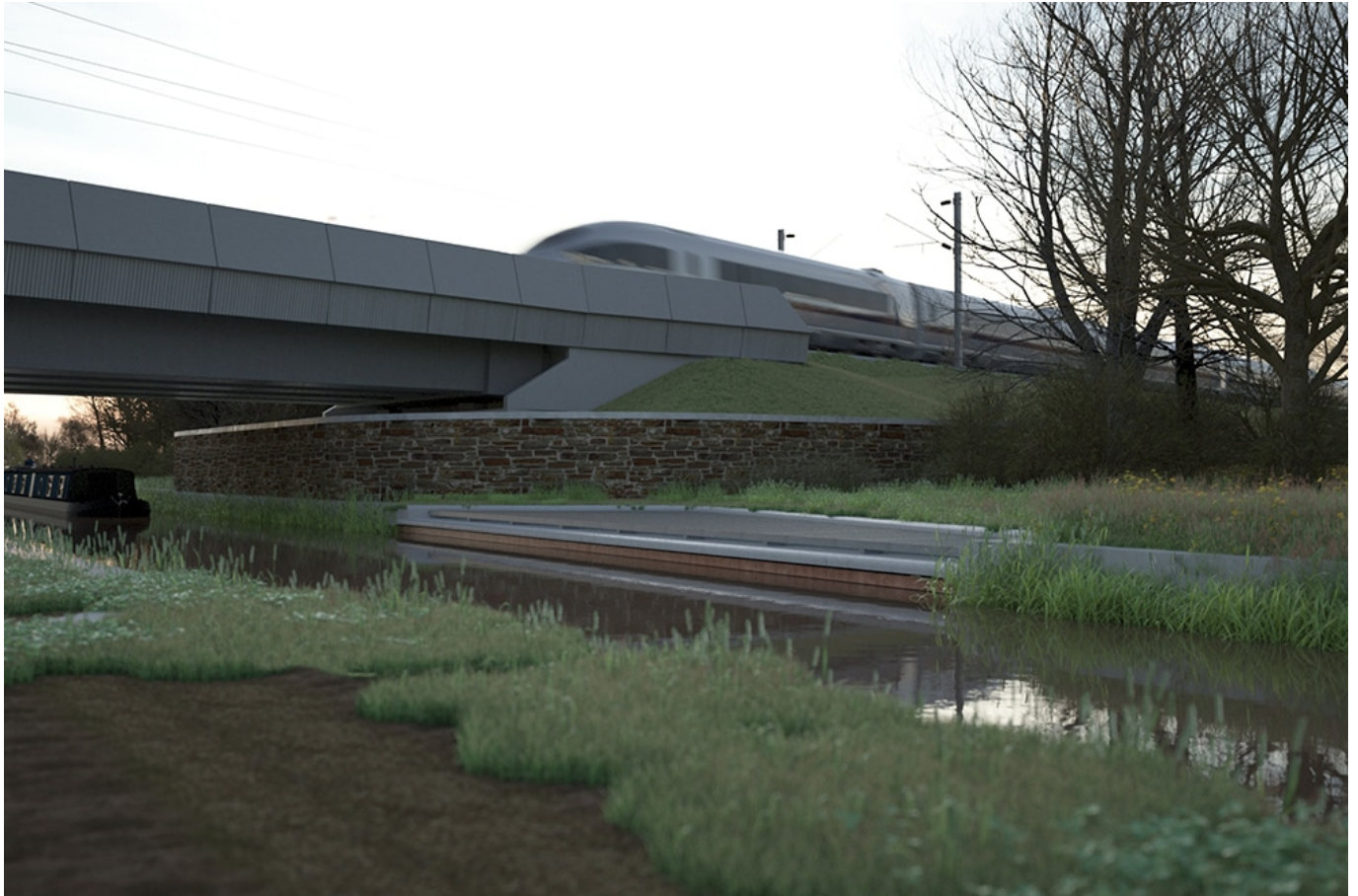


# HS2 reveals Warwickshire 'ironstone' finish for new Oxford Canal Viaduct

February 15, 2023



HS2 says that traditional Warwickshire 'ironstone' will be used to clad the piers supporting the high speed railway's new Oxford Canal Viaduct as a nod to the canal's architectural heritage after engaging with the local community.

Set low in the landscape, three concrete spans will carry the railway 62.5m across the canal, towpath and a country lane near the village of Wormleighton close to the border between Warwickshire and West Northants.

Local ironstone will be used to face the piers and abutments that face onto the towpath and passing canal boats. Tough and hardwearing, the warm-brown stone been a feature of local buildings for hundreds of years and gets its name from the small quantities of iron ore contained within it.

As part of the design process, local residents were given a choice of smooth concrete finish or a rough-cut masonry finish for the viaduct piers – with the majority opting for ironstone.

As well as using local stone, the viaduct has been designed to be as open as possible to improve the

environment for boaters and walkers, allowing views across the landscape and the horizon. The design combines a simple overall form with a special focus on materials for the parts of the structure that are close to the canal and its visitors.

Opened in stages between 1774 and 1790, the 75 mile long Oxford Canal is one of the oldest in Britain and was designed to bring coal from the Coventry coalfields to Oxford and the River Thames.

HS2 Ltd's Senior Project Manager, Paul Cooper said: "The construction of the first canals revolutionised transportation and helped to build the country we live in today so it's fitting that our contemporary design includes a nod back to those eighteenth-century pioneers.

"Once complete, HS2 will transform journeys across the UK, help to boost the economy and support the UK's transition to net zero. But it's also important that key structures like the Oxford Canal Viaduct are sensitive to their location, which is why we were keen to involve the community in key decisions, like the design of the viaduct piers."

Construction of the HS2 project – which is designed to improve rail links between London, Birmingham and North, help level-up the economy and provide a zero carbon alternative to car and air travel – is ramping up across the UK with almost 30,000 jobs now supported by the project.

The Oxford Canal Viaduct is one of 15 viaducts and bridges across the central section of the HS2 route which is being designed by HS2's main works contractor EKFB – a team made up of Eiffage, Kier, Ferrovial and Bam Nuttall – working with architects Moxon and design partners ASC – a team made up of Arcadis, Setec and Cowi.

EKFB's Interface and Stakeholder Director, Simon Matthews said: "The Oxford Canal You Said We Did community event is a prime example of how HS2, EKFB and its designers worked alongside the local community to further enhance the exterior appearance of the viaduct's supporting piers and abutments.

"The local stone detail reflects the canal's original architectural characteristics which enriches and remains in keeping with its surrounding area.

"EKFB is pleased with the outcome from the community event and thanks the community for its input and support."

More information about the design can be found [here](#).

*Photo credit: HS2 Ltd*