

**6. FULL APPLICATION – NEW BUILDING TO PROVIDE DAMBUSTERS EXHIBITION, CAFÉ SPACE AND SHOP AT FAIRHOLMES VISITOR CENTRE, BAMFORD (NP/1218/1205, AM)**

**APPLICANT: SEVERN TRENT WATER LTD**

**Site and Surroundings**

1. Fairholmes visitor centre is located in open countryside between the Derwent and Ladybower Reservoirs and approximately 6.5km North West of Bamford.
2. The site is access via Derwent Lane off the A57 and includes an upper and lower car park, a building at the entrance to the site housing toilet facilities, shop, food kiosk and office occupied by National Park Authority Ranger Service and a second building to the south west providing Peak District National Park Authority cycle hire and service facilities.
3. Derwent Lane leading up to the site is a clearway (parking and stopping prohibited) with double yellow lines painted on both sides of the highway along its length leading to the site. Public access for vehicles past the site is restricted. There are three public car parks located on Derwent Lane on the approach leading up to the application site.
4. The site is located within the Dark Peak and within the reservoir valleys with woodland landscape character type as identified by the Authority's Landscape Character Assessment.
5. Higher ground to the north of the valley is located within the Peak District Moors Special Protection Area (SPA), the South Pennine Moors Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Dark Peak Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
6. Derwent Dam is a Grade II listed building and is located approximately 400m to the north of the site. The nearest neighbouring properties are Jubilee Cottages which are located 140m to the east of the site on the far side of the reservoir.

**Proposal**

7. The erection of a new building at the site to house a café (77 square metres floorspace), exhibition space (36 square metres floorspace) and shop (21 square metres floorspace) along with associated plant and storage.
8. The building would be single storey with the walls of the building clad with natural gritstone with open overhanging roof elements on either gable with timber louvres and oak supporting columns. The roof would be pitched and clad with natural Welsh slate with an overhanging element to the front supported by oak columns with concealed gutters. Windows and doors would be aluminium.
9. There would be an observation balcony to the rear (north elevation) of the building bounded by a metal railing along with an air source heat pump and bin storage area bounded by stone walling. Cycle racks would be installed adjacent to the building.
10. The existing building on site would be re-configured internally to provide greater space for the existing kiosk and toilets and to provide a 'changing places' facility for visitors to the site. No external changes to this building are proposed.

11. The new building would be located within the lower car park on the lower boundary of the site and would displace a total of 10 parking spaces. The application proposes to re-locate these parking spaces within the site and the amended plans propose an additional 12 parking spaces (two of which reserved for use by disabled visitors).
12. Additional information has been provided by the applicant about traffic management. Discussions have been held between the applicant and Derbyshire County Council Highways about potentially providing funding for Civil Enforcement Officers along Derwent Lane. Derbyshire County Council have advised the applicant that additional funding is not required and have committed to instruct enforcement to carry out patrols of Derwent Lane at weekends starting immediately (this is irrespective of whether planning permission is approved for the proposed development or not). Patrols will be undertaken for a provisional six month period with a review then undertaken and continuing as necessary.
13. The applicant also proposes to repaint the double yellow lines along Derwent Lane and to undertake daily patrols of Derwent Lane reporting any illegal parking to the civil enforcement team along with reporting parking issues raised by local residents. The applicant also proposes to review the verges along Derwent Lane with the County Council to see if there are any further measures that can be implemented to reduce illegal parking. Finally, the applicant proposes to install a sign along Derwent Lane close to the turning loop to display messages when the car park is full to encourage visitors to turn around rather than driving down to the site and back.

