

**6. FULL APPLICATION - CHANGE OF USE OF FORMER STATION BUILDING FROM OFFICE AND WORKSHOP TO VISITOR INFORMATION POINT AND CAFÉ. EXTENSION TO CAR PARK. STATION CAR PARK UNNAMED ROAD FROM GLEBE FARM TO B6049, MILLERS DALE (NP/HPK/0518/0407)**

**APPLICANT: PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**

**1. Site and Surroundings**

- 1.1. The former Millers Dale Station site is located in open countryside on the Wormhill Road which rises up from the valley bottom beneath the viaduct. The site sits on a level area of land and includes the car park and surviving station buildings and platforms. The Monsal Trail crosses the site along the route of the former railway.
- 1.2. The site is located within the designated Millers Dale Conservation Area. The viaducts are located to the east of the station, North Viaduct is Grade II listed and South Viaduct is Grade II\* listed. The former station is not listed but does form part of the Historic Buildings, Sites and Monuments Records.
- 1.3. The site is located outside of but adjacent to the Peak District Dales Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the Wye Valley Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The site is located within the Limestone Dales Landscape Character Area for the purposes of the Authority's Landscape Character Assessment.
- 1.4. Much of the former station infrastructure has been demolished and only the booking office remains fully intact currently and is utilised by the National Park Authority as offices, workshop with public toilets. The goods shed walls are also still standing but are in a state of dereliction and the structure has no roof.
- 1.5. The nearest neighbouring property is Station House which is located to the north of the site in an elevated position and shares access with the car park. Station house is a private dwelling which also operates a tea garden which is open to the public. A separate public footpath runs up and around Station House and runs westwards above the application site.

**2. Proposal**

- 2.1. It is proposed to change the use of the former station building from office and workshop to a visitor information point and café together with an extension to the car park.
- 2.2. The plans show that the existing public toilets would be unchanged and that the café would provide up to 44 covers within the building, along with associated kitchen and counter and storage and a toilet for staff. Four benches would be provided on the platform adjacent to the café to provide additional outside seating.
- 2.3. To facilitate the proposed change of use, various other elements are proposed. New doors are proposed on the platform side to facilitate access and escape. New windows are proposed to replace existing infill boards with slim-profile double glazing. A vent is proposed on the car park facing elevation.
- 2.4. Outside of the former station building a biomass heating system is proposed within the tool shed. The fuel store for the biomass heating system would be sited underground with a metal hopper above ground. The flue would run up the inside wall of the engine shed and terminate 0.9m above it.

- 2.5. An underground grease separator is proposed in the position of the existing sewage treatment plant which is to be removed and replaced with a new underground plant connected to a new soakaway by existing drainage pipework which runs beneath the platforms. An area for bins is shown designated adjacent to the station building.
- 2.6. The car park is proposed to be extended beyond the walls and gate which currently form the western edge of the existing car park. The amended plans show that a total of 15 spaces would be provided in this extended area and that the spaces would be surfaced to match the surface of the trail.
- 2.7. The existing gate would be removed and the northern part of the boundary wall shortened to provide access into the enlarged car park. The end of the extended car park would be defined with fencing and a gate.
- 2.8. The amended plans show that the existing car park would be re-configured to provide a total of 107 spaces (including the proposed extension), four of which would be designated for use by disabled persons. The existing car park for comparison has a total of 83 spaces, four of which are designated for use by disabled persons. Therefore an increase of 24 spaces is proposed.

### **3. RECOMMENDATION**

**That the application be APPROVED subject to the following conditions:**

- 1. Statutory time limit for implementation.**
- 2. Development to be carried out in accordance with specified approved plans.**
- 3. Extended car park to be surfaced, laid out and available for use prior to the first use of the café hereby approved.**
- 4. Provision of space within site for site accommodation, storage of plant and materials, parking and manoeuvring of site operative's and visitor's vehicles together with the loading / unloading and manoeuvring of goods vehicles to be submitted and approved and thereafter maintained throughout duration of construction works.**
- 5. Submission of revised detailed design drawings for new window and door frames.**
- 6. Submission of scheme for secure cycle parking to be installed prior to the first use of the café hereby approved.**
- 7. Submission of scheme for bat and bird boxes to be installed prior to the first use of the café hereby approved.**
- 8. Submission of full details of extraction vent prior to installation.**
- 9. No external lighting other than in accordance with approved scheme.**
- 10. Fuel hopper to be finished dark green to match submitted specification and permanently maintained.**
- 11. Flue to be finished matt black at the time of erection and permanently maintained.**
- 12. Extended car park to be surfaced with material to match the adjacent trail and shall be permanently so maintained.**

**13. No outside seating shall be provided other than in accordance with approved plans.**

**14. Restrict use of café to Use Class A3 only.**

**15. Restrict hours of opening of café to 09:00 – 17:00 on any day.**

**16. Package treatment plant and soakaway to be installed prior to the first use of the café hereby approved.**

**17. Development shall be carried out in complete accordance with the ‘Potential impacts and recommendations’ section of the submitted ‘Brief ecology survey report’ dated 26<sup>th</sup> April 2018.**

#### **4. Key Issues**

- Whether the proposed development is acceptable in principle.
- Impact of the proposed development upon the historic, archaeological and architectural significance of the former station, the designated Millers Dale Conservation Area and the setting of the nearby viaducts.
- Impact of the proposed development upon the landscape, ecological interest on the site and the adjacent designated sites.
- Impact of the proposed development upon highway safety and the amenity of neighbouring properties and road users.

