

# Case Name: Alton Railway Station and Footbridge

## Case Number: 1418860

## Background

English Heritage has received an application to consider the footbridge at Alton Railway Station for listing. Given the close relationship of the station buildings and footbridge, all will be considered within the assessment.

## Asset(s) under Assessment

Facts about the asset(s) can be found in the Annex(es) to this report.

Annex	List Entry Number	Name	Heritage Category	EH Recommendation
1	N/A	Alton Railway Station and Footbridge	Listing	Do not add to List

## Visits

Date	Visit Type
27 January 2014	Partial inspection

## Context

The footbridge has been identified by National Rail as being in poor condition and is unlikely to be retained in the long term. A secondary footbridge has recently been erected on the station.

The station lies outside the Alton Conservation Area.

## Assessment

### CONSULTATION

The applicant, the local authority, the Historic Environment Record (HER), and Network Rail, the owner of the site, were invited to comment on the facts of the case.

Network Rail responded to the consultation with a detailed account of the changes that have been made to both the station and the footbridge, and highlighting the poor condition of the footbridge. The alterations are assessed with the discussion, below. Condition is not a consideration that can be taken into account.

Network Rail disputes the date of the bridge, and suggests that it was probably constructed in the 1940s or '50s, based on a historic photograph alleged to date from 1938. The bridge dates from 1891: archival evidence records the order by the LSWR General Manager for a footbridge to be provided. In 1894 and 1896 the Traffic Committee ordered the enclosure of the sides and the glazing (SW Circular Vol 14 No 4 October 2007). Additionally, Ordnance Survey maps from 1896, 1910, and 1937 depict the bridge.

Responses were also received from the HER and the applicant, but specific comments on the report were not made.

### DISCUSSION

As outlined in the Principles of Selection for Listing Buildings (March 2010), stringent selection should be applied to buildings which post-date 1840. English Heritage's Selection Guide for Transport Structures (April

2011) provides context and specific considerations for the building type, and explains that railway buildings from the 1860s onwards were built, and subsequently survive, in great numbers, and hence require great selectivity for listing. Architecture and design quality, technical or construction interest, date and extent of alteration will be key issues for consideration.

The station is a small, modest building. It is an attractive, symmetrical composition, though the original design and detailing have been eroded by the cumulative effect of modernisation and refurbishment; chimney stacks, fireplaces, windows, doors, the ticket office and toilets all have undergone alteration. It is certainly a pleasant building, but is indistinct from numerous other railway stations of the period.

The principal shelter on Platform 2 is, likewise, a pleasant example, but is somewhat lost amongst the extensions.

The footbridge is a later feature of the station and is the sole survivor of 26 timber bridges erected by the LSWR. The choice to build in timber rather than iron was an economic one and the result was a limited lifespan for the structures; that this one survives is likely to be down to the enclosure of the superstructure with panelling and glazing; the panelling, incidentally, has been replaced in parts. Its rarity as a timber railway footbridge is of some interest, however, it is also a reflection of the fact that these were cheap, make-do structures whose fitness for purpose was limited to a relatively short period. The rarity of the material itself is not of such special interest to merit listing; the bridge would also need to be architecturally accomplished, technologically innovative, or of superior construction quality, and to be unaltered. It is, however, a standard and functional design and is without cohesion with the associated railway structures in terms of design detailing.

The bridge has been identified as in a poor condition and National Rail is unlikely to retain it in the long term. Though not in possession of the levels of special interest necessary for listing the station and footbridge are of clear local interest: the station forms the terminus of the Watercress Line heritage railway. The loss of the bridge would be regrettable, but listing, in this instance, is not appropriate.

## CONCLUSION

After examining all the records and other relevant information and having carefully considered the architectural and historic interest of this case, the criteria for listing are not fulfilled. Alton Railway Station (1865) and footbridge (1891) are therefore not recommended for listing.

## REASONS FOR DESIGNATION DECISION

Alton Railway Station (1865) and footbridge (1891) are not recommended for listing, for the following principal reasons:

- \* Date: a great quantity of railway structures remain from the 1860s; Alton is not distinguished in design, construction or as a complete ensemble;
- \* Alteration: continued modernisation has eroded the architectural detail of the station buildings, and extension has overwhelmed the original group;
- \* Architectural interest: the structures do not have the high levels of architectural quality to distinguish them as being of special architectural interest.

