm or conceivably not harmful at all, for example, when removing later inappropriate additions to historic buildings which harm their significance.*”

Local Policy

Cornwall Local Plan Strategic Policies 2010-2030 (November 2016)

- 4.14 The Cornwall Local Plan was formally adopted on 22 November 2016. It provides a positive and flexible overarching planning policy framework for Cornwall.
- 4.15 Policy 1 presumption in favour of sustainable development advises that development proposals which accord with local planning policy will be regarded as sustainable development and approved unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Account will be taken of a proposal’s location, layout, design and use against the three pillars of economic and social development, and environmental protection and improvement.
- 4.16 Policy 13 design states that development proposals must show high quality design and layout of buildings and places demonstrating a process that has clearly considered the existing context, and contributes to social, economic and environmental sustainability. Design schemes will be judged against the principles of character, layout, movement, adaptability, inclusiveness, resilience and diversity, process and community engagement and impact upon amenity.
- 4.17 Policy 14 development standards expects new development to achieve a number of standards including avoiding adverse impacts during construction, operation or restoration stage of development and taking advantages of opportunities to minimise energy consumption for example

through building materials.

- 4.18 Policy 24 historic environment requires new development to sustain Cornwall's local distinctiveness and character and protect or enhance Cornwall's historic environment and assets through a number of measures including protecting, conserving and enhancing the historic environment of designated heritage assets and their settings. It goes on to state that where the balance of a decision in favour of development results in the loss or significant damage of a heritage asset, the Council will require appropriate mitigation.
- 4.19 Policy 27 transport and accessibility advises that to ensure a resilient and reliable transport system proposals should meet a range of measures including contributing to Cornwall's strategic transport plans; minimising the need to travel through the location of development and facilities; designing proposals to provide convenient, accessible and appropriate cycle and pedestrian routes and public transport within and in the immediate vicinity of development.
- 4.20 The next section provides a detailed assessment of the proposals in the context of the above planning policy.

5 Assessment of the Proposal

- 5.1 This section considers how the proposal is acceptable in terms of the planning policy framework and other relevant matters.

Principle of Development

- 5.2 The development involves the erection of a footbridge at Lostwithiel station.
- 5.3 The proposal has the following aims;
- To provide pedestrian access in and around Lostwithiel station; and
 - provide pedestrian access over Grenville Road when the level crossing is down and the road is closed.
- 5.4. The works proposed form part of a positive strategy to provide constant access to Lostwithiel station and over Grenville Road whilst conserving the use of the signal box and improving the setting of this heritage asset and the nearby Conservation Area and listed bridge.

Heritage Assessment

Impact upon the Setting of the Signal Box and Bridge

- 5.4 Context and Significance: Lostwithiel Signal Box (Grade II) and Lostwithiel Bridge (Grade I) are both highly significant heritage assets within the Lostwithiel Conservation Area. The signal box is a rare and well-preserved example of a GWR Type 5 box, retaining original operational equipment and historic character. The medieval bridge is a landmark structure, integral to the town's historic development and visual identity.
- 5.5 Assessment of Impact:
- a) Signal Box Setting
- **Historic Relationship:** The proposed footbridge reinstates a historic crossing point, reflecting the station's original layout prior to the removal of the previous footbridge in the 1980s. This helps maintain the historic character and function of the station environment.
 - **Visual Impact:** The new bridge is sited close to the original location, ensuring continuity in the station's spatial arrangement. The design is open (uncovered), with a slim steel structure, reducing visual bulk and avoiding dominance over the signal box. The colour scheme (chocolate and cream) is sympathetic to traditional railway colours, aiding integration with the existing station palette.
 - **Views and Vistas:** The bridge's placement and open design preserve key sightlines to and from the signal box, including views from Grenville Road and the platforms. The parapet height and handrail design are functional but unobtrusive, ensuring the signal box remains visually prominent.
 - **Physical Impact:** No physical works are proposed to the signal box itself. The bridge's foundations and construction will be managed to avoid disturbance to the listed structure and its immediate setting.
- b) Bridge Setting
- **Separation and Context:** The footbridge is located at the station, some distance from Lostwithiel Bridge, with intervening railway infrastructure and landscaping. There is no direct physical or visual connection between the two structures, minimising any risk of adverse impact.
 - **Historic Character:** The bridge's design and materials are contemporary but restrained, ensuring it does not compete with or detract from the medieval character of Lostwithiel Bridge. The proposal respects the bridge's status as a landmark and its role in the town's historic landscape.
 - **Public Benefit:** By improving pedestrian access and safety, the footbridge supports the continued use and appreciation of the station and its heritage assets, including the bridge. This aligns with national and local policy objectives for sustaining and enhancing heritage significance.

- 5.6 Additional Mitigation and Enhancement:

- **Landscape Integration:** Landscaping around the new bridge is designed to soften its visual impact and reinforce the character of the station setting. Planting and fencing will be sympathetic to the conservation area.