#### **5. Relevant Planning History**

- 5.1. 2004: Planning permission granted on a temporary basis for siting of mobile refreshment vehicle.
- 5.2. 1992: Planning permission granted unconditionally for car park extension.
- 5.3. 1982: Planning permission granted conditionally for public toilets, ranger base, car park and septic tank.
- 5.4. 2018: Pre-application discussions were held between Development Management, and Visitor Experience Development and Property, which included input from colleagues in Ecology, Built Environment, and Landscape to ensure that the scheme properly addressed the interests on site and the wider planning policy aspirations of the National Park.

#### **6. Consultations**

- 6.1. Parish Council: Object to the proposed development.
- 6.2. Pleased to see recognition that this is a neglected building that forms an important and significant heritage asset situated in a Conservation Area. However, Parish Council do not agree with the proposed change of use into a cafe.
- 6.3. The location has reached vehicle saturation point to the extent that local communities are blighted throughout the summer months with visitors searching for places to park. Millers Dale cannot absorb any more vehicles. The proposal to increase car parking is totally inadequate and will not cater for an increase in visitor numbers by the proposal. This will not accommodate visitors to the café who will not use the trail or additional users who choose to start their trip at the site because of the café being located on site.

- 6.4. Cars parked on the highway create an obstruction due to the width of the highway and lack of pedestrian path. Local farmers using tractors and trailers are often obstructed. Photographs have been submitted by the Parish Council taken at the Bank Holiday Weekend (27<sup>th</sup> May 2018) which show a number of cars and vans parked on the east side of the highway outside of the site down to the B6049.
- 6.5. District Council: No response to date.
- 6.6. Highway Authority: Raises no objection to the development subject to conditions and makes the following comment:
- 6.7. *"The former railway station is a well-used public car park providing access to a multi-user trail and surrounding countryside. The former railway buildings have toilets and a number of uses. The proposals are to create a café in the buildings and extend the car park. The applicant will need to consult with the relevant refuse collection department to ascertain details of what will be acceptable to them in terms of number and location of bins. Bin storage should not obstruct the private access, parking or turning provision. Additionally a bin dwell area should be provided clear of the public highway, private access, parking and turning for use on refuse collection days. The Highway Authority does not consider that the impact of the development would be such that would justify refusal. Therefore, subject to the inclusion of conditions in any consent given there are no objections from a highway point of view."*
- 6.8. Following the above response Officers queried the proposed number of spaces within the extension to the car park with the Highway Authority and received the following additional response.
- 6.9. *"Having visited the site on numerous occasions throughout the year and at different times of the day have always found it to be at or close to capacity.... The former office/workshop area is 86m<sup>2</sup> and based on the proposed conversion to visitor information point and café this Authority's former standards would suggest 22 spaces as being appropriate for the proposed café use. There seems to be no information available regarding the visitor information point which may attract vehicle trips in its own right."*
- 6.10. *This Authority would not wish to see any parking on the adjacent highways and therefore the layout submitted including remodelling of existing car park to increase provision and the provision of... new spaces seems appropriate from a highway point of view."*
- 6.11. Natural England: No response to date.
- 6.12. PDNPA Archaeology: Raises no objection and makes the following comments:
- 6.13. *"The site of the proposed development is a site of historic and archaeological interest, and is a non-designated heritage asset. It is recorded with the Peak District National Park's Historic Building Sites and Monuments Record (MPD3633) and the Derbyshire Historic Environment Record (MDR2012) as the remains of an elegant Midland Railway Station with purpose built post-office."*
- 6.14. *Miller's Dale station was constructed in 1862, opened in 1863, built on a wide ledge terraced from the hillside. It originally comprised two platforms, a main station building and an adjacent good shed. The station developed over time with the addition of a loading dock, cattle shed, coal offices, weigh office, additional sidings, waiting rooms, a subway etc. Due to congestion problems with freight and passenger services, parliamentary approval was granted for the construction of Miller's Dale loop (which created fast and slow lines through the station in both directions). This involved the construction of a second viaduct, the*

demolition of the main buildings and goods shed and cutting back the hillside for the new tracks, buildings and goods yard. These improvements took place between 1902 and 1906, and the completed station had five platforms. The station closed to goods traffic in August 1966 and to passengers in March 1967. Today the site is currently an important access point on to the Monsal Trail comprising a pay and display car park, former railway booking office building, derelict goods shed, façade wall believed to have supported a platform canopy and station platforms.

