

The Settle - Carlisle Railway Conservation Area (SCRCA) Historic Structure Recording Project
Information to aid the evaluation of Settle Station Signal box for national listing (case no. 475359)

1: Age and rarity

<p>1.1: When was the structure constructed / manufactured / installed? (State the 'railway era' in all cases and the precise date if it is known).</p>	<p>Network Rail's signal box database¹ states that Settle Station Signal box was built in 1891 and that it contains a manually operated 20-lever-frame (details not known). Gough (1989)² states that it opened on 12/4/1891. Anderson & Fox (1986)³ gives the year of opening as being 1891 and states that the box contained a "20 lever tumbler frame". If these sources are correct, Settle Station Signal box is the seventh oldest Midland Railway signal box listed in the N.R. database and the oldest signal box remaining within the SCRCA. It was manufactured / constructed by the Midland Railway Company (or its sub-contractors) during the Midland Railway Operational phase (1st January 1877 to 31st December 1922). For information on the frame, see ⁴).</p>
<p>1.2: Is the structure a rare surviving example of its 'type'? (Consider this question at international, national, regional and local levels.)</p>	<p>Network Rail's signal box database¹ states that this structure is a "Midland 2a" signal box and lists a total of eleven surviving structures of this type nationally. The other ten are located outside the SCRCA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alstone Crossing (Western) = owned by Network Rail, in operational use Church Lane Crossing = preserved and operational at Peak Rail Langham Jtn (East Mids) = owned by Network Rail, in operational use Keighley Station Jtn (LNE) = owned by Network Rail, out of use Masingham = privately owned and at a private location, out of use Sleights Sdgs East = preserved on the Embsay Steam Railway, out of use St Albans (South East Mids) = owned by Network Rail, out of use Thrapston = current location & ownership not know, out of use Wennington Jtn = current location & ownership not know, out of use Wingland = privately owned and at a private location, out of use <p>A side-by-side comparison of all the signal boxes remaining within the SCRCA can be downloaded from: http://www.foscl.org.uk/node/1035 and additional photographs of the remaining SCRCA signal boxes are available in the relevant Structure Summaries, all of which can be accessed via: http://www.foscl.org.uk/scrca-structure-list-public-2. Useful explanations of the different types of Midland Railway signal boxes are available from: http://www.derby-signalling.org.uk/MR_types.htm http://www.midlandrailway-butterley.co.uk/signal_boxes/typesofbox.html</p>
<p>1.3: Is this structure 'type' likely to become rare in the next five to ten years (e.g. due to changes in technology)?</p>	<p>Probably. In the Autumn of 2011, Network Rail announced plans to dramatically streamline traffic management on the National Rail Network. At the heart of these plans is a project to replace more than 800 signal boxes with just 14 "state-of-the-art rail operating centres". 80% of Britain's signal boxes are expected to be operationally redundant by 2026.</p>
<p>1.4: If the structure was built / installed before 1st Jan 1923 (the pre-grouping era), does it survive in anything like its original external condition?</p>	<p>Yes. It has been restored to near original external appearance. The corner posts are originals, although replacement sections have been spliced-in at the bottom of some to replace rotten sections. The roof has been stripped and re-built, but most of the slates are the originals. A few sections of rotten weather-boarding have been replaced, but most is original. The steps, however, are a modern reproduction. A series of photographs of this structure is available at http://www.foscl.org.uk/content/scrca/structure_summaries/760.</p>
<p>1.5: If the structure was built between 1st Jan 1923 to 31st Dec 1947 (the LMS era), does it retain the majority of its original features?</p>	<p><i>Not applicable.</i></p>
<p>1.6: If the structure was built between 1st Jan 1948 to 31st Mar 1993 (the BR era), is it of sufficient quality to distinguish it from similar surviving buildings / structures from this period located elsewhere in the country?</p>	<p><i>Not applicable.</i></p>

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1.7: If the structure was built after 31st Mar 1993 (the modern era), is it a building / structure of exceptional quality and / or a particularly innovative design?	<i>Not applicable.</i>
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2: Architectural interest