## Countersigning comments:

Agreed. We have carefully considered the case, and the claims that the bridge dates from the mid-C20. Although the structures form a strong entity, the station building is not of sufficient interest to provide the core to the group. The bridge is of undoubted interest as the sole survivor of its type to be built by the LSWR, but this is not sufficient for it to merit listing in a national context. P Trevor 17.3.14

## Second Countersigning comments:

Agreed also. Both the station and footbridge (both of C19 date despite Network Rail's claims for a later date for the bridge) are of local interest but in the context of railway buildings nationally fall short of the mark for statutory listing.

V. Fiorato, 26th March 2014

# Annex 1

## Factual Details

**Name:** Alton Railway Station and Footbridge

**Location:** Alton Railway Station, Station Road, Alton, Hampshire, GU34 2PZ

County	District	District Type	Parish
Hampshire	East Hampshire	District Authority	Alton

## History

A railway station was first built to serve the Alton line between Alton and Farnham in 1852. The Alton, Alresford and Winchester Railway (later Mid-Hants) company extended the line to Winchester, and in 1865 opened the new line and replaced the existing station. The latter section of line was closed in 1973 but now operates as a heritage line as far as Alresford.

The present station underwent at least three phases of development. In the first, two platforms, the main station building, and a waiting room were built, and to this were added a covered footbridge connecting the platforms in 1891, a shop, and further canopied structures on platform two, in place by 1896. In 1894 and 1896 the Traffic Committee also ordered the enclosure of the sides and the glazing of the bridge (SW Circular Vol 14 No 4 October 2007). A second set of tracks, and a third platform came into use in the early C20, and a further lean-to extension was added to the rear of the shop.

## Details

Railway station, 1865 with later additions, and footbridge, 1891, serving the Alton line.

**MATERIALS:** the station is constructed from buff-coloured brick and has slate roofs. Canopies are of cast iron and timber construction, and the footbridge is timber with metal beams, braces and joints.

**PLAN:** the train line runs from north-east to south-west; the main station building and platform one are to the west, and platforms two and three to the east. The main station building is rectangular in plan, and has a central ticket hall, lavatories to the south and a ticket office to the north; a rectangular extension to the north houses a shop. Canopies run the length of each building covering the platform.

On platform two there are four discrete structures: a waiting room and three canopied shelters; all are rectangular in plan and adjoin each other along the platform.

The footbridge has a U-shaped plan, with stairs running north and turning 90 degrees to cross the track.

**ELEVATIONS:** the station is a single-storey building of three bays. The entrance is on the west elevation which is a roughly symmetrical arrangement with projecting bays to either side and a central doorway beneath a fretted timber canopy. The left has a one-over-one sash, and blind window. The right also has a sash, and two slim casements; all openings have gauged brick lintels. There are modern lanterns fixed to either side of the doorway. Shaped timber corbels support the roof, which is slate with hipped ranges to the end bays; it has two truncated brick chimney stacks. The east elevation facing onto platform one has a central doorway flanked by sashes, and there are tripartite sashes on either side.

The shop is timber-framed and weather-boarded. It has sliding shutters and match-boarding on the platform elevation.

Timber canopies run the length of each building above the platform, and are supported on square section timber posts with chamfered corners.

On platform two there is a brick structure, formerly a waiting room, to the north; it has four bays separated by brick pilasters, each has a one-over-one sash window with gauged brick lintels. It has a flat roof with parapets to the ends. Fretted canopies cantilever over platforms two and three on either side.

To the south of platform two is a timber-framed rectangular shelter. Posts with cast iron brackets support the pitched roof; the gables are weather-boarded and the structure is partially enclosed by corrugated sheeting.

A covered footbridge adjoins the platforms one and two. It has a timber superstructure with iron bracing; it is clad in match-boarding and has fixed casements. There is shaped timber eaves detailing and a shallow arched roof in corrugated sheeting. It is match-boarded internally, and has timber stairs and banisters.

Monopitched canopies occupy the gaps between the bridge and the brick and timber shelters on either end of platform two. Like the other canopies, they have timber posts with iron brackets.

INTERIORS: the ticket hall has moulded timber architraves to the doors and windows, deep skirtings and dado rail, and a simple cornice and ceiling rose. The detail continues in the lavatories and ticket office.

### **Selected Sources**

M. Hutson, Crossing the Line on the LSWR, Historical Model Railway Society Journal, Vol 15 1996  
The Historical Society for the London & South Western Railway, South Western Circular, Vol 14, October 2007  
Geoffrey Body, Railways of the Southern Region, 1984

**Map****National Grid Reference: SU7234139702**

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