- 6.15. *The remodelling of the site since the 1960s has resulted in a significant number of the station buildings being demolished, but despite this the site retains legibility as a former railway station and sidings. The plan-form, design and style of the surviving station buildings are clearly part of the design aesthetic common to buildings of the period across the Midland Railway network, and are clearly legible in their function and purpose. The platforms that remain extant are a clear reminder of the historical function, and although now forming part of the car park, the position of the former sidings are still apparent. It is this legibility, along with the association with the nearby listed viaducts, which forms the core significance of the site.*
- 6.16. *The site has archaeological interest due to the chance for surviving buried remains of the arrangement of the early 20th century station layout and the earlier station layout (position of sidings, platforms, buildings etc.). However, it must be acknowledged that all the infrastructure of the sidings are likely to have been removed as part of the re-commissioning of the station, that the remodelling of the site since the 1960s will have affect the potential for undisturbed remains of the former line to survive, and the remodelling in the early 1900s affect the likelihood that traces of the former station layout survive.*
- 6.17. *The proposed development involves the change of use of the former station buildings to a café, which necessitates the removal of part of an original wall; a small extension to the car park into the area of one of the former sidings; underground drainage, feed to the biomass boiler, sewage treatment plant and grease separator.*
- 6.18. *The removal of a small section of original wall will result in minor harm to significance of the former station building with the removal of part of its original fabric. However, the core significance of the site in its design, materials and legibility of the former plan will be retained. The creation of the car park extension will require only minimal groundworks and no additional drainage, and due to previous surfacing and use of the area, are unlikely to cause harm to archaeological remains. The groundworks for the installation of the sewage treatment plant, the grease separator and the new underground drainage and feed to the biomass boiler are all located close to the station and former good shed buildings, and in the built up area of the former platform, and therefore unlikely to encounter remains of archaeological significance.*
- 6.19. *None of these impacts will affect the core significance and legibility of the affected heritage assets. Furthermore, the proposed development offers considerable scope for enhancement of the historic interest of the site, with increased scope for interpretation to enhance peoples' enjoyment, appreciation and understanding of the site."*
- 6.20. PDNPA Conservation Officer: No objections subject to details, makes the following comments.
- 6.21. *"The building proposed for use as a visitor café is the former railway booking office, one of the few structures remaining from the Midlands Railways Station at Millers Dale. Constructed between 1902 and 1906, the building is unlisted, but is a non-designated heritage asset.*
- 6.22. *The proposed works will take place within the shell of the original building, with no new external openings proposed. Existing windows and doors will be refurbished, with glazing to*

*windows reinstated; glazing to the upper sections of the principal entrance doors is the main alteration. Internally, a section of one of the partition walls is to be removed, in order to create a larger area for the café and ease circulation, an existing WC within the east bay will be enlarged slightly and new partition walls will be added to the central bay in order to create a kitchen.*

- 6.23. *Although some minor harm to the historic significance of the former station building will result from these alterations, the 3-bay plan form of the interior will remain largely intact, and the general refurbishment of windows and doors should result in an enhancement, subject to the details outlined below (which could be conditioned).*
- 6.24. *We need clarification that slim profile (rather than standard) double-glazing is to be installed in the windows, and whether this is to be installed to all windows (i.e. replacing existing glazing as well as where new frames are required). The existing, traditionally profiled glazing bars are slender, and standard double-glazing would not be appropriate.*
- 6.25. *We should see details, to scale, of any new/replacement windows or sections of windows, as the profile of the existing frames and glazing bars must be retained (these details could be conditioned).*
- 6.26. *The existing external doors are not plain boarded.... They have the proportions of a 4-panelled door, with vertical boards infilling the panels (3 narrow boards to each panel). These original doors should be retained as they are, repaired (like-for-like) as necessary. If any of the doors are beyond repair (which did not appear to be the case when I visited site), then any new doors must match the existing exactly.*
- 6.27. *The proposed glazing to the pair of doors at the main entrance needs to be amended. Each door has the same 4-panelled form described above, which must be retained. Removing the vertical timber boards to the upper 2 panels and glazing these will retain the original proportions of the door; the bottom of the glazing will then align with the bottom of the glazing to the windows on this elevation, which will retain the balance of the elevation...*
- 6.28. *We should condition details to show the external appearance of extract vents (from the cooker and the WC).*
- 6.29. *Original stone setts remain to the former station platform. These should be retained. We should see details to show how the proposed ramp to allow disabled access to the café will be implemented (the stone threshold to the entrance doorway should be retained).*
- 6.30. *Lighting should also be controlled by condition."*

PDNPA Ecology: Is happy with the recommendations put forward to safeguard protected species and habitats and non-designated features. Suggests inclusion of the following conditions:

- The measures put forward in the Ecology Survey Report (dated 26<sup>th</sup> April 2018) must be followed.
- Prior to the start of the development, a scheme providing details of additional nesting and roosting habitat for bats and birds on the application site must be submitted to and approved in writing by the PDNPA Ecologist. Thereafter, the development shall be carried out in complete accordance with the approved scheme.

6.31. PDNPA Tree Officer: No response to date.

## **7. Representations**

- 7.1. A total of six letters from individuals have been received to date including a letter from the Friends of the Peak District. One letter is in support of the application, one of the letters does not object to the development but make general comments and four of the letters object to

the development or raise concerns. The comments and material planning reasons for support and objection are summarised below. The letters can be read in full on the Authority's website.

7.2. Support

7.3. The proposal will stimulate the tourist industry in the area in a manner wholly sympathetic to the local environment and will also serve to heighten the interest in the heritage of the site.

7.4. General comments

7.5. Recommend that additional measures are taken to ensure that the ecological interests of the surrounding area are not damaged including tool box talks for contractors, involve an ecologist in the works involved in the restoration of the soakaway, ensure that the roof space remains suitable for bats, look at the potential for remote cameras in the roof space for use in interpretation.

7.6. The existing female toilets should be expanded as there are frequently queues.

7.7. Objection

7.8. Concern the proposal will lead to additional pressure on the natural environment particularly wild flowers that grow around the station and the nearby Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

7.9. Concern that the proposal will cause increased disturbance of wildlife particularly the colony of house martins that nest in the station building every year and the potential disturbance of bat roosts by the building works.