2.1: Is the building / structure part of a collection or group that all adhere to a similar historic architectural style / design?	<p>Yes. Much of the heritage value of the SCRCA arises from the remarkable survival of a large number railway-related structures from the Midland Railway era. The majority of these are distributed in a series of discrete clusters, linked by the railway line they were built to serve.</p> <p>Network Rail's signal box database¹, lists 93 remaining signal boxes of Midland Railway origin representing 12 standard MR design-types (along with two non-standard designs). Eight of these (covering four of the standard design-types) are located within the SCRCA:</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">Hellifield South Junction</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">Midland Railway type 4c</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">built 1911</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">Settle Junction</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">Midland Railway type 4c</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">built 1913</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">Settle Station</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">Midland Railway type 2a</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">built 1891</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">Garsdale</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">Midland Railway type 4c</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">built 1910</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">Culgaith</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">Midland Railway type 4a</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">built 1908</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">Armathwaite</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">Midland Railway type 2b</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">built 1899</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">Low House Crossing</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">Midland Railway type 2b</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">built 1900</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">Howe & Co.'s Siding</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">Midland Railway type 4a</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">built 1916</td> </tr> </table> <p>All but one of these (Howe & Co.'s Sidings) are located within one of the discrete 'clusters' of heritage buildings, thereby both adding to, and benefiting from a significant degree of 'group value' at a local level, as well as adding to the "Midland Railway feel" of the SCRCA as a whole.</p> <p>Two of these Midland Railway design signal boxes - Settle Station (MR2a) and Armathwaite (MR2b) are already operationally redundant and have since been restored by the Friends of the Settle-Carlisle Line. Both of these structures are now operated as museums dedicated to Settle-Carlisle Railway signalling.</p>	Hellifield South Junction	Midland Railway type 4c	built 1911	Settle Junction	Midland Railway type 4c	built 1913	Settle Station	Midland Railway type 2a	built 1891	Garsdale	Midland Railway type 4c	built 1910	Culgaith	Midland Railway type 4a	built 1908	Armathwaite	Midland Railway type 2b	built 1899	Low House Crossing	Midland Railway type 2b	built 1900	Howe & Co.'s Siding	Midland Railway type 4a	built 1916
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2.2: Is it a particularly fine, relatively unaltered example of a standard historic architectural style / design?	<p>Don't know. Settle Station signal box is certainly an example of a standard historic design (a "Midland Railway type 2a" signal box), of which there are only eleven surviving examples (see 1.2 above). Recent photographs of all ten would need to be obtained to facilitate an assessment and comparison. A series of photographs of Settle Station signal box can be reviewed at http://www.foscl.org.uk/content/scrca/structure_summaries/773.</p>																								
2.3: Is it an example of a style of building that is unique to and / or unique within the SCRCA?	<p>No. It is a standard Midland Railway Company design. Network Rail's signal box database¹ contains eleven remaining examples of "Midland type 2a" signal boxes in the UK (see 1.2 for details), although Settle Station signal box is the only one of the type located within the SCRCA.</p>																								
2.4: Is it a good early example of a new / innovative building type or construction technique?	<p>No. Settle Station signal box opened on 12/4/1891, but the Midland Railway Company had been constructing modular signal box 'kits' to standard designs in its purpose-built factory in Derby since the 1870s. The technique was first used on the type 1 boxes: the type 2 boxes are simply a later development of this already well-proven modular construction process.</p>																								
2.5: Has the building / structure received a national or international award or received national or international recognition for its design, construction / installation, or renovation / repair?	<p>Yes. In 2008 "The Westinghouse Signalling Award was presented to Friends of the Settle Carlisle Line for Settle Station signal box" (one of the National Railway Heritage Awards).</p>																								



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2.6: Was the building / structure designed or built by a nationally or locally important architect, builder, crafts-person, etc?	No.
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3: Historic interest

