

Redundant Signal Box Strategy





Document Verification



Redundant Signal Box Strategy
Operational Property
NR/GN/CIV/400/06
December 2020

Official

1/46

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Revision Information

Version: 1.0
Date issued: December 2020

Description of changes:
First Issue

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Purpose and Scope



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The UK Railway network of today inherited a fantastic legacy from the earlier railway eras. This constitutes the rich heritage of our railway system, however many of these structures are no longer required for their original purpose.

This guidance document sets out approaches for signal boxes that are no longer required for railway operations. This covers retention, demolition and relocation.

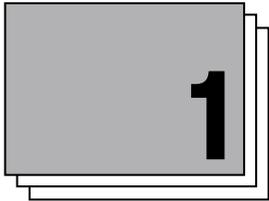
The aim of this guidance note is to identify the important concerns and considerations for signal boxes that have become redundant.

This guidance sets out the statutory framework that applies where a signal box is listed, or in a conservation area. This will inform the reader of applicable legislation, and also where further help and guidance can be sought. The Heritage: Care and Development document NR/GN/CIV/100/05 provides additional guidance.

Five options are provided to illustrate different options for retaining a signal box, and how future uses can be sought that benefit the railway community and wider community uses.

The document identifies some common physical characteristics that signal boxes share, and some considerations when maintaining or relocating a signal box. Throughout the document photographs illustrate the heritage and future use challenges that are faced with provide examples of good practice.

How to use this document



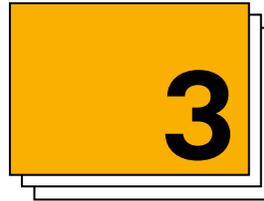
Section 1 Introduction:

Provides the parameters for the demolition or retention of non-operational, listed and non-listed signal boxes, and to provides guidance on how a retained non-operational box can be used in other ways.



Section 2 Legal Framework:

This section underlines the Legislation and its relevance to both retained signal boxes and the demolition of signal boxes. Refers to various acts and consent application and processes.



Section 3 Redundant Non-Listed Signal Boxes:

Provides details on Non-Listed Signal Box, Not in a Conservation Area and Non-Listed Signal Box, in a Conservation Area. Including retention, permissions and demolition.



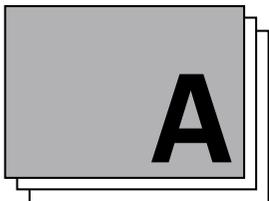
Section 4 Redundant Listed Signal Boxes:

Provides details on six options for the reuse and retention of redundant signal boxes, with information on permissions, restrictions and funding.

Hints and tips:

To quickly navigate this document click on any of the sections or titles on this page.

To return to the contents page you can click on the Double Arrow symbol.



Appendices A-C:

- Acknowledgements and Image Credits
- List of Relevant Policies
- Responsibilities and Accountabilities

How to use the guidance

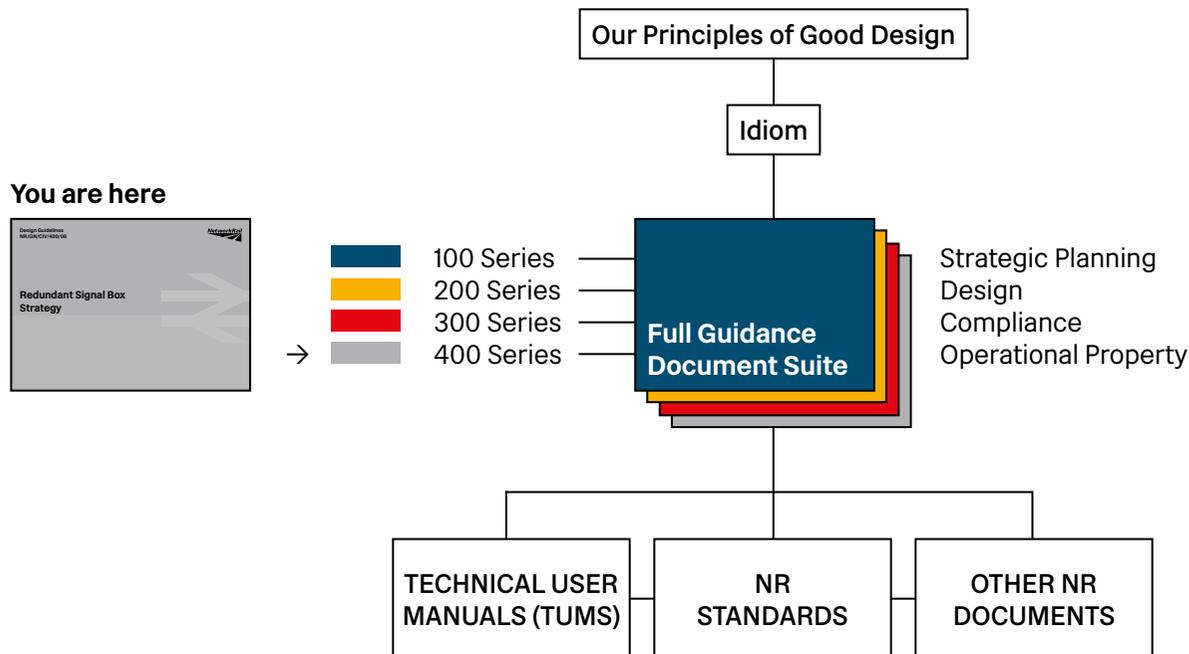


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The Network Rail Document Suite



This guidance has a Network Rail standards Green status, and the contents do not require a variation.

A full list of relevant documents, and other guidance suite documents is contained in the appendix.

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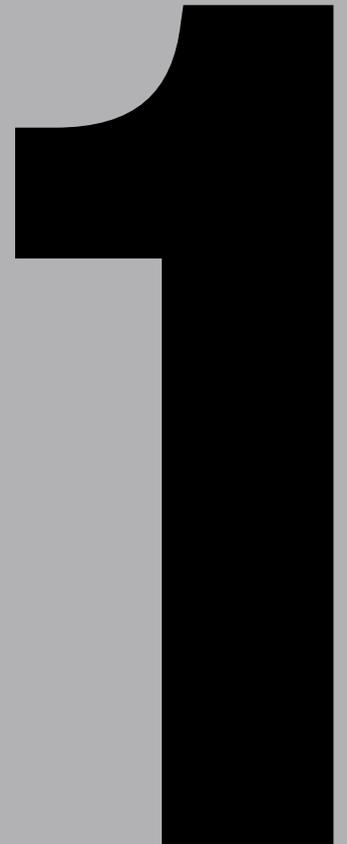


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Image 0.1
Knarborough signal box

Redundant Signal Box Strategy
Introduction





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55 →



Image 1.1
Lewes signal box



1.1.1 Purpose

The objective of this document is to set the parameters for the demolition or retention of non-operational signal boxes, and to provide guidance on how a retained non-operational box can be used in other ways.

1.1.2 Scope

This document applies to all signal boxes, listed and non-listed redundant signal boxes in both conservation areas, and non-conservation areas.

Asbestos may well be present in signal boxes and if that is the case Network Rail's standard on Asbestos Management NR/L2/CIV/168 should be followed.

This document also does not cover or replace other Network Rail Environmental policies nor does this document cover Legislative Environmental requirements.

1.1.3 Introduction

Over the last fifty years the majority of mechanical signal boxes have ceased to be in operational use. Network Rail's operational strategy is to close the remainder, mostly in the next decade and a half. Most boxes have been demolished on closure, but some have had to remain by virtue of being listed as of special historical or architectural interest or of being within a designated conservation area. The particular outcome for a specific signal box should depend on the outcome of the applications to the Local Authority, and feedback from consultees, in particular national heritage bodies (Historic England, Historic Environment Scotland or Cadw).

The Network Rail policy is to demolish and remove the signal boxes as they close, thus reducing its maintenance liability. However there are legal and social constraints that affect its ability to do so. These include:

- Listed building and Conservation area legislation
- Community pressure to retain the building

The three principal challenges to new uses are:

- Proximity to the operational railway
- The cost of maintaining historic structures
- Access to these structures

In 2012, the heritage bodies - then English Heritage, Historic Scotland and Cadw (Wales) reviewed the entire signal box estate in conjunction with Network Rail, including those on heritage railways. This collaborative approach provided a balanced view of the signal boxes of particular historic or architectural interest. There have generally been few listings since, though some examples were missed off, and have since been listed, such as Bardon Mill. If there is local pressure to list a signal box when closure and demolition of that box is planned, then the relevant report(s) to demonstrate whether they have previously been considered and discounted should be used.