7.10. Concern that the proposals will cause increased parking on the road at busy times and that this already happens.

7.11. Concern that the proposals will increase traffic using the access from the station which is between blind corners on a very narrow road.

7.12. Proposed car parking is totally inadequate. There is more space available on the site for parking and this should be utilised.

7.13. This application forms the first of two phases of a major project and the application should have been presented in that context. A masterplan for the whole site should be presented and consulted on with all relevant information.

7.14. Without visitor and travel surveys are unable to assess the impact and sustainability of the application or the whole project.

7.15. Lack of engagement by the applicant, local communities and stakeholders in pre-application discussions.

7.16. Inadequate and / or conflicting information within the submitted application.

7.17. The development would result in increased visitors to the site. There is no capacity in this locality to absorb an increase in visitors.

7.18. No assessment of existing visitor numbers or projected future visitor numbers have been carried out.

7.19. The proposed development would fail to meet the following Core Strategy policies RT1 B, E2, T1, T6 or T7.

- 7.20. Additional parking in front / round the side of the former booking office would have an adverse impact upon the setting of the building.
- 7.21. On the basis of the dining area of the café and the Development Management Policies Parking Standards the maximum car parking allowance for customers and staff should be 16 spaces or less.
- 7.22. The assessment by the Highway Authority of parking needs is not adequate.
- 7.23. Proposed white lines on the adjacent highway will not deter the majority of drivers. Double yellow lines and enforcement is required and would have less impact on the listed viaducts than parked cars.
- 7.24. No information in regard to signage has been submitted, this should come forward as an application submitted simultaneously with the planning application.
- 7.25. There should be no outside seating on the station platform for heritage reasons and because the platform is a thoroughfare in both directions for users of the trail.
- 7.26. No takeaway service should be permitted. The total number of covers should be restricted and restricted to within the building only.
- 7.27. The opening hours of the café are not acceptable because longer hours would make the café a destination in itself and explicitly increase traffic and visitor numbers adding to general intensification of the site and the trail.
- 7.28. There should be no lighting at the site from dusk to respect the dark skies initiative.
- 7.29. Full details of the extraction system including a noise survey should be agreed prior to determination, it is not acceptable to leave this matter to be agreed with Officers post determination.
- 7.30. No information in regard to public access during construction is provided.
- 7.31. No information in regard to storage for plant and materials during construction is provided.
- 7.32. No dedicated cycle parking is proposed in the application.
- 7.33. A larger car park would inevitably lead to intensification of use through traffic generation. If the proposed café provides a justification for a larger car park then the application should be refused.
- 7.34. The existing car park is sufficient to support the café and there is no data to justify the car park extension.
- 7.35. Additional car parking would have an adverse impact upon the site and the setting of the station buildings and lime kilns.
- 7.36. Tarmac is not an appropriate surface area for the extended car park.
- 7.37. Insufficient parking for disabled persons is provided in the scheme.
- 7.38. There is no provision for motorcycle parking or coach / minibus parking.
- 7.39. No staff parking is proposed.

- 7.40. Plans do not show designated safe areas for deliveries and no information about waste collection or how the lorry would access and manoeuvre on site has been provided.
- 7.41. No information has been provided in the application to demonstrate how visitors to the site would be encouraged to use public transport.
- 7.42. The car park extension would prejudice the integrity of this heritage asset and take away easy public understanding of the complex as a whole.

## **8. Policies**

- 8.1. National Park designation is the highest level of landscape designation in the UK. The Environment Act 1995 sets out two statutory purposes for national parks in England and Wales:

- Conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage
- Promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of national parks by the public

When national parks carry out these purposes they also have the duty to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the national parks.

### National Planning Policy Framework

- 8.2. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 27 March 2012 and replaced a significant proportion of central government planning policy with immediate effect. The Government's intention is that the document should be considered as a material consideration and carry particular weight where a development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date. In the National Park the development plan comprises the Authority's Core Strategy 2011 and saved policies in the Peak District National Park Local Plan 2001. Policies in the Development Plan provide a clear starting point consistent with the National Park's statutory purposes for the determination of this application. It is considered that in this case there is no significant conflict between prevailing policies in the Development Plan and more recent Government guidance in the NPPF.
- 8.3. Para 115 of the NPPF states that *'great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations in all these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads.'*
- 8.4. Para 28 of the NPPF states that policies should support economic growth in rural areas by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. Plans should support sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas both through conversion and well designed new buildings. Plans should support sustainable rural tourism that respect the character of the countryside.
- 8.5. Para 32 of the NPPF states that development that generate significant amounts of movements should be supported by a Transport Statement or Transport Assessment. Decisions should take account of the opportunities for sustainable transport modes have been taken up depending upon the nature and location of the site, safe and suitable access can be achieved for all people and whether improvements can be undertaken within the transport network that cost effectively limit the impacts of the development. Development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe.