5.7 **Policy Compliance:** The proposal is considered to result in “less than substantial harm” to the setting of both heritage assets, with clear public benefits in terms of safety, accessibility, and heritage interpretation. It complies with Section 16 of the NPPF and Policy 24 of the Cornwall Local Plan, which require the conservation and enhancement of designated heritage assets and their settings.

Design Considerations

5.5. As described above, the erection of the footbridge will improve the ease of movement within and around the station, which is currently restricted when the level crossing is down and Grenville Road is closed to vehicles and pedestrians whilst trains are crossing. The main design matters are summarised below:

Use

5.6. The use of the station will not alter. Albeit by providing an alternative crossing will ensure continued access at all times within the station, it will improve the experience for some of the passengers.

Layout

5.7. The location of the deck of the footbridge will be in the same location as the original footbridge but the proposed location of the steps is in reverse to what was already provided at the station. The future use of the footbridge is for both rail passengers and also the general public, as such this is the most effective solution in terms of the operational station and wayfinding exercise.

5.8. The primary output of the footbridge is as a diversionary route to the level crossing during barrier down times. The orientation therefore allows for the fastest route for a diversion from one side of the level crossing to the other.

Figure 7: Ariel View of the original footbridge



Amount and Scale

5.9. The amount and scale of refurbishment is described in section 3 and considered an appropriate amount and scale of development for the purpose of the aims described in this section at 5.3.

Appearance and Context

5.10. The appearance of the footbridge will differ from the original bridge shown in the photo above. The proposed footbridge will not have a roof, the orientation of the footbridge has move 180 degrees, but the scale, mass and layout are similar to the original footbridge.