A full list of signal boxes with relevant details is available on request from the National Records Group, NRGenquiries@networkrail.co.uk



Minimising interfaces with railway

Where a signal box is retained, interfaces with live railway assets should be minimised as much as possible, whether by providing separation or relocating the signal box. This should allow access and maintenance to the signal box to be carried out without impact to the railway. Wherever possible, relocation should be off Network Rail premises.



Complementing Local Environment

Care should be taken so that proposals for retained signal boxes respect the local environment, particularly for listed assets and those in conservation areas. Consideration should also be given to local needs.



Retained infrastructure is managed

Signal boxes and related infrastructure that is to be retained should be maintained and managed, to avoid it falling into disrepair and becoming dangerous. Well managed and maintained structures improve the overall perception of the railway.



Supporting the needs of the community

Where alternative uses are sought for signal boxes, the needs of local heritage railways, railway clubs, and wider community groups should be considered in order to find a sustainable long term use for the signal box.



Innovative Solutions

A wider range of potential uses should be considered, such as cafés, holiday lets / rentals and artists' studios or residences. New technologies may assist with the relocation, monitoring and management of signal boxes. New materials may reduce the maintenance requirements of signal boxes. The use of new materials should be respectful of heritage considerations, and may not be appropriate for those that are listed or in conservation areas.



Valuing heritage

Where assets are listed, in conservation areas, or retained for other reasons, expertise should be sought on what care and maintenance the assets require. Where signal boxes are being decommissioned, consideration should be given to how elements that are not part of the building fabric can be retained and handed over, where appropriate, to heritage group or museum use.

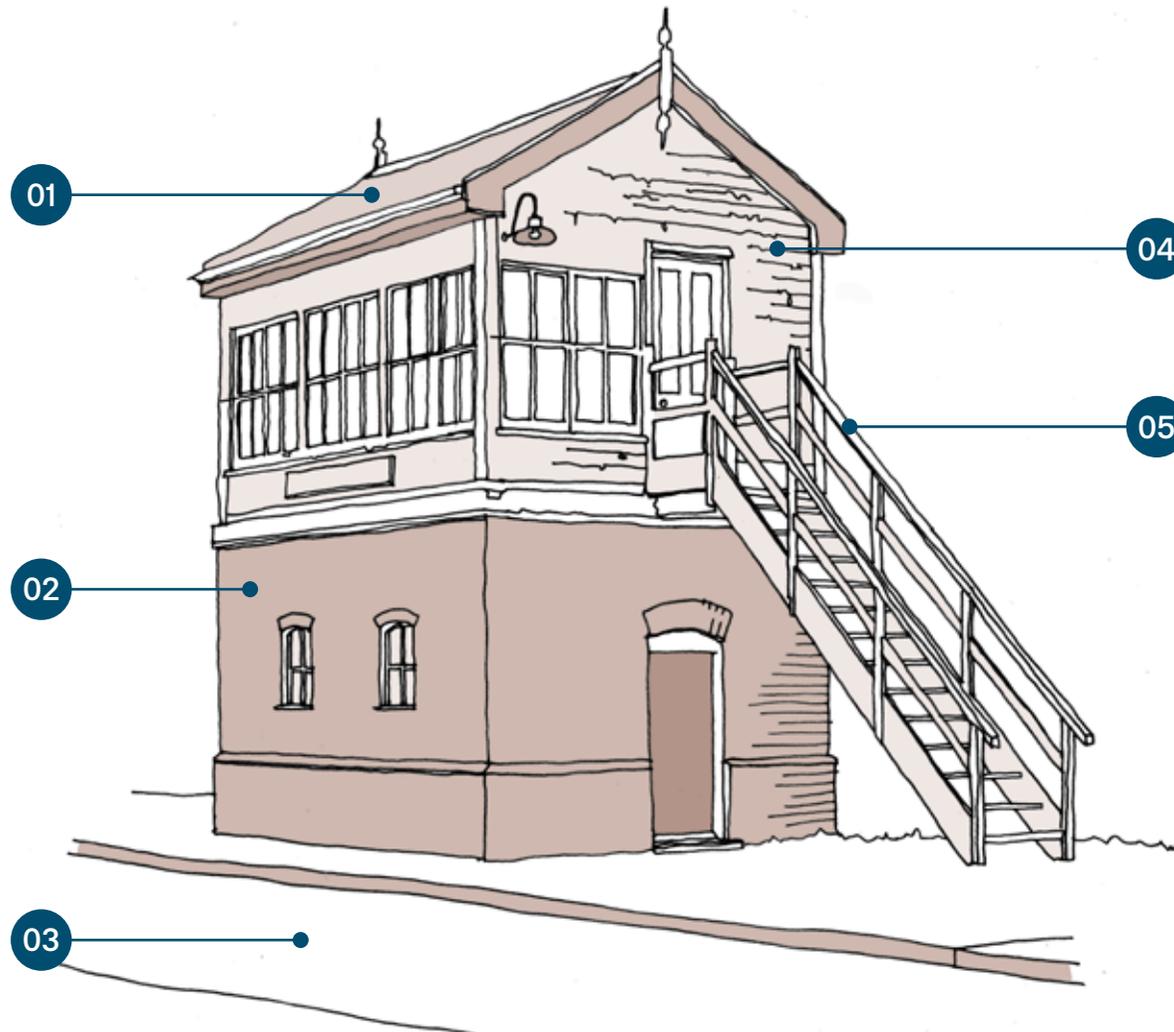
1.3 Signal Box Considerations



01 Roofs and rainwater goods often require the most regular maintenance, and if poorly maintained the structure may deteriorate

02 Method of construction – whether the building has the ability to be moved if required

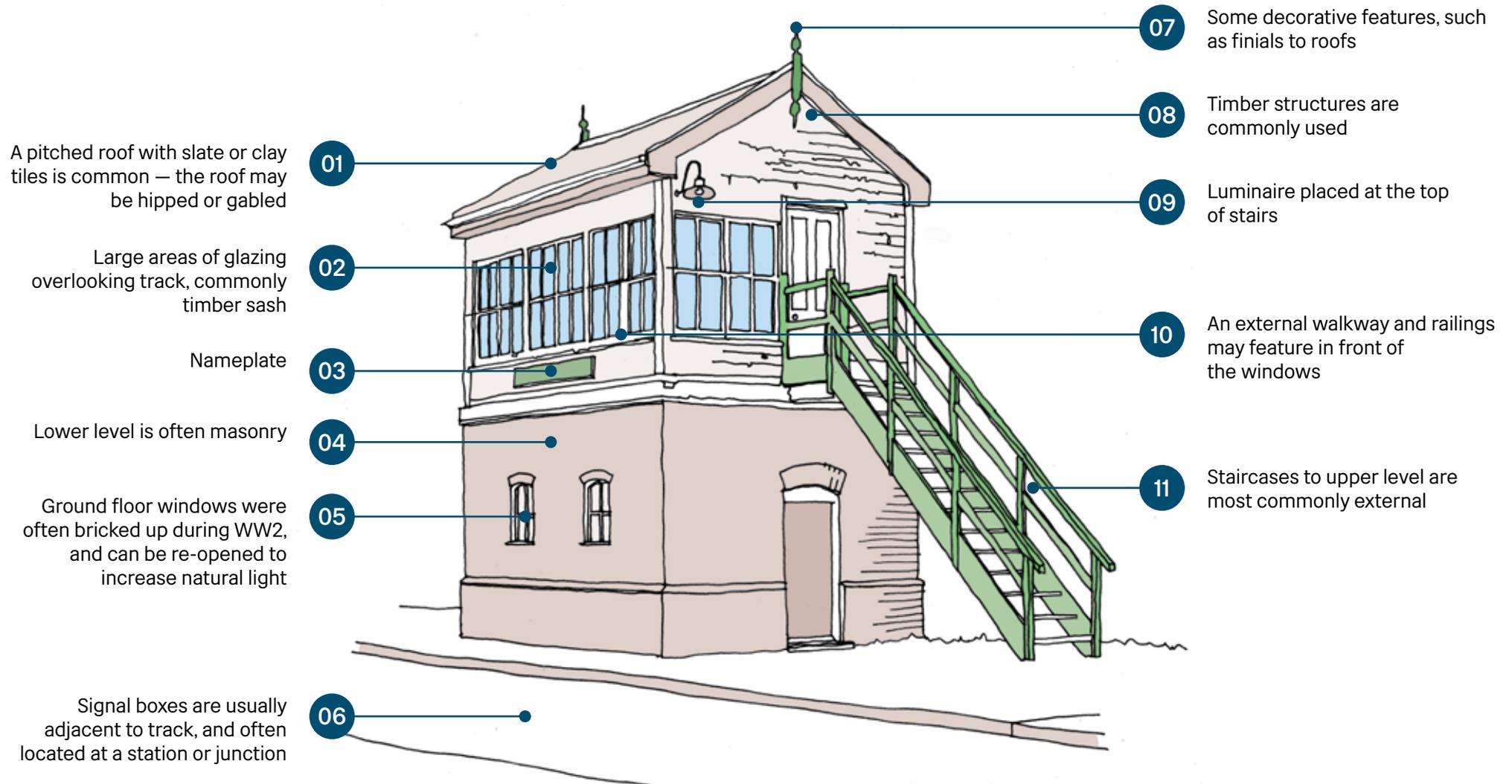
03 Proximity and connection to track and rail infrastructure can be a safety liability