- 8.6. Para 118 of the NPPF states that when determining planning applications biodiversity should be conserved and enhanced by applying the following principles. Refusing planning permission if significant harm cannot be avoided and by not permitting development on land within or outside of a Site of Special Scientific Interest likely to have an adverse effect.
- 8.7. Para 129 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.
- 8.8. Para 132 of the NPPF states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, battlefields, grade I and II\* listed buildings, grade I and II\* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.
- 8.9. Para 134 of the NPPF states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

#### Development Plan policies

- 8.10. Policy GSP1 sets out the broad strategy for achieving the National Park's objectives having regard to the Sandford Principle, (that is, where there are conflicting desired outcomes in achieving national park purposes, greater priority must be given to the conservation of the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area, even at the cost of socio-economic benefits). GPS1 also sets out the need for sustainable development and to avoid major development unless it is essential, and the need to mitigate localised harm where essential major development is allowed.
- 8.11. Policy GSP3 and policy LC4 set out development management principles and states that all development must respect, conserve and enhance all valued characteristics of the site and buildings, paying particular attention to, amongst other elements, impact on the character and setting of buildings, scale of the development appropriate to the character and appearance of the National Park, design in accordance with the National Park Authority Design Guide and impact on living conditions of communities.
- 8.12. Policy DS1 sets out the development strategy for the National Park. DS1 C says that in the countryside (outside of the Natural Zone) recreation and tourism development is acceptable in principle as is the conversion or change of use of buildings for business uses.
- 8.13. Policy L1 identifies that development must conserve and enhance valued landscape character and valued characteristics, and other than in exceptional circumstances, proposals in the Natural Zone will not be permitted.

- 8.14. Policy L2 states that development must conserve and enhance any sites, features or species of biodiversity importance and where appropriate their setting. Other than in exceptional circumstances development will not be permitted where it is likely to have an adverse impact on any sites, features or species of biodiversity importance or their setting that have statutory designation or are of international or national importance for their biodiversity.
- 8.15. Policy LC17 provides more detailed criteria to assess development that may affect protected sites, species or habitats. LC20 is relevant for development that would impact upon trees.
- 8.16. Policy L3 states that development must conserve and where appropriate enhance or reveal the significance of archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic assets and their settings, including statutory designations and other heritage assets of international, national, regional or local importance or special interest. Other than in exceptional circumstances development will not be permitted where it is likely to cause harm to the significance of any cultural heritage asset of archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic significance or its setting, including statutory designations or other heritage assets of international, national, regional or local importance or special interest.
- 8.17. Policies LC5, LC6 and LC8 provide more detailed criteria to assess development proposed within Conservation Areas, development that affects listed buildings and development proposing to convert existing buildings to new uses respectively. Policies LC15 and LC16 provide detailed criteria to assess development that affects archaeological and historic sites.
- 8.18. Policy RT1 states that proposals for recreation, environmental education and interpretation must conform to the following principles.
- A. The National Park Authority will support facilities which enable recreation, environmental education and interpretation, which encourage understanding and enjoyment of the National Park, and are appropriate to the National Park's valued characteristics. Opportunities for access by sustainable means will be encouraged.
- B. New provision must justify its location in relation to environmental capacity, scale and intensity of use or activity, and be informed by the Landscape Strategy. Where appropriate, development should be focused in or on the edge of settlements. In the open countryside, clear demonstration of need for such a location will be necessary.
- C. Wherever possible, development must reuse existing traditional buildings of historic or vernacular merit, and should enhance any appropriate existing facilities. Where this is not possible, the construction of new buildings may be acceptable.
- D. Development must not on its own, or cumulatively with other development and uses, prejudice or disadvantage peoples' enjoyment of other existing and appropriate recreation, environmental education or interpretation activities, including the informal quiet enjoyment of the National Park.
- 8.19. Policy CC1 states that development must make the most efficient and sustainable use of land, buildings and natural resources, taking into account the energy hierarchy and achieving the highest possible standards of carbon reductions and water efficiency.
- 8.20. Policy E2 states that proposals for business development in the countryside must take account of the following principles.
- 8.21. A. Businesses should be located in existing traditional buildings of historic or vernacular merit in smaller settlements, on farmsteads, and in groups of buildings in sustainable locations. However where no suitable traditional building exists, the reuse of modern buildings may be acceptable provided that there is no scope for further enhancement through a more appropriate replacement building.

- 8.22. B. On farmsteads, or groups of estate buildings, small scale business development will be permitted provided that it supports an existing agricultural or other primary business responsible for estate or land management. The primary business must retain ownership and control of the site and building, to ensure that income will be returned to appropriate management of the landscape.
- 8.23. C. Business use in an isolated existing or new building in the open countryside will not be permitted.
- 8.24. D. Proposals to accommodate growth and intensification of existing businesses will be considered carefully in terms of their impact on the appearance and character of landscapes.
- 8.25. Policy T6 A. and policy LT20 state that the Rights of Way network will be safeguarded from development, and wherever appropriate enhanced to improve connectivity, accessibility and access to transport interchanges. This may include facilitating attractive safe pedestrian and cycle routes between new residential or industrial developments and the centre of settlements. Where a development proposal affects a Right of Way, every effort will be made to accommodate the definitive route or provide an equally good or better alternative.
- 8.26. Policy T7 is relevant for minimising the adverse impact of motor vehicles and managing the demand for car and coach parks and states. T7 C. says that non-residential parking will be restricted in order to discourage car use, and will be managed to ensure that the location and nature of car and coach parking does not exceed environmental capacity. New non-operational parking will normally be matched by a reduction of related parking spaces elsewhere and wherever possible will be made available for public use.
- 8.27. Policy LT10 states that in new development parking must be of a very limited nature or accompanied by on-street waiting restrictions, especially in areas served by good public transport.
- 8.28. Policy LT14 states that enlarged car parks will not be permitted unless essential to the management of the area and so designed and integrated with other traffic management measures to enhance the valued characteristics of the area. New off street car parks should be accompanied by equivalent on street parking restraint. Car parks with a capacity of up to 100 spaces may be permitted and car parks with a capacity of between 100 and 500 spaces will only be considered in exceptional circumstances. In Conservation Areas an assessment of alternative sites capable of being linked to the original visitor destination by a park and ride system or footpath will be expected. Additional off street parking will not be permitted unless it replaced on-street parking spaces with exceptions provided under policy LT10.
- 8.29. Emerging Development Management Policy DMT5 is also relevant for business parking and says that new or enlarged car parks will not be permitted unless a clear demonstrable need can be shown. Parking provision should be of a limited nature whilst being appropriate to the size of the development and taking account of its location and the visual impact of parking. The relevant parking standard for the proposed café use is 1 space for 4m<sup>2</sup> dining area plus 1 space for disabled users per 25 spaces.
- 8.30. Policy LT17 states that the provision of secure cycle parking will be encouraged at recreational attractions. New development will be required to provide secure cycle parking.
- 8.31. Policy LT18 says that the provision of safe access is a prerequisite of any development in the National Park.