**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. **Submit and agree details of foul sewerage prior to first occupation of development. Implementation prior to first occupation of the development.**
4. **Submit and agree details of landscaping including gritstone paving prior to installation. Hard landscaping to be implemented prior to first occupation of the development any planting to be completed within first planting season following first occupation of the development.**
5. **Implementation of tree protection measures in accordance with submitted details.**
6. **Implementation of submitted ecological impact assessment report.**
7. **Provision of space within site for site accommodation, storage, materials and parking during construction period to be submitted and agreed.**
8. **New parking spaces to be surfaced, laid out and available for use prior to first occupation of the development hereby approved.**
9. **No external lighting other than in accordance with approved scheme.**
10. **No external Closed Circuit Television Equipment (CCTV) or alarm system to be installed other than in accordance with scheme to be submitted.**

11. **Installation of cycle parking prior to the first occupation of the development.**
12. **Installation of air source heat pump and stone wall to compound area prior to first occupation of the development.**
13. **Agree stonework sample panel and roof sample panel prior to erection of external walls and roof.**
14. **Agree finish of external timberwork, railings, window and doors prior to installation.**
15. **Number of covers shall be restricted to a maximum of 60 at any time.**
16. **No additional outside seating shall be provided at any time other than in accordance with the approved plans.**
17. **Restrict use of café to Use Class A3 only.**
18. **Restrict hours of opening of café to 09:00 – 18:00 on any day.**

### **Key Issues**

14. Whether the proposed development is acceptable in principle.
15. Impact of proposed development upon the landscape character, biodiversity and cultural heritage of the National Park.
16. Impact of the proposed development upon visitor pressure, vehicle movements, highway safety and the amenity of the local community and road users.

### **History**

17. 2018: ENQ 33423 Pre-application enquiry in relation to proposed extensions of visitor centre at the site to provide improved toilet facilities with shower, exhibition space to house the dambusters exhibition and indoor seating for the kiosk / café. Officers gave the following advice:
18. In principle, extensions to provide enhanced facilities are acceptable. Facilities need to be of an appropriate scale to facilitate recreation, environmental education and interpretation rather than be an attraction in their own right. Encourage any evidence there is on visitor numbers and how the scale of the development is proportionate to be submitted as part of a planning statement. A tree survey and protected species survey are required to support the application.
19. Design will be a key issue and needs to be in accordance with the Authority's adopted design guide which is an adopted Supplementary Planning Document. Concerns were raised about the design proposed with the enquiry because the proposed form, detailing and materials all did not reflect the built traditions of the National Park and would therefore be contrary to the design guide.
20. There is scope for a contemporary design rather than a pastiche or copy of the local vernacular. Retaining a gable form with pitched roofs is important and window and door openings should have a strong vertical emphasis. The site is in woodland and therefore use of timber could work, however care needs to be put into the detail using stone and timber where appropriate.

21. Suggested considering moving toilets into a separate building could be the best option and later agreed that alternatively moving the exhibition space and café within the separate building could also be appropriate. This would free up space in the existing building and avoid a first floor extension.
22. Finally, Officers provided design advice for a worked up scheme which lead to the building which is the subject of this application.

### **Consultations**

23. Officer note – amended plans showing an additional 12 parking spaces to be provided within the lower car park have been submitted along with revised ecological and tree surveys. A process of re-consultation is underway on the amended details which closes on the 26<sup>th</sup> February after this report was written. Any additional consultation responses or representations received will be updated at the meeting.
24. Highway Authority: No objection subject to replacement parking being provided prior to first occupation.
25. District Council: No response to date.
26. Parish Council: Object to the development. The material planning reasons given are summarised below, the letter can be read in full on the Authority's website.
27. The new building is not in keeping with any other buildings in this very rural area in terms of both size and design. For example, the application clads the building in gritstone, but the area's natural stone is sandstone; traditional barns have no overhangs; the gables have timber cladding – again, not traditional.
28. Another building will urbanise the area. The dwellings in and around Derwent are isolated farms and a very few houses, all built in a traditional manner. There are already two buildings at the visitor centre; a third building of this style and position is not in keeping with the area.
29. The existing visitor centre building has very strong lighting. Another building will cause more light pollution and compromise the current dark sky.
30. The new building is advertised as providing a home for the Dambuster museum. This only takes up 17% of the new building, the rest being given over to a new shop and 60-cover café. Fairholmes will become a destination centre instead of a short stay stop off point.
31. A new centre will attract more visitors and the existing parking is already inadequate with cars now parking along the sides of Derwent Lane on double yellow lines, on the grass verges, in gateways and on the A57 clearway. Currently this illegal parking is allowed to continue without fear of drivers being 'caught' and occurs most weekends. This will only get worse causing more congestion, queues and pollution and is already destroying vegetation and causing difficulties for residents and farmers. During last summer and autumn residents of Derwent could neither access nor leave their homes without adding a good hour each way for their journeys. Emergency vehicles could not have got through due to the number and density of parked cars which is unacceptable. We have photos and videos to show this and it is making life a misery for residents and farmers. An indoor café and museum will encourage visitors to stay longer, so with more visitors this will further exacerbate parking problems.