04 Timber structures are commonly used and require maintenance to avoid rotting, and regular repainting

05 Accessibility – This may impact on the suitability of some potential uses

1.4 Common Features of a Signal Box





The Network Rail sponsor needs to plan what is to happen to the structure of a closed signal box at the outset of any intervention. This decision, and the optioneering that leads to it, should be part of the scheme development: deciding what to do with a redundant signal box.

The sponsor should establish the legal status of each signal box that should close in the scheme, and whether each is listed or in a conservation area. If a signal box is listed, or in a conservation area, the Sponsor should consider the options laid out in section 4 of this document, and specify the project appropriately.

If the signal box is listed, or in a conservation area the nature of the listing or conservation area character assessment should be fully understood. If the signal box forms part of a group of buildings, the location and group value is an important aspect of the listing, and therefore relocation is unlikely to be approved. If it is listed or within a conservation area and demolition consent cannot be obtained, then relocation would not be possible, options 1, 4, 5 and 6 in section 4 of this document can be considered.

Objects, structures and buildings affixed to a listed building or within its curtilage may also be protected by listing. The listing criteria should include interior fixtures and fittings such as the lever frame, track panel and instrument shelf. Group value should be considered in assessing the special interest of ancillary buildings.

Items associated with a signal box may also be designated under the Railway Heritage Act. A list of designated items can be obtained from NR Planning Team. They are also mapped on GI Portal / geoRINM.

If designated items are present, the project should make contact with Network Rail's representative on the Railway Heritage Designations Advisory Board (RHDAB), currently the Company Archivist, York Audax National Records Group or the Secretary via the National Railway Museum for advice on how to deal with these protected assets.

Project Managers should exercise caution in the removal of such fixtures and fittings from a signal box so that they do not inadvertently remove designated items. The removal of such items requires consent, which can be obtained from the RHDAB.

If consent is given to demolish a listed signal box, or one in a conservation area, the Project Manager should verify that all requirements of the listing body and legislation are followed.

The National Railway Museum has undertaken an oral history project to record staff recollections of certain signal boxes before closure. Details of boxes that have been recorded can be found by contacting Network Rail's Archivist.

If a signal box which has been visited under the oral history project is planned to be demolished it is advisable that the re-signalling project should share with the oral history project via the National Rail Museum any available records of its physical condition.

Image 1.2
Woking signal box, internal view



Introduction

1.5 Pre-closure Planning



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The Project Manager should determine the level of recording in discussion with the relevant local authority or the relevant listing body.

The Project Manager should consider technological advances in recording (for example 3D Lidar). Historic England's 2006 publication, *Understanding Historic Buildings, A Guide to Good Recording Practice*

The Project Manager should deposit such records with Network Rail's Archivist.

Image 1.3
Downham Market signal box

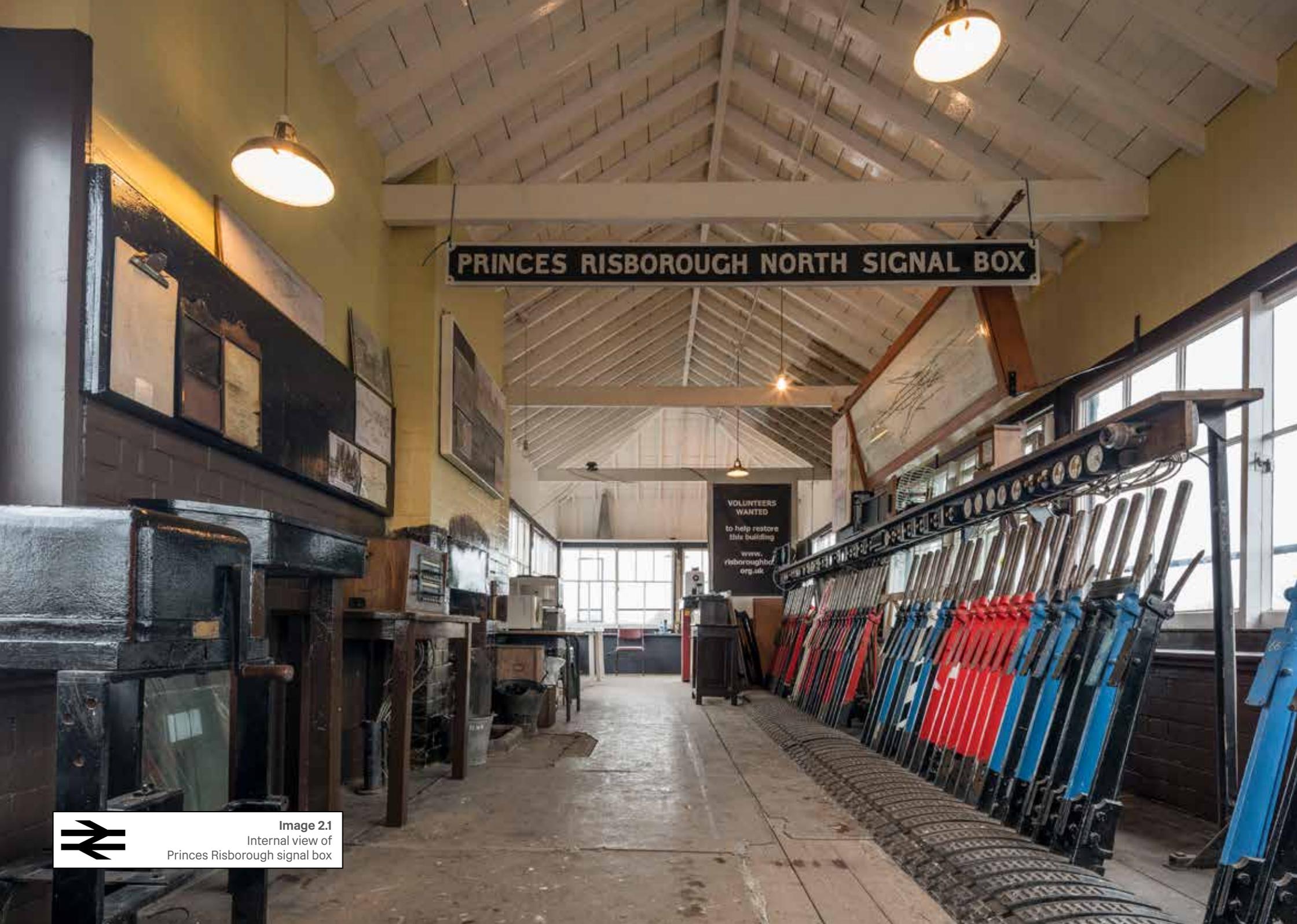


Image 1.4
Grain Crossing, internal view



Redundant Signal Box Strategy
Legal Framework

2



PRINCES RISBOROUGH NORTH SIGNAL BOX

VOLUNTEERS
WANTED
to help restore
this building
www.risboroughbor.org.uk



Image 2.1
Internal view of
Princes Risborough signal box



2.1.1 Demolition – Legislation

The following Legislation is of relevance to the demolition of signal boxes.