- 8.32. The Authority's adopted Conservation Area Appraisal for Millers Dale is a relevant material consideration.

Relevant Core Strategy (CS) policies: GSP1, GSP3, DS1, L1, L2, L3, RT1, CC1, E2, T6 and T7.

Relevant Local Plan (LP) policies: LC4, LC5, LC6, LC8, LC15, LC16, LC17, LC20, LT10, LT14, LT17, LT18, LT20.

## **9. Assessment**

### Principle of proposed development

- 9.1. This application consists of two related main elements:
- 9.2. The first element is the conversion of part of the former ticket office and change of use from office and workshop to café with associated biomass boiler and replacement package treatment plant.
- 9.3. The application site is located in open countryside adjacent to the Monsal Trail which is well used by members of the public. There is an existing public car park on the site run by the Authority along with public toilets within part of the former ticket office. The rest of the building being utilised for offices, workshop and mess room for staff. The Authority acknowledges that there are parking issues within the vicinity of the site during peak times which is reflected in concerns raised by the Parish Council and in a number of representations.
- 9.4. The proposed café is intended to provide an additional offer for visitors and users of the trail and extend the season outside of the typical current busy period of May to October.
- 9.5. Policy RT1 and E2 are considered to be relevant in assessing the principle of the proposed development as the proposal is for a new business in the countryside which would be operated in association with well-established recreation activities associated with the site and the established network of trails.
- 9.6. These policies support business facilities for recreation in principle as in this case there is a clear justification for the location of the proposed development within the former ticket office which is positioned in an appropriate location adjacent to the trail.
- 9.7. The second element is the extension of the existing car park to the east to provide an additional 16 parking spaces and the re-configuration of the existing car park to provide a further additional 8 spaces. In total the capacity of the car park would therefore be increased from 83 spaces (including 3 spaces for disabled people) to 107 spaces (including 4 spaces for disabled people).
- 9.8. Policies T7, T10 and T14 generally discourage new or additional non-operational parking (such as public car parks) unless they are essential to the management of the area and are matched with an equal reduction in existing on-street parking. Policy LT10 and emerging development management policy DMT5 provide an exception where new or additional operational parking (such as for staff, customers and deliveries to a business) is acceptable in principle provided that there is a clear need. In all cases new parking must be able to be accommodated without harm to the valued characteristics of the National Park.
- 9.9. Additional parking is acceptable in principle if it is demonstrated either as essential non-operational parking matched by an equivalent reduction in off-street parking or if it is demonstrated as required operational parking to serve the proposed development. Further consideration of this matter is made below.

- 9.10. It is noted that a representation raises the matter of 'phase 2' of the development of the site. Nothing beyond the scope of the application is currently under consideration and no details have been provided to Development Management of any other works. The development proposed under this application is free-standing and capable of implementation without any further development. Any future proposals, should they come forward, will be considered on their merits at that time.

Visual and landscape impact of development

- 9.11. The proposed café would be located within the existing former ticket office and external alterations to the building would be limited. There are no objections to the proposed alterations to the doors and the replacement windows provided that appropriate design details are secured in accordance with advice from the Authority's Conservation Officer. The proposed extraction vent on the car park facing elevation would be limited in size and subject to an appropriate detail and finish there is no objection to this element in principle.
- 9.12. Additional information has been provided in regard to external seating which would be limited to a total of four benches on the platform adjacent to the café. There are no objections to this in terms of visual and landscape impact as the benches and related activity would be well contained and adjacent to the building.
- 9.13. The proposed development would be served by a new biomass boiler, the majority of which would be sited either underground within the service yard area to the west of the café or within existing buildings with the exception of a fuel hopper within the yard and a flue which would terminate on the inside wall of the engine shed.
- 9.14. The fuel hopper would be visible from the car park and to a limited extent through the openings in the service yard wall from the platform. The hopper would be of a modest size and is of a functional design which is appropriate given the former function of the site as a station. The impact of the flue would also be limited and overall the proposed design solution is considered to be an appropriate way to incorporate a more sustainable source of heating for the café in accordance with policy CC1. If permission is granted conditions would be recommended to specify an appropriate dark green finish for the fuel hopper and a matt black finish for the flue.
- 9.15. The proposed replacement package treatment plant would be positioned underground and would utilise existing pipework under the former platforms and therefore would not result in any adverse visual or landscape impact.
- 9.16. The proposed extension to the car park would be to the west of the existing car park within the sidings on the north side of the trail. The proposal would result in up to 16 additional parked cars in this location which would create additional visual impact, however due to topography and existing planting the impact would be localised and in principle the provision of additional parking in this location would be acceptable.
- 9.17. Amendments to the scheme have been made to further reduce the impact including surfacing the additional car parking to reflect the trail rather than in macadam to provide a more informal appearance as the site transitions into the trail and the retention of the majority of the existing walling.
- 9.18. Subject to conditions to secure appropriate design details, the amended plans and appropriate surfacing materials for the car park it is considered that the proposed development can be accommodated without any adverse visual or landscape impact.