32. Visitor pressure especially at weekends due to cars parking in gateways, sheep worrying, damaging fences and walls and gates being left open make it difficult for local farmers to carry out day to day farming activities.
33. The development would encourage an increase in the number of outdoor organised events resulting in more visitors and traffic.
34. The A57 is lined with litter and the development would encourage more litter. Litter and fly tipping need to be tackled first before any more visitors are encouraged to visit.
35. The ecological impact assessment says that the survey showed little interesting wildlife due to the current high level of disturbance. Any further development will adversely affect what wildlife there is due to an increase in visitors and vehicles. There is nothing in the application to take measures to reverse this decline in wildlife.
36. The new building will pose a security risk as there have already been two break in's at Fairholmes recently. This will also put residents at more risk from crime.
37. The café could jeopardise existing public houses in the local area.
38. The café would not contribute to the local economy.
39. The development would increase illegal and irresponsible behaviour from visitors.
40. Environment Agency: We have reviewed the submitted flood risk assessment. Although the site lies within flood zone 3 for planning, the flood risk assessment demonstrates that due to the topography of the site it will actually lie within flood zone 1.
41. Lead Local Flood Authority: No comment and refers applicant to informative notes.
42. Natural England: Consider that the proposed development will not have significant adverse impacts on designated sites and therefore raises no objection.
43. PDNPA Ecology: Raise no objection subject to conditions and makes the following comment.
44. The building is situated very close to existing trees and although the removal of trees has been limited through the tree protection measures and pile foundations, there is likely to be some damage to the root systems. These trees do not support bat roosts, but are likely to be used by foraging bats along the reservoir.
45. Depending on the advice of the tree officer, it may be worth asking for some compensatory planting to ensure that a flight corridor is maintained in the future. Any external lighting scheme will need to consider foraging and commuting bats. Breeding birds have been noted and recommendations have been made in the report.
46. PDNPA Forestry: No objection subject to approval of the works in accordance with the submitted Arboricultural Method Statement.
47. PDNPA Landscape: Raise no objection subject to conditions and makes the following comment.
48. It appears that the root protection areas of a number of trees may be compromised. A landscape strategy should be put in place for the wider site including additional compensation planting.

