

# Thame Lane Bridge (DCL5657)

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## Official list entry

Heritage Category:**Listed Building**

Grade:**II**

List Entry Number:**1409238**

Date first listed:**17-Jul-2012**

List Entry Name:**Thame Lane Bridge (DCL5657)**

Statutory Address 1:**Thame Lane Bridge, Thame Lane, Culham, Oxfordshire**

This List entry helps identify the building designated at this address for its special architectural or historic interest.

Unless the List entry states otherwise, it includes both the structure itself and any object or structure fixed to it (whether inside or outside) as well as any object or structure within the curtilage of the building.

For these purposes, to be included within the curtilage of the building, the object or structure must have formed part of the land since before 1st July 1948.

### Understanding list entries

(<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/understanding-list-entries/>)

### Corrections and minor amendments

**(<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/minor-amendments/>)**

## Location

Statutory Address:**Thame Lane Bridge, Thame Lane, Culham, Oxfordshire**

The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County:**Oxfordshire**

District:**South Oxfordshire (District Authority)**

Parish:**Culham**

National Grid Reference:**SU5282496056**

## Summary

A flying segmental arch road bridge, spanning a shallow cutting.

## Reasons for Designation

Thame Lane Bridge is designated at Grade II for the following principal reasons: \* Selectivity: rare, flying segmental arch road bridge designed by Brunel; \* Date: 1843-4, for the Didcot-Oxford line, laid out by Brunel shortly after the main line; \* Design, engineering and material interest: well-preserved, elegant, Brunel period bridge of unusual design, built of handmade brick; \* Historic interest: early subsidiary line, built under Brunel, giving GWR access to the Midlands; \* Group value: contributes to a cluster of well-preserved Brunel structures on the Didcot -Oxford line that includes Culham Station (Grade II\*) and Appleford Bridge (Grade II).

## History

The railway line from Didcot to Oxford was built in 1843-4. It was planned as part of a larger project give the Great Western Railway access to the West Midlands, in rivalry to the London & Birmingham Railway. In the event, although it reached Oxford in 1844, the line did not reach Birmingham until 1852. The 13 mile route from Didcot was built to the broad (7ft 0¼) gauge and had stations at Appleford and Abingdon Road (later Culham). The engineer was Isambard Kingdom Brunel (1806-59): it is not known who the Resident Engineer was.

Thame Lane bridge was built c. 1843-4 as part of the construction of the line. There have been no major works or alterations since then. A 1983 proposal to reconstruct the bridge with a concrete arch was not carried out.

Thame Lane Bridge is an unusual form, being one of a small number of flying segmental arch road bridges designed under Brunel on early GWR lines. Although common nationally, single arch bridges are less common than the larger triple arch bridges on GWR lines. This is one of a small number that survive on the Didcot-Oxford line and of these Appleford Bridge and Culham Bridge are the standard, semi-elliptical form usually favoured by Brunel.

## Details

**MATERIALS:** largely original handmade red brick, laid in English bond, but with some later patching. Parapet coping is limestone.

**DESCRIPTION:** the arch has a span of approximately 48ft [15m] and springs from concrete or concrete faced brick footings raked flush with the embankment sides. Bridge elevations gently curve out towards terminating piers. Stepped string course and parapets.

This is one of only a handful of flying arches designed under Brunel on early GWR lines.

## Sources

## Books and journals

Bourne, J C, The History and Description of the Great Western Railway, (1846)

Brindle, S, Cruickshank, D, Brunel: The Man Who Built the World, (2005)

Cross-Rudkin, P, Chrimes, M, EDS, Biographical Dictionary of Civil Engineers Volume 2: 1830–1890, (2008)

MacDermot, E T, A History of the Great Western Railway, (1927, revised ed. 1964)

Pevsner, N, Bradley, S, Tyack, G, The Buildings of England: Berkshire, (2010)

Pugsley, A, The Works of Isambard Kingdom Brunel, (1976)

Vaughan, A, A Pictorial Record of Great Western Architecture, (1977)

## Other

Alan Baxter & Associates, The History and Significance of the Great Western Main Line , 2012,

Kinchin-Smith, R, Crossrail Technical Assessment of Historic Railway Bridges , 2005,

## Legal

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.



## Map

This map is for quick reference purposes only and may not be to scale. This copy shows the entry on 17-Mar-2025 at 13:12:17.

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