#### Impact upon heritage assets

- 9.19. The former ticket office and the remains of the former station are heritage assets and possess historical and architectural interest because of the age and type of surviving structures, association with Midland Railway and connection with the local community and industries and with the wider landscape, which the railway shaped.
- 9.20. This value is recognised by the inclusion of the site in the Millers Dale Conservation Area and the listing of the nearby north and south viaducts. The site is therefore a non-designated heritage asset in its own right and also forms part of the wider interest with those nearby designated heritage assets.
- 9.21. A heritage statement has been prepared in support of the application which has been assessed by the Authority's Conservation Officer and Senior Archaeologist.
- 9.22. The introduction of an appropriate and viable use for the former ticket office is welcomed as an appropriate way to secure the long term conservation of the historic building. The proposed vent and internal works would result in the removal of a small section of original wall, however the core significance of the site in its design, materials and legibility of the former plan will be retained.
- 9.23. The proposed alterations to the building are considered to be acceptable subject to detailed design issues and Officers are satisfied that the proposed conversion and proposed café use can be accommodated without harm to the significance of the former ticket office, the wider station or the setting of the viaducts.
- 9.24. Similarly there are no objections to the proposed biomass boiler, or replacement package treatment plant subject to appropriate colour finishes for the fuel hopper and flue.
- 9.25. The proposed car park extension would be sited in a former sidings associated with the station. The creation of the additional car parking spaces would not physically impact upon any features of the former station. Part of the existing wall between the car park and the trail would be demolished to facilitate access however this is a modern wall of no historic significance. As discussed earlier, additional parked cars in this location would have a very limited impact due to the location and the former station would remain clearly legible.
- 9.26. The proposed groundworks for the car park extension are minimal with no additional drainage and they are unlikely to cause harm to archaeological remains. The proposed groundworks for the sewage treatment plant, grease separator and the new underground drainage and feed to the biomass boiler are all located close to the station and former goods shed buildings, and in the built up area of the former platform, and the archaeologist is satisfied that these works are unlikely to encounter remains of archaeological significance.
- 9.27. It is therefore concluded that the proposed development offers considerable scope for enhancement of the historic interest of the site, with increased scope for interpretation to promote appreciation and understanding of the site. The appropriate and sustainable re-use of the building would enhance the significance of the site and its setting.

#### Impact upon biodiversity

- 9.28. An ecological assessment has been carried out by the Authority's ecologist and submitted with the application. The assessment states that bats are present and roost within the roof of the former ticket office. There is a brown long eared bat roost and a Daubenton's bat roost within the roof. The northern elevation of the building supports a number of regularly used house martin nests and the southern elevation supports a single nest site. The near-by post house building also supports nest cups. Finally, there are records for slow worm within 1km of the site alongside the trail to the west of the station.

- 9.29. The location of the proposed works lies adjacent to the Wye Valley Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Peak District Dales Special Area of Conservation (SAC).
- 9.30. The proposed car park extension is backed by a wall. There are patches of vegetation with species characteristic of disturbed ground conditions. This vegetation is of recent origin and is of low conservation value, therefore the proposed surfacing to create the car park would not result in adverse impacts.
- 9.31. The location of the proposed underground sewage treatment plant is mown species poor grassland which is of low conservation value. The upgraded soakaway is located in approximately the same position as the existing system sited within a part of the verge running parallel to the trail. The verge species in the ditch is rich unimproved grassland. The proposed soakaway would avoid the majority of vegetation of conservation value and therefore subject to appropriate management during construction and aftercare the soakaway would not affect the valued vegetation which would recover and no detrimental medium or long term impacts would arise.
- 9.32. The submitted ecological assessment makes detailed proposals for the timing and management of works to avoid adverse impacts upon the bat species and house martins identified on the site along with proposals for new bat boxes and bird boxes for other species placed away from the house martin sites. A precautionary approach in regard to slow worm is also proposed for works to excavate the soakaway.
- 9.33. Subject to appropriate planning conditions to secure the proposed recommendations for implementation of the development and mitigation it is considered that the development can be carried out without harming the favourable conservation status of bats or birds on the site.
- 9.34. The location of the proposed works lies close to, but outside of the SSSI and SAC. The works are restricted to the station building, and specified areas within the site. Any storage of materials, works or access associated with the works will use existing areas of hard surfacing, there will be no storage of material on SSSI or SAC habitats. The new water treatment unit will meet current standards and will more efficiently produce clean waste water and this will provide a modest benefit in terms of the adjacent designated sites.
- 9.35. Any visitors to the site of the proposed development would be likely to be visiting the station, the trails and local area. Therefore the majority of any additional activity and disturbance created by visitors would be focused on site and along the trails and therefore would not result in any harm to the SSSI and SAC. It is therefore concluded that there would be no adverse impact created by the development upon designated sites.
- 9.36. Highway safety and amenity
- 9.37. The former ticket office where the café would be located is some distance from Station House on the far side of the car park and therefore there are no concerns that any additional noise and disturbance from cooking or visitors within and around the proposed café would harm the amenity or privacy of neighbouring properties. Similarly due to the distance to the proposed extended car park there are no concerns that noise from vehicles parking in that area would be harmful to amenity.
- 9.38. Concerns have been raised in regard to the numbers of visitors to the site currently at peak times and the potential for the development to increase visitor pressure. In particular concern has been raised about visitors parking vehicles on the far side of the highway adjacent to the site and the impact of that upon the amenity of road users trying to pass the site.