49. PDNPA Policy / Transport: No objection subject to conditions and makes the following comment.
50. *“The National Park Authority is in the process of developing a Recreation Hubs Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) aimed at guiding the provision of facilities for visitors at locations in the open countryside that attract large numbers of recreational visitors.*
51. *Whilst the Recreation Hubs SPD is yet to be fully developed, preliminary work consisting of site visits and user surveys to the Upper Derwent Valley is of some pertinence. The site visits identified Fairholmes as a location where there was scope for the improvement to visitor facilities without having visible impact on the surrounding open countryside. The well-screened nature of the site, plus its popularity with visitors as accessing the wider Upper Derwent Valley highlighted the location as one where relatively modest development could bring significant enhancement to the facilities.*
52. *In relation to the Recreation Hubs SPD work undertaken thus far, the proposed scheme appears of an appropriate scale in relation to the size and popularity of the site and the current level of facilities on offer.*
53. *The proposed scheme appears to be largely in keeping with Part A of policy RT1, and whilst it does not in itself offer additional opportunities for access by sustainable means, the provision of additional cycling parking facilities, will improve the offer for cyclists, some of whom will in all likelihood be new visitors taking advantage of the improvements to the kiosk and the provision of a café. Similarly, the proposed scheme seeks to retain the existing number of parking spaces, rather than provide additional spaces. This would suggest that the intent is not to encourage more car borne visitors to Fairholmes.*
54. *Given the existing screening of the setting, the existing building group and the scale of the proposed development, the proposal is in accordance with Part B of the policy. The proposal does comprise the construction of a new building, but this is balanced against the reuse of the existing building to provide better toilet facilities for visitors with a disability. Therefore, the proposal does appear to be in keeping with Part C of the policy.*
55. *Because the proposal seeks to add benefits to existing visits, and in the case of the Dambusters exhibition, focuses activity on the Fairholmes site, it could be said that it improves opportunities for quiet enjoyment away from the site. However, there is a possibility for the site to act as an attractor for additional visits which could act to prejudice enjoyment of the valley if it leads to the number of visits exceeds capacity.*
56. *It is recognised that the intention behind the proposal is not to increase the number of visitors to the site, but is instead to improve facilities for existing visitors. However, given the combination of a new café and the reopening of the Dambuster Exhibition, there may be an increase in visitor numbers to the site. It should be noted that the previous Dambuster Exhibition was not open at all times, and that when it was open, there was some discretion available to allow those with a disability to park at the Derwent Dam car park, when the road closure was in operation. This parking offered, albeit limited spaces for visitors to the museum, away from the main Fairholmes parking facilities.*

57. *Given the high profile of the Dambusters over recent years, with three separate flypasts between 2013 and 2018, it is likely that the Dambuster Exhibition will attract additional visitors, (at least in the short-term), given its unavailability over recent years. The documentation accompanying the application, makes the assumption that when Fairholmes car park is full, that visitors will go elsewhere. However, the likelihood is that, the elsewhere will be in close proximity to Fairholmes, with a strong possibility that this will result in inappropriate or obstructive parking. The fact that Fairholmes can only be reached after driving along Derwent Lane makes it more likely, that having already made a commitment to visit, that visitors will park wherever they can rather than travel somewhere else.*
58. *Therefore, the application offers an opportunity to make better use of the space available within the Fairholmes and Derwent Overlook car parks to improve capacity within the existing footprint. It is recognised that there are environmental constraints on capacity, and that there will need to be a balance struck between providing additional space for parking and ensuring that there is no loss of habitat, trees and screening which the woodland provides.*
59. *A modest number of additional spaces spread across the Fairholmes Upper and Lower Car Parks (and if necessary the Derwent Overlook car parks) should be achievable without any significant impact. The number of additional spaces should be in the order of 10-12. This would allow for an additional number of spaces, lower, but in proportion to the number of the spaces previously used at the Derwent Dam Wall to access the Dambuster Exhibition.”*
60. PDNPA Rangers: No response to date.

### **Representations**

61. A total of 61 representations have been received by the Authority to date. Out of these 45 object to the proposed development, 12 support the proposed development and 4 make general comments. The material planning reasons given are summarised below. The letters can be read in full on the Authority's website.

### **Letters of objection**

- Proposed development will be an attraction and will result in an increase in visitors and number of cars visiting the site.
- The proposed development does not include any proposals for traffic or visitor management contrary to policies T1, T2 and T7.
- There are already too many visitors to the site and at the Ladybower and Derwent Reservoirs, especially at weekends and bank holidays.
- The issue with visitor numbers was exemplified in November 2018 when thousands of people were encouraged to visit the remains of the submerged Derwent Village.
- The car parking at the site cannot support additional visitors.
- Proposed development will exacerbate illegal and inconsiderate parking in the double yellow lines and the verges of Derwent Road leading to the site.
- Parking issues reduce Derwent Road to a single lane at multiple points and cause significant congestion.