- In England, The Town and Country Planning (Demolition – Description of Buildings) Direction 2014.
- In Wales, Welsh Assembly Government, Department for Environment and Sustainability. Letter to Chief Planning Officers, Planning Control over Demolition April 2011.
- In Scotland there is no specific planning legislation on demolition, with the planning consent requirement flowing from The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development (Scotland) Order).

2.1.2 Demolition – Case law

Following a Court of Appeal decision (SAVE Britain's Heritage vs. Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, March 2011).

This Court of Appeal decision did not change the listed building or conservation area consent processes.

In England & Wales, where it is proposed to demolish buildings with a volume greater than 50 cubic metres, Network Rail as the owners of the building should provide formal notification under Section 80–83 of the Building Act 1984 to the local planning authority.

In Scotland the same decision was dealt with differently by the Scottish Government, with secondary legislation changes meaning that there might be few, if any, signal box demolitions which require any notification to, or approval by, the planning authority under the planning regime.

2.1.3 Demolition / Relocation requirements

Network Rail boundaries should be maintained at all times. If a building is removed that previously acted as the boundary to the railway then adequate measures should be taken to reinstate the boundary. Verify that all necessary protection is given to adjacent line side equipment and buildings.

The project should allow provision for the updating of the Operational Property Asset System (OPAS) and the Adaptive Risk Management System (ARMS) on completion of the project. Consignment notes for asbestos removal should be included within the health and safety file with copies uploaded to ARMS.

Legal Framework

2.2 Consents



2.2.1 Listed building and conservation area consent

The following Legislation is of relevance to listed building or conservation area consent processes.

- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (England & Wales) sets out the requirements placed on Network Rail when it wishes to alter a listed building or a building in a conservation area in England and Wales.
- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997.
- Historic Environment (Amended) (Scotland) Act 2014.

2.2.2 Obtaining Consent

A Listed Building Consent (LBC) application takes 8 weeks for the local authority to determine. There is the possibility of post-approval conditions being attached to a LBC, these can also take up to 8 weeks to be determined in England (there are no set timescales in Scotland). Accordingly Project Managers should provide as much information as possible at the application stage. This should include existing and proposed elevation and plan drawings as a minimum. However, more detailed drawings may be required in some instances. A Network Rail town planner may be asked to submit or make any application on behalf of the Project Manager.

In England, Historic England is a statutory consultee and should be consulted in certain circumstances as detailed in Department for Communities and Local Government directives.

In Wales, Cadw is notified when a planning authority is minded to grant listed building consent for works to a category 1, 2* or 2 listed building

In Scotland, planning authorities consult Historic Environment Scotland before granting or refusing applications for listed building consent or conservation area consent. Planning authorities are required to notify Scottish Ministers where they are minded to grant consent for demolition of a listed building if Historic Environment Scotland has already objected. Historic Environment Scotland can take around 4 weeks to respond leading to a total LBC determination time of around 12 weeks.

Over half of all planning authorities have produced lists of buildings that are “locally listed” as being important features within their areas. Such designation requires no additional consents to be obtained for works, other than normal planning permission. Some buildings can be demolished without planning permission by utilising permitted development rights, subject to securing prior approval from the local authority, and local listing does not affect that. Locally listing applies only in England and Wales.



Image 2.2
Hebden Bridge signal box, Grade II listed



Image 2.3
Snodland signal box, Grade II listed

2.3 Upkeep of Listed Buildings



There is no legal obligation requiring the owners of listed buildings to maintain their property in a good state of repair. However, when listed buildings are not maintained local authorities can use a range of statutory enforcement powers to secure improvements to the building. These include:

- Urgent Works Notice – In England and Wales this allows a local authority to directly carry out works that are required urgently to make an unoccupied listed building weather tight and thus prevent further deterioration. In Scotland the provisions under the 1997 Act are to serve a Building Preservation Notice in the case of an unlisted building (effectively an emergency listing) or a Repairs Notice in the case of a listed building.
- Repairs Notice – a power that allows a local authority to specify to the owner works it considers reasonably necessary to secure the future of a listed building. If the repairs are not carried out, the power can lead to compulsory purchase of the building.

- S.215 notices – A requirement for the owner or occupier to carry out works to improve the external condition of a building or land if its neglect is adversely affecting the surrounding area. A similar provision of an Amenity Notice is available under S179 of the Scottish legislation.
- Compulsory Purchase Order – when all other measures fail, the local authority's last resort is to compulsorily acquire a listed building in order either to repair it itself or as more often is the case to sell it on to be restored by a buildings preservation trust or other new owner.



Image 2.4
Billingshurst signal box



2.4.1 Infringements

There are various penalties under criminal law for failure to follow the correct procedures.

Where unauthorised works to a listed building have taken place, or are continuing the planning authority may serve a listed building enforcement notice. In England and Wales conservation area enforcement notices also apply for buildings in conservation areas. These enable the planning authority to require remediation of unauthorised works to bring a building back to its former state. A notice can be issued at any time – even many years after the unlawful works were carried out.

Works that require but do not have planning permission can be stopped by 'stop notices'. Failure to adhere to a stop notice is itself a criminal offence. A 'temporary stop notice' may also be issued by a local planning authority to address some breaches of planning control. This requires that an activity which is a breach of planning control should stop immediately and the effect of the temporary stop notice is immediate.

Unauthorised works to Listed Buildings is a criminal offence, punishable by a possible unlimited fine and up to two years in prison. In addition in Scotland, depending on the powers used and offence committed, it is also possible for multiple Fixed Penalty Notices to be served ranging from £2,000 to £5,000.

2.4.2 Artefacts within Signal Boxes

The Railways Heritage Act 1996 as amended by the Railways Act 2005 sets the legal powers of the Trustees of the Science Museum Group to designate railway artefacts for preservation. The Trustees have appointed the Railway Heritage Designation Advisory Board to make recommendations on what should be designated. Network Rail has representation on this Board. The list of designated railway artefacts can be viewed on the Science Museum Web site.

Redundant Signal Box Strategy
Redundant Non-listed Signal Boxes

3



Image 3.1
Blea Moor signal box -
Signal box in a conservation area



Redundant Non-listed Signal Boxes

3.1 Signal box not in a Conservation Area



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3.1.1 Demolition

Where the signal box is not listed nor in a conservation area the preferred approach should be demolition, having secured any items protected under the Railway Heritage Act and having disposed of assets via Contracts & Procurement, either for re-use within Network Rail or for re-sale. Disposal of assets should be in accordance with Network Rail Standard NR/L2/SCO/306.

3.1.2 Permissions Required

There should be few, if any, signal box demolitions which require any notification to, or approval by, the planning authority under the planning regime: The majority are permitted development. However Network Rail follows Government best practice recommendations and the Project Manager should notify out of courtesy the local authority, via Network Rail Town Planning, of significant imminent permitted development works in its area.

3.1.3 Retention

If the local community wishes to re-use a non-listed signal box for community purposes then they should develop plans with Network Rail well before the signal box closes. As all signal boxes are to close discussion can then take place to start the process immediately. Any such plans should be developed in such a way as to relieve Network Rail of all maintenance liability for the signal box, and to minimise risk of any interference with the operating railway. Due consideration should be given to the impact, delivery and cost of asset protection. Re-siting a non-listed signal box would normally be at the cost of the local community group, and should be implemented at the time of the closure of the signal box, to prevent any operational risk to Network Rail property thereafter. Network Rail's cash contribution to such salvage schemes should be limited to the costs that it would have incurred for demolition.

3.1.4 Permissions Required

A planning permission for change to community or commercial use may be required and this should take 8 to 12 weeks to be determined.

3.1.5 Financial contribution from The Railway Heritage Trust

The Railway Heritage Trust cannot offer financial help for the retention of any such signal box, as non-listed buildings are outside its scope of operation. Locally listed buildings and structures are also outside the scope of the Railway Heritage Trust, which do not consider giving grants in such circumstances..