3.1: Is the building / structure part of a collection or group that collectively illustrate a key facet of economic, industrial, social, or cultural history?	Yes, no, and maybe. The Settle-Carlisle Railway was the last of the great British railway routes to be constructed without the aid of heavy earth-moving machinery. It has been billed as the last ‘hand-built’ railway and wealth of primary-source reference material (including contemporary newspaper accounts, parliamentary records, plans, etc), survive to tell the story of its construction. The corporate and political machinations that led to it being built, together with the subsequent fight to save the line from closure in the 1980s, have elevated the line to almost legendary status. However Settle Station signal box dates from a re-signalling exercise undertaken almost fifteen years after the line was constructed. It does not, therefore, add to the construction story. While the Midland Railway Company operated the line for 45 years, very little remains within the SCRCA from this ‘operational’ period. The most notable remnants of the MR operational period are the eight signal boxes listed in 2.1 above (which includes Settle Station signal box), and the almost continuous set of distance-markers (a.k.a. mileposts) located at quarter-mile intervals along the full length of the SCRCA. The question that needs to be considered at a national level is: does any other section of railway in the UK have a better ‘group’ of in-situ Midland Railway structures dating from both the construction and operational phases of a Victorian-era railway? Unfortunately, the author does not have access to the information required to answer this question.
3.2: Is it a particularly fine example of a building / structure that illustrates a key facet of economic, industrial, social, or cultural history?	Yes. Manual signalling is set to become obsolete on the National Rail Network and the non-operational but restored Settle Station signal box is currently used as a museum and interpretation centre, focussing on manual signalling generally, and signalling on the Settle-Carlisle Railway in particular.
3.3: Does the building / structure illustrate a once common activity or process that has since become rare or ceased to exist?	Yes. See 3.2 above.
3.4: Is the building / structure associated with a particularly interesting or important historical figure?	No.
3.5: Did the building / structure play a significant part in the fight to save the Settle to Carlisle railway line from closure during the 1980’s?	No, but . . . Its relocation, restoration and subsequent use as a museum do illustrate what can be achieved by railway professionals and Friends of the Settle-Carlisle Line volunteers working together to achieve a common goal.
3.6: Does the building / structure have any other significant historical associations?	No.
3.7: Is the history and interpretation of the building / structure enhanced by the existence of a significant contemporary or historic written record?	Yes. A vast quantity of both primary and secondary reference material relating to the Settle-Carlisle railway is available.

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<p>3.8: Is the structure part of a group or cluster of structures that, taken together, tell a significant part of the Settle-Carlisle Railway story (e.g. the line's original construction and / or its historic operation)?</p>	<p>Yes. The history of Settle Station signal box to some extent mirrors the history of the Settle-Carlisle Railway as a whole. The current structure dates from 1891 and is an early of the Midland Railway Company's network-wide re-signalling exercise of the 1890s. Settle Station signal box was closed on 13th May 1984 as the line was being run-down for closure. To allow the redevelopment of the old goods yard area, it was relocated overnight on 14th / 15th June 1997, restored by Friends of the Settle-Carlisle Line volunteers, and is now run as free museum and interpretation centre.</p> <p>Settle Station signal box is the oldest of the thirteen signal boxes still standing between Hellifield South Junction and Carlisle. Together, these structures chart more than a century of signal box design, from a relatively early example of standard Midland Railway design (Settle Station, built in 1891) to the Portacabins of Kirkby Thore (installed in 1994). A side-by side comparison of all the signal boxes remaining within the SCRCA can be downloaded from: http://www.foscl.org.uk/node/1035).</p>
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4: Aesthetic merits and visual value

<p>4.1: Does the building / structure reflect local building styles, use local materials or display any other distinctive local characteristics – i.e. does it contribute to a 'sense of place' or of 'local identity'?</p>	<p>No: Quite the opposite: it is a standard corporate design, example of which were once common across much of the British Isles.</p>
<p>4.2: Does it contribute to the overall appearance and / or amenity of the local area?</p>	<p>A personal opinion = yes. It forms part of an attractive group of ex-Midland Railway structures, all centred on Settle Railway station. It also houses a signalling museum that is open to the public on a regular basis, thereby adding to the attractiveness of the station area for tourists and other visitors.</p>
<p>4.3: Does it contribute significantly to the 'character' (i.e. the overall look & feel) of the SCRCA?</p>	<p>A personal opinion = yes. Its standard Midland Railway Company design fits-in with, and supports the overall Midland Railway theme that is central to the Settle-Carlisle Railway Conservation Area. At a more local level, it forms an integral part of a tight cluster of railway-related structures associated with Settle station.</p>
<p>4.4: Does it enhance, or markedly contrast with, the natural landscape in which it sits?</p>	<p>No. It is located within an urban environment.</p>
<p>4.5: Is the building / structure a notable / iconic 'landmark' – either during a railway journey through the SCRCA, or when viewed from publicly accessible locations in the wider landscape?</p> <p>4.5.1: Does it help rail passengers ascertain their current location during a journey on the railway?</p> <p>4.5.2: Is it a prominent or dominant feature in the landscape when viewed from a distant road, footpath, hill-top, etc?</p> <p>4.5.3: Is it considered to be 'iconic' for some other reason?</p>	<p>No.</p>
<p>4.6: Is there anything else that marks-out this building / structure as being worthy of special protection - i.e. anything else that means it might warrant national listing, local listing, conservation in-situ and / or removal and preservation elsewhere?</p>	<p>No. (At least, not that I have identified so far.)</p>