- Parking issues impact on the ability of local farmers to carry out their business.
- Parking issues could potentially prevent access by the emergency services.
- An increase in visitors will result in noise and litter which pollutes the local area and damage to walls, fences, rivers and farmland.
- An increase in visitors will harm designated sites which surround the site.
- An increase in vehicles will result in increased pollution and light pollution and harm local wildlife.
- The development will promote antisocial behaviour such as setting fires and barbeques.
- Proposed development will impact upon the viability of pubs in the local area.
- Proposed development will result in an increase in public events within the local area.
- Proposed development will not encourage people to walk or cycle from Fairholmes on the surrounding paths.
- The proposed building will have an urbanising impact upon the character of the area.
- The proposed building is not of an appropriate design and does not reflect local traditional buildings.
- The proposed use of natural gritstone and blue slate materials are inappropriate. Sandstone and stone slate would be more appropriate.
- The proposed development is contrary to policy RT1 because there is no demonstration of the need for the proposed development in this location.
- No evidence to demonstrate that the proposal will not increase visitor numbers has been provided or to demonstrate what the environmental capacity of the valley for visitors is.
- Proposed additional parking spaces would not alleviate traffic congestion and only lead to more vehicles.
- The proposal and proposed additional parking would result in the removal of trees from the site.
- Visibility at the junction of Derwent Road with the A57 is poor and therefore there should not be an increase of vehicles at that junction.
- Proposed development would be contrary to the Equalities Act 2010 as it would exclude groups of people who use the site.
- Proposed development would be at risk of crime.
- Café facilities should be sited at Heatherdene to encourage traffic away from the valley and to even out visitor pressure.
- Proposed development would result in pressure for further development in the future.



## 62. Letters of support

- The provision of a site down café area would be much better for elderly and disabled visitors. The current facilities do not allow for fully disabled access.
- The site lacks interpretation of the fascinating history associated with the valley.
- The provision of a museum for dambuster memorabilia is important and is part of local history and should be preserved in the area.
- The proposed development will update facilities such as toilets and changing facilities and will improve the experience for regular and new visitors.
- Proposal will have a positive effect by providing job opportunities and services.
- Proposed design is well considered with proposed materials that would complement the surrounding natural context.

## General comment

- No objection to upgrading of the toilet facilities.
- The proposed changing places facility is needed and should be in many more locations.
- Some of the income generated by the development should be set aside for improved parking provision or funding for increased traffic warden patrolling the area to deter parking.

## **Main Policies**

63. Relevant Core Strategy policies: GSP1, GSP3, DS1, L1, L2, L3, RT1, CC1, E2, T6 and T7.
64. Relevant Local Plan policies: LC4, LC5, LC6, LC8, LC15, LC16, LC17, LC20, LT10, LT14, LT17, LT18, LT20.
65. 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

66. 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 with regard to the issues that are raised.
67. Para 172 of the NPPF states that great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, 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.
68. Para 83 of the NPPF says that planning decisions should enable the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings and should enable sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside.
69. Para 84 of the NPPF says that planning decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport). The use of previously developed land, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.
70. Para 109 of the NPPF says that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.
71. Para 111 of the NPPF says that all developments that will generate significant amounts of movement should be required to provide a travel plan, and the application should be supported by a transport statement or transport assessment so that the likely impacts of the proposal can be assessed.

### Development Plan policies

72. 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).
73. 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 access and traffic levels and living conditions of communities.

74. 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.
75. 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.
76. 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.
77. 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 and requires adequate information to be submitted to allow the Authority to assess potential impact.
78. Policy RT1 states that proposals for recreation, environmental education and interpretation must conform to the following principles.
79. 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.
80. 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.
81. 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.
82. 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.
83. 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.
84. Policy E2 states that proposals for business development in the countryside must take account of the following principles.
85. 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.