Image 3.2
Oddingley crossing signal box



Image 3.3
Roydon signal box

Redundant Non-listed Signal Boxes

3.2 Signal box in a Conservation Area



3.2.1 Demolition

It is Network Rail's policy to demolish and remove signal boxes as they close, thus reducing its maintenance liability. The Contents of the Signal Box should be treated in the same way for non-listed boxes which are not in a conservation area.

3.2.2 Permissions Required

In England and Wales Planning Permission should be granted in advance of any 'relevant demolition' within a Conservation Area. This is defined as the demolition of a building greater than 115 cubic metre, or to take down any wall, gate or fence which is less than 1 metre high where abutting a highway, or less than 2 metres high elsewhere.

In Scotland Conservation Area Consent is required for the complete or substantial demolition of a building which has a volume more than 115 cubic metres.

3.2.3 Alternative Uses

If permission is not granted to demolish a signal box in conservation area, alternative uses as described in section 4 of this document should be investigated. If the local community wishes to re-use a non-listed box in a conservation area for community purposes then they should follow the guidance in section 3.1.3.

3.2.4 Financial Contribution from RHT

Sponsors could consult the Railway Heritage Trust, who may be able to provide financial assistance for heritage elements of any work, in line with the options in section 4 of this document.

3.2.5 Retention

Where Network Rail cannot get permission to demolish signal boxes in conservation areas, and it is impossible to find another use for them by relocation or alternative use in situ, it is best to board up the signal box and to minimise maintenance only to steps that are necessary to avoid any risk to people that might be in contact with the building (i.e. responsibility under Health and Safety at Work Act 1974). However, any requirement for external maintenance should take into account reputational impact on Network Rail. The signal box should be maintained sufficiently to discourage vandalism, break-ins and graffiti attack.



Image 3.4
Fiskerton signal box

Redundant Signal Box Strategy
Redundant Listed Signal Boxes

4



Image 4.1
Shrewsbury signal box

Redundant Listed Signal Boxes

General Guidance



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A listed box remains part of the asset base, and Network Rail should maintain it as such, unless and until it can find another body to take on that responsibility.

Works to listed structures should generally require Listed Building Consent. Consultation with Network Rail's Town Planning team is recommended at an early stage. The team should provide advice on the planning strategy, information requirements and timescales, as well as undertaking pre-application discussion with the local authority and Historic England, Historic Scotland and Cadw where relevant. The Railway Heritage Trust are able to provide expert guidance, contact details are provided at the end of this document.

If a listed building is allowed to deteriorate, or if unauthorised works are undertaken, there is a reputational and financial risk to Network Rail.

The following pages identify six generic approaches to future use of a signal boxes after closure.

Redundant Listed Signal Boxes

Summary of Options

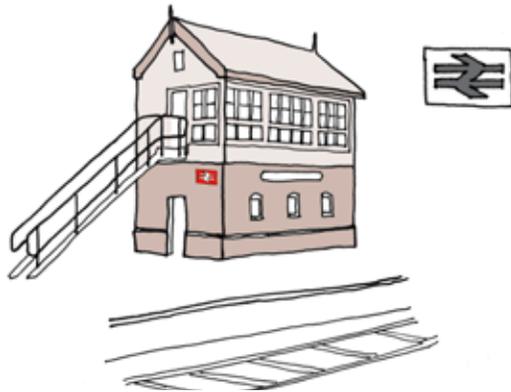


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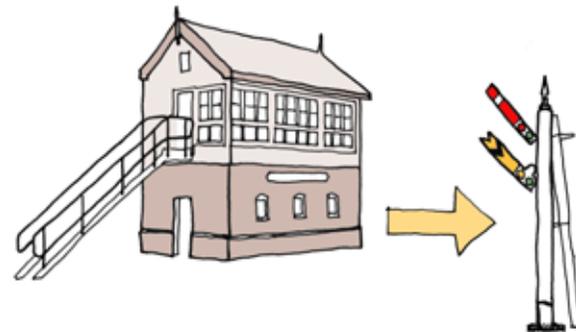
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Option 1



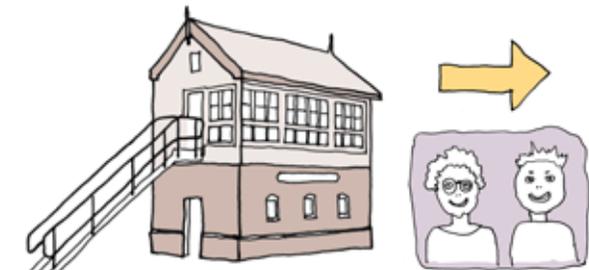
Signal box is retained for a new railway use

Option 2



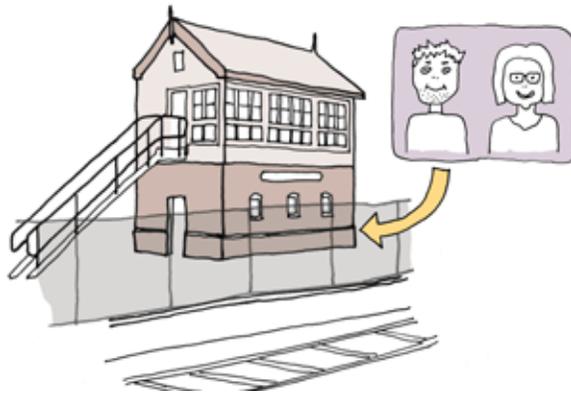
Relocation of Signal Box to a Heritage Railway

Option 3



Relocation of Signal Box for a Community Use

Option 4



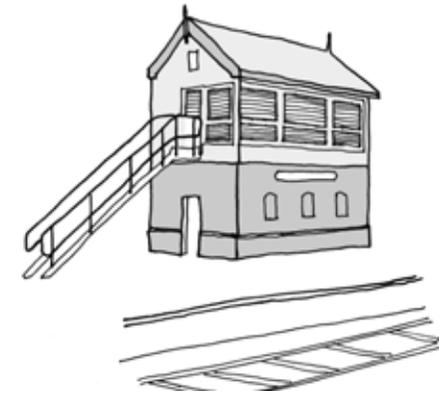
Finding a community use for the building in situ and separating the signal box from the operational railway

Option 5



Finding a community use for the building in situ whilst the signal box remains adjacent to the operational railway

Option 6



Signal box without access for community use, and cannot be relocated

Redundant Listed Signal Boxes

4.1 Option 1 - New Operational Use



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4.1.1 Signal box is retained by Network Rail for a new operational purpose

In some instances, the signal box may be re-purposed for railway uses other than signalling. Examples include where a signal box is adjacent to a station, and the signal box can be used for additional staff accommodation or operational uses.

Station Change would have to be agreed with the station operator for a signal box to become part of the station lease.

4.1.2 Permissions Required

As per section 2.2, Listed Building Consent may be required, dependent on if any physical works are proposed. In instances where the structure is also within a conservation area, planning permission should also be required or, Conservation Area Consent in Scotland.

4.1.3 Funding

Funding would be primarily through the Network Rail project that is instigating the change.



Image 4.2

Option 1 – Haltwhistle signal box,
which is now used as an office



4.2.1 Relocation of Signal Box to a Heritage Railway

The preferred option for Network Rail if a signal box is listed or is in a conservation area and cannot be demolished is to relocate it to a heritage railway to be used as a signal box there. A good example is the relocation from Portland Sidings to Holt (Images 4.3 and 4.4). Many types of signal boxes were designed to be relocated, and regularly were, and this solution allows the building to be seen as being used for the purpose for which it was designed. It could also permit public access to be allowed in controlled circumstances, in a way that is not possible on the main line system. The extent to which signal box superstructure and substructure is relocated should be determined by location and construction type.

This solution may not be possible if the signal box is listed as part of a grouping of buildings.

4.2.2 Permissions Required

The relocation is a form of demolition with respect to the original location. Therefore in such cases Listed Building Consent is required for demolition. In instances where the structure is also within a conservation area, planning permission should also be required or, in Scotland a Conservation Area Consent.

4.2.3 Funding

If this option were selected, the Railway Heritage Trust could normally fund the construction of a new base. This funding would be subject to Network Rail paying to dismantle the signal box and relocate the parts, including the frame, to its new home. It would then be up to the new owner to fund the rebuilding and fitting out of the signal box.