- 9.39. The intention is to provide additional facilities for visitors already using the trail. It is likely that existing visitors to the site would make use of the facilities but it is also likely that the presence of the café on site would attract additional visitors to the trail or indeed visitors to the café itself. It is therefore considered likely that the proposed development would result in additional trips to the site by visitors and additional use of the trails.
- 9.40. The concerns raised in representations and by the Parish Council in regard to visitors parking on the highway are recognised by the Authority and by the Highway Authority in their consultation response. The application therefore proposes the extension of the car park along with re-organisation of the existing layout to provide additional spaces to alleviate the issue with on-street parking. In addition the applicant states that Derbyshire County Council has agreed to mark a single white line along the edge of the highway to deter parking.
- 9.41. The Authority's transport policy generally discourages new or additional non-operational parking (such as public car parks) unless they are essential to the management of the area and are matched with an equal reduction in existing on-street parking. New or additional operational parking (such as for staff, customers and deliveries to a business) is acceptable in principle provided that there is a clear need. In all cases new parking must be able to be accommodated without harm to the valued characteristics of the National Park.
- 9.42. The site currently includes a 83 space non-operational car park. One aspect of the proposal is to re-configure the existing car park which in itself would provide an additional 8 spaces. This re-configuration could be carried out without the benefit of planning permission and Officers have no objection in principle to making the most efficient use of the existing space especially given the concerns raised about on-street parking.
- 9.43. The proposal would introduce a café onto the site which based on the number of covers has a requirement for 16 parking spaces (excluding the outside benches) or 20 parking spaces (including the benches).
- 9.44. Ordinarily the Authority would expect the proposed café to make use of the existing car park without an extension. However very clear concerns have been raised by the Parish Council and in representations about an existing issue with on-street parking and these concerns are recognised by the Authority and the Highway Authority.
- 9.45. The proposed car park extension would provide for an additional 16 parking spaces which combined with the re-configuration of the existing car park closely matches the operational parking requirements of the proposed café based upon the Authority's parking standards within the emerging development management policies. A total of four spaces for disabled persons is proposed which is also in accordance with the parking standards.
- 9.46. Given the issues raised in regard to on-street parking and the fact that the extended car park could be accommodated without harm to the valued characteristics of the National Park it is considered that the proposed car park extension would strike the right balance between ensuring that the development does not contribute to the existing on-street parking issue and that the development does not harm the valued characteristics of the National Park.
- 9.47. Therefore Officers consider that provided the car park extension was carried out and the existing car park re-configured before the first use of the café then the proposed development would not harm highway safety or the amenity of neighbouring properties or highway users through additional visitor pressure or additional on-street parking.
- 9.48. A concern has been raised in regard to the lack of secure cycle parking proposed in the application. There is adequate cycle parking alongside the trail in front of the station. However there is no existing secure cycle parking and as discussed above, the proposed development is likely to result in additional visitors including cyclists stopping along the trail.

9.49. Policy LT17 clearly requires new development to provide secure cycle parking and therefore if permission is granted a condition to require details of this to be submitted and agreed is considered necessary.

9.50. Concerns have been raised about deliveries and manoeuvring of bin wagons on the site. There is ample space on the site for such vehicles to turn on site and therefore there are no concerns in this regard.

## **10. Conclusion**

10.1. The proposed conversion of the former station office to a café is acceptable in principle as it would provide a beneficial use of this heritage asset which is closely related to the existing recreational use of the trail.

10.2. The proposed development taken as a whole would enhance the historical significance of the site and enhance opportunities for members of the public to experience and interpret the history of the site and utilise the trail network. The development can be accommodated in a manner which conserves valued landscape character, biodiversity on site and the adjacent designated sites.

10.3. The proposed car park extension is considered to strike the right balance between ensuring that there is sufficient operational parking for the café that the development does not contribute to an existing on-street parking issue during peak times and ensuring that the development conserves the site and the valued characteristics of the National Park.

10.4. Having had regard to all other issues raised it is therefore concluded that the proposed development is in accordance with the development plan and in the absence of any further material considerations the application is recommended for approval subject to conditions outlined in this report.

## **11. Human Rights**

11.1. All human rights issues have been identified and considered in the preparation of this report.

## **12. List of Background Papers (not previously published)**

None

### **Report Author and Job Title**

Adam Maxwell, North Area Senior Planner