86. 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.
87. Business use in an isolated existing or new building in the open countryside will not be permitted.
88. 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.
89. Policy T1 is relevant for reducing the need to travel and encouraging sustainable transport and seeks to deter cross-park traffic, encourage a modal shift to sustainable transport, improved connectivity between sustainable modes of travel, a reduction in impacts of traffic in environmentally sensitive locations, sustainable access for quiet enjoyment and demand management and low carbon initiatives.
90. 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.
91. 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.
92. 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. Additional off street parking will not be permitted unless it replaced on-street parking spaces with exceptions provided under policy LT10.
93. 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.
94. Policy LT18 says that the provision of safe access is a prerequisite of any development in the National Park.
95. Emerging Development Management Policy DMT5 is 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.
96. Emerging Development Management Policy DMT7 is relevant visitor parking and says:
97. New or enlarged car parks will not be permitted unless a clear, demonstrable need, delivering local benefit, can be shown.

98. Where new or additional off-street visitor parking is permitted, an equivalent removal of on-street parking will usually be required. This will be delivered through Traffic Regulation Orders to restrict on-street parking.
99. In considering proposals for new or enlarged car parks in the Natural Zone and in Conservation Areas, the developer is expected to have assessed alternative sites located in a less environmentally sensitive location, capable of being linked to the original visitor destination either by a Park & Ride system or right of way.

## **Assessment**

### Principle of proposed development

100. The application site is located in open countryside within the Derwent Valley and provides a hub for access to the many tracks and trails throughout the area and is well used by the public. There are existing public car parks on the site and nearby off Derwent Lane along with existing public toilets, exhibition / shop space, a kiosk serving hot and cold food to takeaway and cycle hire. The Authority is aware of parking issues within the vicinity of the site along Derwent Lane during peak times and this is reflected in a number of concerns raised by the Parish Council and in representations.
101. The proposed café is intended by the applicant to provide an additional offer for visitors along with provision of a larger exhibition space on site for interpretation related to the history of the valley. The development would also facilitate the provision of additional space for the existing toilets and kiosk and a 'changing places' facility within the existing building.
102. Policy RT1 and E2 are considered to be relevant in assessing the principle of the proposed development as the proposal is for new business in the countryside which would be operated in association with well-established recreation activities associated with the site and the surrounding area.
103. The Authority is in the process of developing a Recreation Hubs Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) aimed at guiding the provision of facilities for visitors in locations that attract large numbers of visitors, such as at Fairholmes. The work undertaken so far identified Fairholmes as a location where there was scope for the improvement of visitor facilities without having a visible impact on the surrounding open countryside and that the well-screened nature of the site plus popularity of visitors highlighted the location as one where relatively modest development could bring significant enhancement to facilities.
104. Given the relatively advanced stage of the work preparing the Recreation Hubs SPD it is considered that very little weight can be given to this document in the determination of this application.
105. Nevertheless the proposal is to provide additional facilities for visitors at a well established and popular recreation site that is well connected to existing trails used by the public and would enable the provision of enhanced facilities within the existing building. Therefore in principle the proposed development is considered to be in accordance with Policy RT1 and E2.
106. A number of concerns are raised by the Parish Council and in representations in relation to many issues but principally in regard to potential impact upon visitor pressure within the local area, illegal parking and highway safety issues and the scale and design of the proposed development. The Authorities policies require all

development to conserve the valued characteristics of the National Park to conserve the amenity of the area and the local community, not harm highway safety and to be of an appropriate design and scale, amongst other things. These therefore are considered to be the key issues in the determination of the application.