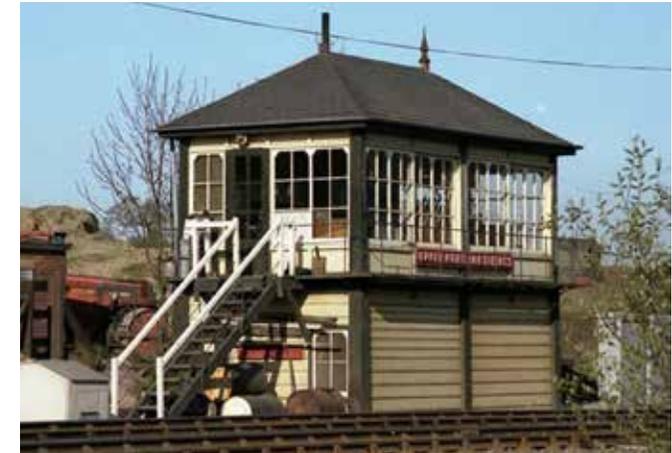


Image 4.3

Upper Portland Sidings signal box, prior to relocation



Image 4.4

Upper Portland Sidings signal box, relocated to Holt on North Norfolk heritage railway

Redundant Listed Signal Boxes

4.2 Option 2 - Relocated to a Heritage Railway



Image 4.5
Wroxham signal box after relocation. Members of the Barton House Railway set up the Wroxham Signalbox Trust to preserve and restore the signal box.



Image 4.6
Wroxham signal box - internal view



Image 4.7
Settle station signal box,
relocated away from railway



4.3 Option 3 - Relocated to Community



4.3.1 Relocation of Signal Box for a Community Use

If Network Rail cannot get a signal box moved for operational use on a heritage railway, it could be relocated to another site for community or museum use. The example of Barnham is illustrated by images 4.8, 4.9 and 4.10. This could be on a heritage railway or away from the railway altogether. This is a good choice for Network Rail, although it does not show the signal box in context in the way that option 2 does. This option could also include a private buyer, though this is less preferable than community uses. Re-siting should be implemented at the time of the closure of the signal box, to prevent any operational risk to Network Rail property thereafter.

4.3.2 Permissions Required

The relocation is a form of demolition with respect to the original location. Therefore in such cases Listed Building Consent is required for demolition. In instances where the structure is also within a conservation area, planning permission should also be required or, in Scotland a Conservation Area Consent.



Image 4.8
Removal of Barnham signal box for relocation



Image 4.9
Barnham signal box in transit

4.3.3 Funding

If this option were selected, the Railway Heritage Trust could normally fund the construction of a new base. This funding would be subject to Network Rail paying to dismantle the signal box and relocate the parts, although it may not include for the relocation of the frame, to its new home. It would then be up to the new owner to fund the rebuilding and fitting out of the signal box.



Image 4.10
Barnham signal box relocated, situated on new base



4.4.1 Finding a community use for the building in situ and separating the signal box from the operational railway

If Network Rail cannot move the signal box off site, can it be fenced off from the operational railway, or otherwise separated from it, so that the building can be placed on a long-term lease, (or ownership of it transferred) to a body that can use it without interfering with the railway. To achieve this the distance between the box and the nearest running line should be such that a scaffold can be erected between the fence and the box, and there should be sufficient space between the fence and the running line to provide a place of safety outside the area defined as 'on or about the running line'. The Route Asset Protection team can give guidance on what is an acceptable distance to the fence line for a particular location.

For this solution to work there should be a degree of physical separation between the operational railway and the signal box. Fencing is normally necessary

Very rarely it may be possible to sell the signal box and the land on which it stands. Any sale of currently operational land should require demonstration to the Office of Rail and Road that the land should never be used for railway purposes again, and such permission should only be given in exceptional circumstances.

Additionally, for the land to be sold it should be directly accessible to and from the public highway without crossing any Network Rail land.

4.4.2 Permissions Required

Listed Building Consent may be required for any works within the curtilage of the listed structure (for example new fencing). In Scotland listed building consent is only required for works to the listed building which also affects its character – and not for works in the curtilage. However these types of works may require planning consent.

4.4.3 Funding

The Railway Heritage Trust may give a grant to support the restoration of heritage features of a listed signal box that is to be retained in situ and leased in its entirety, provided that it has a new sustainable use.



Image 4.11

St Albans South Signal Box, Grade II listed, retained for community use on original site

Redundant Listed Signal Boxes

4.4 Option 4 - Fence off for Community Use

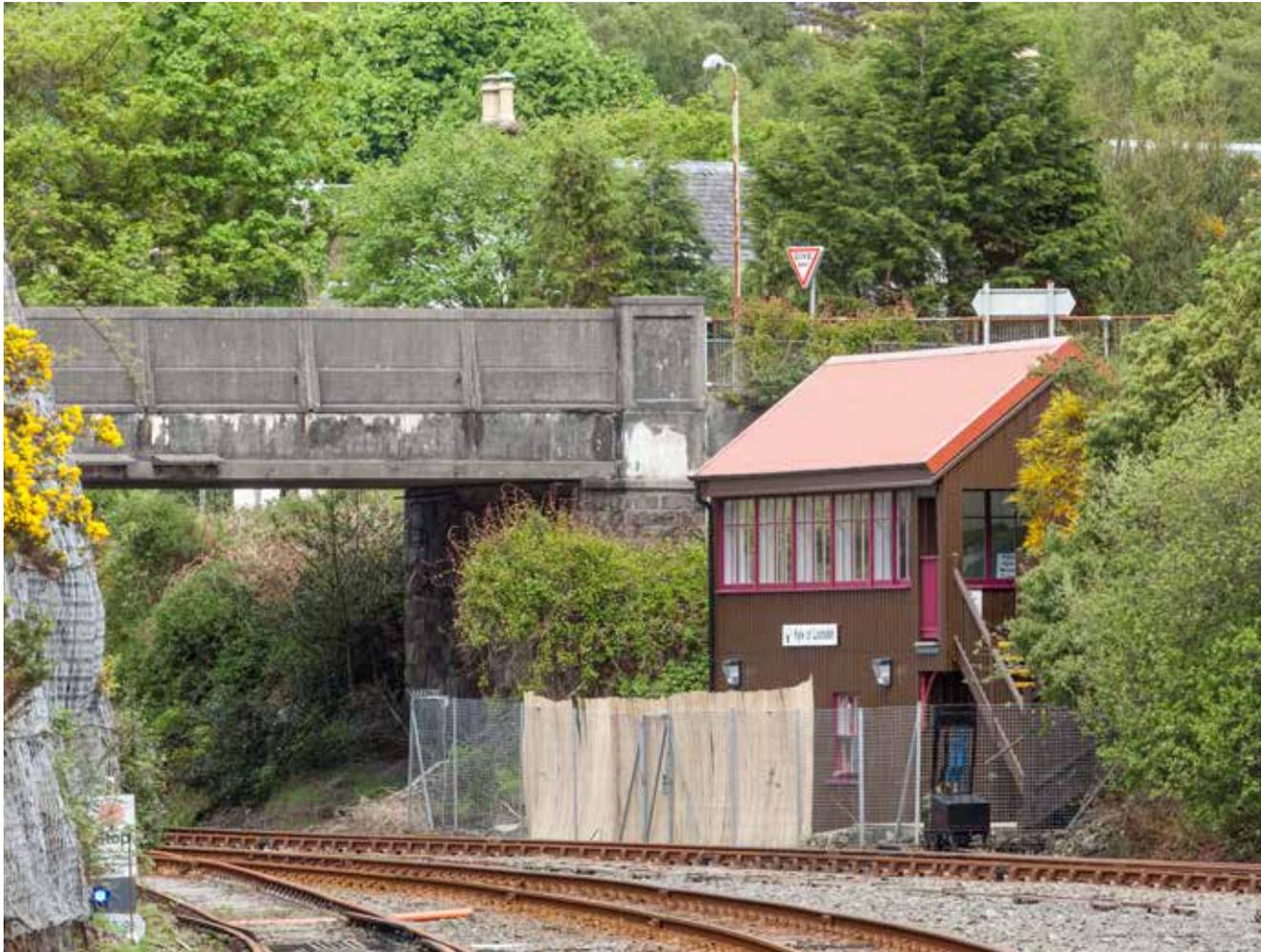


Image 4.12
Kyle of Lochalsh signal box - the ground floor provides holiday accommodation



Image 4.13
The first floor is used as a model railway exhibition centre



Image 4.14
Ground floor holiday accommodation view



4.5.1 Finding a community use for the building in situ whilst the signal box remains adjacent to the operational railway

If Network Rail cannot move the signal box off site, or safely fence it off from the operational railway (see 4.4.1), and a safe public access to it is feasible, then it may be possible to lease the interior for a community use to a body that can use it without interfering with the railway. The example of Totnes is shown in image 4.15.