5.11. The chocolate and cream color scheme reflects that of the Cornwall line.

Figure 3: Visualisation of the proposed bridge at Lostwithiel station



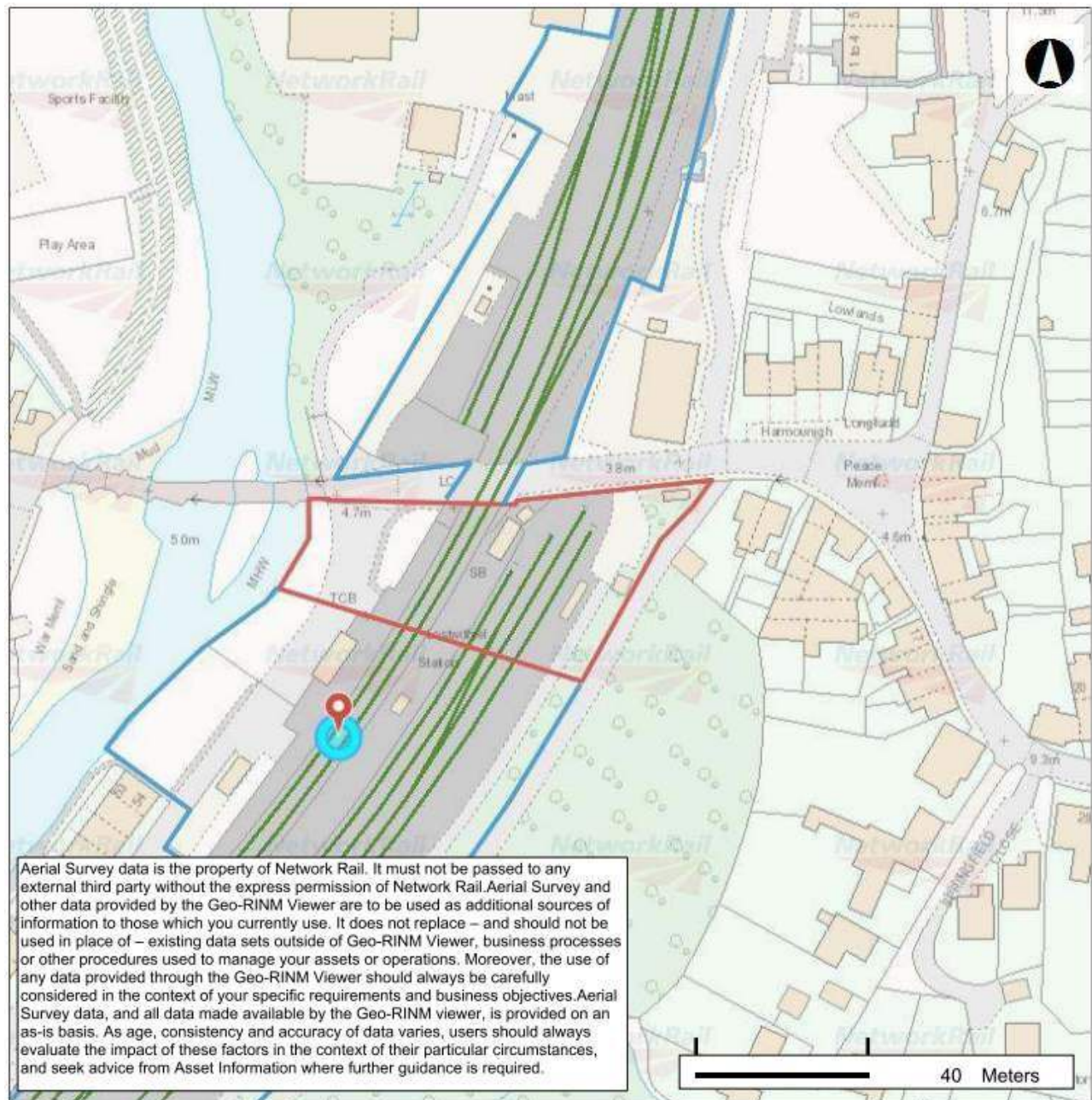
Access

- 5.12. The works proposed will improve access in and around the station and the construction work will be carefully managed with the project team and station management team to ensure the station continues to operate normally throughout the implementation of this project.

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 Network Rail is seeking Prior Approval for the erection of a footbridge at Lostwithiel railway station.
- 6.2 The proposed footbridge is in a similar location to the original footbridge at Lostwithiel station. The design of the footbridge will meet the aim of the project whilst being sensitive to the setting of the listed buildings and conservation area.
- 6.3 For the reasons outlined in this Supporting Statement Network Rail believes the proposed development to be in accordance with both national and local planning and heritage policy. We therefore trust that Cornwall Council will support the proposals submitted under this application for Prior Approval under Class A, Part 18 of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015.

Appendix 1 – Location Plan



Appendix 2 – Listing Description

Lostwithiel Signal Box

Heritage Category: Listed Building

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1413727

Date first listed: 30-Apr-2013

Location Description:

Statutory Address: Lostwithiel Railway Station, Grenville Road, Lostwithiel

District: Cornwall (Unitary Authority)

Parish: Lostwithiel

National Grid Reference: SX1068759798

Summary

Signal box of 1893 for the Great Western Railway.

Reasons for Designation

Lostwithiel Signal Box, erected in 1893, is designated at Grade II for the following principal reasons:

- * Intactness: despite the loss of the original fenestration, it remains one of the best-preserved examples of what was once a standard signal box on the GWR network during the late C19;
- * Date: it is considered to be the earliest known GWR designed type 5 surviving;
- * Fittings: for the retention of operating equipment including a lever frame and some train control instruments.

History

From the 1840s, huts or cabins were provided for men operating railway signals. These were often located on raised platforms containing levers to operate the signals and in the early 1860s, the fully glazed signal box, initially raised high on stilts to give a good view down the line, emerged. The interlocking of signals and points, perhaps the most important single advance in rail safety, patented by John Saxby in 1856, was the final step in the evolution of railway signalling into a form recognisable today. Signal boxes were built to a great variety of different designs and sizes to meet traffic needs by signalling contractors and the railway companies themselves.

Signal box numbers peaked at around 12,000-13,000 for Great Britain just prior to the First World War and successive economies in working led to large reductions in their numbers from the 1920s onwards. British Railways inherited around 10,000 in 1948 and numbers dwindled rapidly to about 4000 by 1970. In 2012, about 750 remained in use; it was anticipated that most would be rendered redundant over the next decade.

The Great Western Railway (GWR) type 5 design was the first standard system-wide box used by the GWR. It was built in large numbers from 1889 to 1896. Lostwithiel station was opened in 1859 as part of the Cornwall Railway and amalgamated with the Great Western Railway in 1889. The signal box was built in 1893 to the north of the station buildings. It remains operational (2013), controlling a section of the Cornish main line and also overseeing china clay traffic on the branch line to Fowey Docks. It is adjacent to the level crossing, one of only six crossings between Plymouth and Penzance. The original station buildings have been demolished and replaced with modern structures in the late C20.

Details

MATERIALS: it is built of brick with timber weather-boarding under a slate-clad roof.

EXTERIOR: a standard Type 5 design with a two-storey signal box under a shallow-pitched roof with barge-boards and spear-point finials to the gable ends. The first-floor operating room has continuous glazing to the north-west (facing the tracks) with uPVC windows in a similar arrangement to the originals which were arranged as paired horizontal sliding sashes. This glazing pattern continues to the gable ends. The doorway, within a projecting timber porch with a gabled roof, is to the south-east end and is reached by a set of modern wooden steps. The ground-floor locking room is accessed from a semi-sunken doorway in the same gable wall. The lower half of the north-west elevation has three original windows under segmental-arched brick heads. There are three similar ground-floor windows to the opposing (south-east) elevation and two further windows to the first floor.

INTERIOR: it retains a lever frame of 63 levers that was installed in 1923, block instruments, and also has a modern control panel.

Network Rail
Templepoint
Redcliffe Way
Bristol
BS1 6NL

www.networkrail.co.uk