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5: Education, leisure and general ‘heritage’ value

5.1: Does the structure (or group of structures) offer significant scope as an educational resource?	Significant = no. Modest but worthwhile = yes. See 3.2 and 4.2 above.
5.2: Does the structure have potential for public interpretation?	Yes. It is already used as a museum and interpretation centre - see 3.2 and 4.2 above.

6: Practical considerations (including safety, condition, cost, accessibility and visibility)

<p>6.1: Is the structure sufficiently distant from operational railway lines to enable it:</p> <p>6.1.1: to be safely accessed, used, and maintained?</p> <p>6.1.2: to minimise all potential risks to the operational railway?</p>	Yes. It was relocated specifically to ensure that it meets all of these criteria.
6.2: Is the structure itself suitable for practical re-use, either for its original purpose, or for some other purpose (e.g. conversion to residential, commercial, or leisure use)?	Yes. It is already used as a museum and interpretation centre.
<p>6.3: Can the structure be accessed safely and legally:</p> <p>6.3.1: on foot for detailed evaluation, conservation, restoration and / or maintenance activities?</p> <p>6.3.2: on foot by the proposed new ‘occupants’ (including members of the public where appropriate)?</p> <p>6.3.3: by road? (Consider proximity to and access from a public road, any restrictions affecting vehicle size or weight, and the availability of (or the feasibility of providing) safe and secure parking facilities.)</p> <p>6.3.4: by rail? (The SCRCA is effectively a linear heritage trail and the public train service provides a physical link between ‘groups’ of heritage structures at, and immediately adjacent to, each of the ‘open’ stations. The use of these train services is not only appropriate in terms of the context of the SCRCA, it is also highly desirable on environmental grounds.)</p>	Yes. It was relocated specifically to ensure that it meets all of these criteria.
6.4: Is it likely that funding and other resources will be available to conserve, maintain, staff and / or interpret the structure in the short- or medium-term?	Yes. The signal box is operated as a working museum, maintained and staffed by a small but dedicated group of friendly and knowledgeable volunteers (many of whom are ex signalmen) under the auspices of the Friends of the Settle-Carlisle Line. Although no charge is made for admission, visitors are asked to make a donation to help support the maintenance and development of the museum. To date, these donations have been sufficient to cover required expenditure but, should the need arise, it is highly likely that grants could be obtained from FoSCL and possibly other organisations.

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6.5: Is there a strategy for securing the structure's future in the longer term?	Yes. See 6.4 above.
6.6: If safety issues and / or a lack of viable re-use options rule-out restoration or conservation in-situ, is relocation a feasible alternative to demolition? (Consider cost, the availability of an alternative site and the potential for a viable and valuable re-use as well as all the practical aspects of turning the idea into a reality.)	Not applicable. It has already been relocated, its current site appears secure for the foreseeable future, and it is already used as a museum and interpretation centre.

¹ Network Rail's signal box database was posted (in the form of a downloadable Excel spreadsheet) on <http://www.networkrail.co.uk/community/interest-groups/signalling-heritage/> on 18/2/2013.

² Gough, John: "The Midland Railway - A Chronology", The Railway and Canal Historical Society (1989)

³ Anderson, V.R. & Fox, G.K.: "A Pictorial Record of Midland Railway Architecture", Oxford Publishing Company (1985)

⁴ The signal box still contains a 20-lever 'tumbler' type frame, but the 'tumbler' interlocking mechanism was completely removed at some point prior to the box being acquired for preservation. Tappet-style interlocking has subsequently been installed within the frame for five of the levers and this allows three signals (a home, distant and MR ground); a turnout (with 'economical facing-point lock') and a detonator placer to be operated for demonstration purposes. The long-term objective is to re-fit MR tumbler-style interlocking to the first ten levers and MR tappet-conversions to the remainder.

Full details of the Settle - Carlisle Railway Conservation Area (SCRCA) Historic Structure Recording Project can be found on the Friends of the Settle-Carlisle Line Website at: <http://www.foscl.org.uk/content/scrca-project-introduction>.

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