A signal box at the back of a station platform may be suitable for this approach, and in that case it may be possible to transfer the signal box into the station lease.

Where the signal box is adjacent to operational tracks this option does not require the same degree of physical separation of the signal box from the operational railway that option 4 does, although fenced separation of the building users from the track is required, unless on a station platform. For example, the fencing may run from the corners of the box nearest to the tracks, rather than between the box and the tracks. In this case it would be necessary to secure closed all the windows on the box facing the running line. The Route Asset Protection team can give guidance on what is acceptable for a particular location.

Network Rail or station facility operators should recognise that they should be committed to carrying out exterior maintenance to the signal box for the indefinite future, which may well involve working under possession.



Image 4.15

Totnes station signal box — repurposed as a cafe

4.5.2 Permissions Required

Listed Building Consent may be required for any works within the curtilage of the listed structure (for example new fencing). In Scotland listed building consent is only required for works to the listed building which also affect its character – and not for works in the curtilage. However these types of works may require planning consent.

4.5.3 Funding

The Railway Heritage Trust may give a grant to support the restoration of the interior heritage features of a listed signal box that is to be retained in situ under Network Rail maintenance, provided that it has a new, sustainable, use. Maintenance of the exterior of the signal box would not attract support from the Trust as the building is part of Network Rail's funded asset base.

Redundant Listed Signal Boxes

4.5 Option 5 - Leasing for Community Use



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Image 4.16
Aberdour signal box was restored as artist's private ceramics studio in Spring 2017. The project took place under ScotRail's adoption scheme.



Image 4.17
First floor view at Aberdour



Image 4.18
Ground floor view, with kitchen beyond stairs to first floor.



4.6.1 Signal Box without access for community use, and cannot be relocated

If Network Rail cannot get the signal box off site or get public access for a new use on site, the signal box should be mothballed in such a way that it minimises the rate of deterioration and the likelihood of vandalism. This should be the last resort.

To mothball the signal box, Network Rail should do the following:

- As part of the project, Network Rail should remove any non-structural signal box instruments and other mobile kit such as fridges and stoves immediately on closure. Heritage signalling instruments are irreplaceable operational equipment that should be retained for re-use on remaining signal boxes (including on heritage railways): in addition they are highly valued and easily stolen, so leaving them in the signal box is inviting a break in and theft. With the agreement of the Local Authority's Conservation Officer, external items such as the name sign could be stored inside the building in a suitable secure container.
- As a minimum, the frame, shelf and levers, should be retained as they are part of the structure.
- Some fixtures and fittings, particularly the block instruments, bells and track panel may be part of the listing. The listing criteria should be checked, and fixtures and fittings should ideally be agreed with the conservation officer before removal of certain equipment. At Lincoln High Street signal box the Block Instruments were removed with dummy equipment put in its place.
- All incoming services should be cut off outside the building, both to avoid risk of flooding or a gas leak in the building leading to catastrophic damage, and to discourage break ins for squatting purposes;
- Wherever possible, asbestos should be removed to standard *NR/L2/CIV/168*— it may be necessary to consult the local authority about this;
- Clean the signal box out to prevent vermin infestation — remove all papers, carpets, food;
- With agreement from the local authority, get rid of portaloos, non-heritage outbuildings and redundant location cabinets, to minimise vandalism risk and maintenance issues.
- If the signal box is listed, re-paint its exterior, plus repair any rotten timber work, as part of the project, so that the building is in good state when it is returned to the RAM (Buildings). At the same time all rainwater goods should be in good working order. If a box lies in conservation area but is not listed, repainting is not obligatory.

4.6.2 Permissions Required

Mothballing may require Listed Building Consent depending on type of works. This work should be agreed via Town Planning as conservation officers may take a view that some of these elements (particularly signage) may be part of the box

4.6.3 Funding

The Railway Heritage Trust is very unlikely to support mothballing works on a listed signal box, as this concerns the maintenance of an existing infrastructure asset, and does not enhance the heritage features of it.

Redundant Listed Signal Boxes

4.6 Option 6 - Signal Box Closed off



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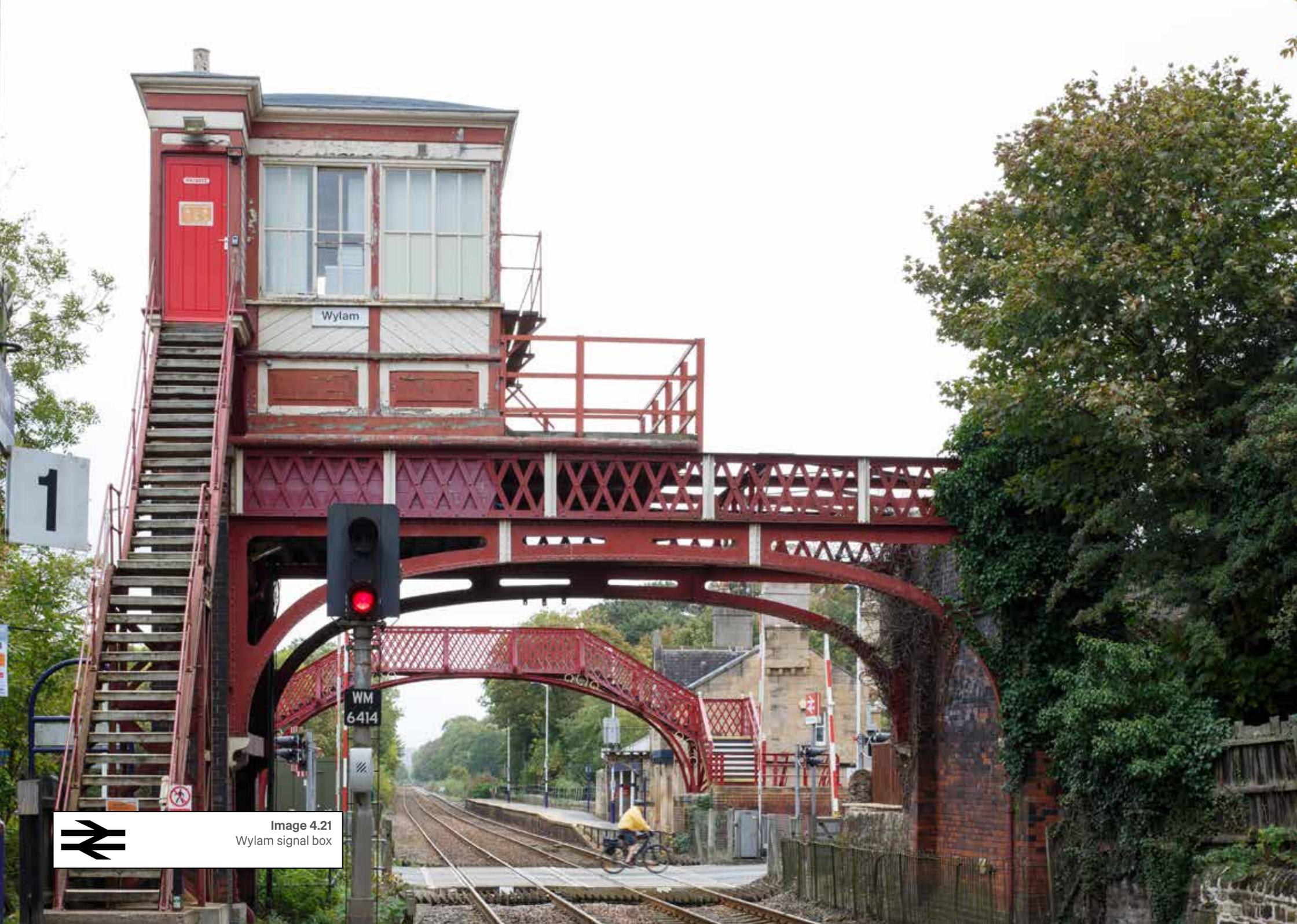
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Image 4.19
Canterbury East signal box. This signal box is difficult to provide a new use for owing to its location, and has been mothballed.



Image 4.20
Anti-vandalism measures at Canterbury East. This is a typical example of what may be considered, but a more bespoke solution may be needed at some sites. At East Holmes signal box, black grilles were required as a planning condition.



1

Wylam



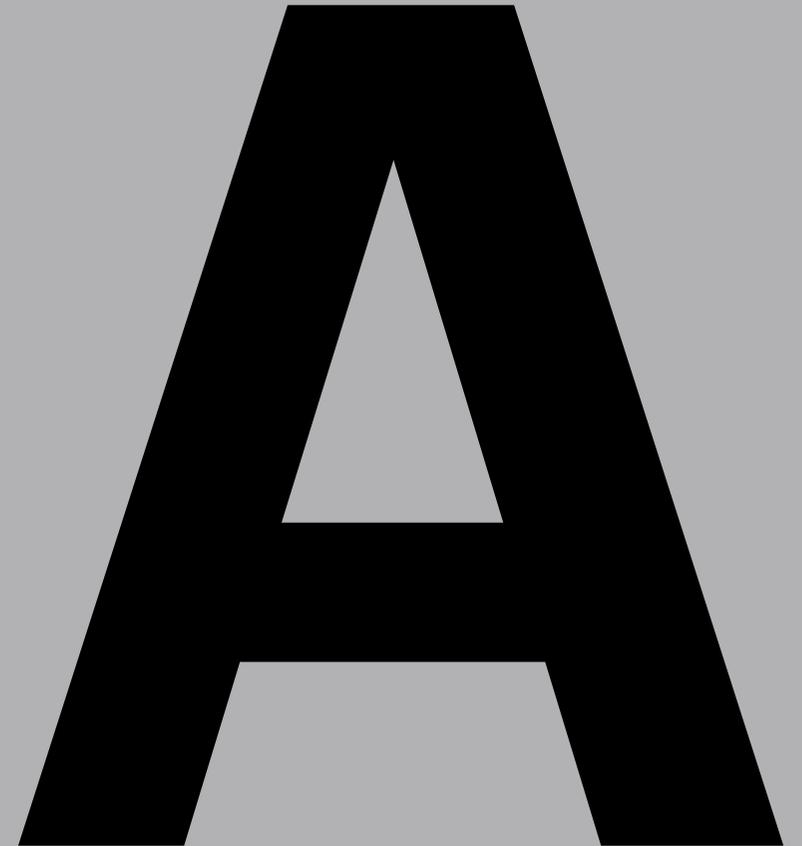
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Image 4.21
Wylam signal box

Document References

Redundant Signal Box Strategy
Acknowledgements and Image Credits





Network Rail would like to thank the Railway Heritage Trust for its input to this document, To Andy Savage for wrting the first draft and to Paul Childs for providing photographs.

The RHT can be contacted for advice about particular boxes, and to discuss potential grants, by email at rht@railwayheritagetrust.co.uk

www.railwayheritagetrust.co.uk

The initial version of this document was greatly influenced and shaped by Network Rail's principal architect Nick Shaw who tragically passed away just before its publication.

This document was produced on behalf of Network Rail by Weston Williamson + Partners.

Inside Cover Images

Front Bedale signal box
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Back Levers at St Albans signal box
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Standards, Guidance, Legislation

Redundant Signal Box Strategy
Relevant Standards and Guidance

B

Appendix B

Relevant Standards and Guidance



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Related policies and guidance

*Network Rail
Sustainability Measurement and Assessment
Requirements for Network Rail Buildings Technical
Services (Buildings and Architecture)*

*Network Rail
Sustainability Charter Draft] Property*

*English Heritage
Vacant Historic Buildings: An owner's guide to
temporary uses, maintenance and mothballing*

*English Heritage
Transport Buildings Selection Guide, March 2007*

*English Heritage
Railway Signal Boxes: A Review, John Minnis, Research
Report Series no. 28-2012*

*Network Rail
Heritage: Care and Development manual
NR/GN/CIV/100/05*

Related standards

*Network Rail
Asbestos Management
NR/L2/CIV/168*

*Network Rail
Disposal of Redundant Assets
NR/L2/SCO/306*

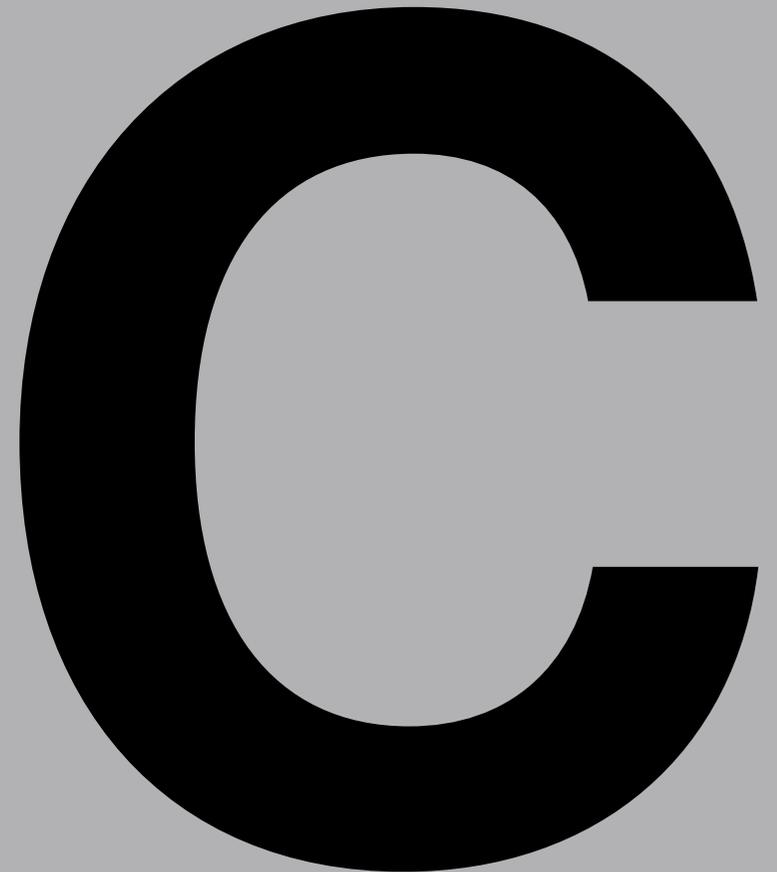
The Health and Safety Executive
Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

**For dated references, only the edition
cited applies.**

**For undated references, the latest
edition of the reference (including any
amendments) applies.**

Processes

Redundant Signal Box Strategy
Options Comparison



Appendix C

Options Comparison



	Accountability	Maintenance	Inspections	Utilities
Operational	HOO	Works Delivery Unit	RAM (Buildings)	Maintain all required services
Demolition	Project	Remove from Ellipse Remove from Opas	Remove from Opas	Disconnect Incoming Services. Final meter reads & remove meter
Option 1 Signal box is retained for a new railway use	Accountable Manager for user	Remove from Ellipse – Update Opas – Works Delivery to undertake PPM	RAM (Buildings) – Update Opas with new status	N/A
Option 2 Relocation of Signal Box to a Heritage Railway	Project	Remove from Ellipse	Remove from Opas	Disconnect Incoming Services. Final meter reads & remove meter
Option 3 Relocation of Signal Box for a Community Use	Project	Remove from Ellipse	Remove from Opas	Disconnect Incoming Services. Final meter reads & remove meter
Option 4 Finding a community use for the building in situ and separating the signal box from the operational railway	Property	Remove from Ellipse	RAM (Buildings) – Update Opas with new status Remove from Opas	Final meter reads & transfer meter
Option 5 Finding a community use for the building in situ whilst the signal box remains adjacent to the operational railway	Property	Remove from Ellipse. Works Delivery to do external maintenance	RAM (Buildings) – Update Opas with new status Remove from Opas	Final meter reads & transfer meter
Option 6 Signal box without access for community use, and cannot be relocated	Project to mothball, then RAM Buildings	Remove from Ellipse – Update Opas – Works Delivery to undertake PPM	RAM (Buildings) – Update Opas with new status	Disconnect Incoming Services. Final meter reads & remove meter



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