#### Impact of the development upon the site and the immediate area

107. The proposed building would be located within the lower car park of the existing site and would be appropriately positioned in relation to the existing buildings on site and the layout of the car park. The scale of the building would be appropriate given the existing nearby buildings. The site is well screened in the wider landscape by existing mature trees around the site and therefore the proposed building would not be prominent or result in a harmful visual impact or adversely affect landscape character. The proposed landscaping around the building is simple and appropriate however gritstone pavers to match those in the existing outside seating area would be more appropriate than the proposed granite.
108. The Authority's Landscape Officer raises no objection but recommends that compensatory tree planting is provided to compensate for the impact of the development upon trees within the site. This is also recommended by the Authority's Ecologist and if permission is granted a condition would be recommended to require details of planting to be submitted and implemented. Care needs to be taken with any lighting on the building to avoid light pollution and if permission was granted a planning condition requiring details of any external lighting scheme would be reasonable and necessary to secure this.
109. The design of the proposed building has followed pre-application advice from Officers with a contemporary approach sympathetic to the local vernacular taken rather than a pastiche through the use of narrow gable form, pitched roof and local materials including natural gritstone and blue slate. The use of a sweeping overhanging roof adds interest to the building while maintaining a simple overall form. The use of timber louvres for gables is considered to be appropriate given the setting of the building within woodland.
110. The proposed design is in accordance with the Authority's adopted design guide and is appropriate for this site and its setting. If permission was granted then conditions would be required to secure samples of the proposed walling and roof slates along with finishes of the proposed window and door frames and exposed roof structure. Other conditions to specify minor design details would also be recommended.
111. The proposed building would be heated using an air source heat pump located in the compound to the rear of the building and a high level of insulation would be installed to provide an efficient building and reduced requirement for heating. Finally cross laminated timber would be utilised in the construction sourced from sustainably produced timber. The development therefore incorporates measures to minimise energy consumption in accordance with policy CC1 and the adopted Climate Change and Sustainable Building Supplementary Planning Document.
112. The proposed development would be sited some distance from the Grade II listed Derwent Dam and this along with established intervening tree planting means that the development would not have an adverse impact upon the setting of the dam or any other heritage assets in accordance with policies L3 and LC6.

113. An Ecological Assessment Impact report has been submitted following survey on site. The proposed building would be located on a part of the existing car park and an adjacent grassed area which is used for picnics, occasional motorcycle parking and as a pathway used by visitors. The area of land does not contain any protected species or important habitat. The proposed development and associated parking proposals would result in the removal of one early mature Norway Spruce. These trees are not identified as providing roosting habitat for bats but are likely to be used by foraging bats along the reservoir and by breeding birds.
114. The Authority's ecologist has been consulted and raises no objection to the proposed development provided that it is carried out in accordance with the submitted report and that compensatory planting is provided to mitigate for the impact upon the trees on site along with details of lighting. As discussed above it is necessary for these issues to be dealt with by appropriate planning conditions if permission is granted.
115. The development would require the removal of one early mature Norway Spruce and would be positioned within the root protection area of a number of trees along the northern edge of the site. An arboricultural assessment has been carried out and submitted and recommends mitigation for the retained trees close to the development including the erection of a protective barrier during works, the use of pile foundations and routing service trenches to avoid and reduce impacts upon root systems.
116. Provided that the tree mitigation is carried out and compensatory planting provided the proposed development would not have an unacceptable impact upon trees on site which would be conserved in accordance with policy LC20. This can be secured by an appropriately worded planning condition.
117. Given the distance from the site to the nearest neighbouring properties there are no concerns that impacts related to the proposed building and use on site would result in any significant loss of amenity or privacy to neighbouring properties or undermine their security.
118. In regard to security on site the applicant has advised that they are aware of recent security issues and would intend to install Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) an alarm system and shutters at the new development. The proposed development would be unlikely to generate any significant security issues and there is no evidence to indicate that the development would lead to anti-social or criminal behaviour on site or in the local area. Details of CCTV, external alarm boxes and shutters are not included on the plans and if permission is granted it would be necessary to approve details of these because these elements could potentially undermine the merits of the proposed design.

#### Impact of the development upon the wider area

119. Significant concerns have been raised by the Parish Council and in representations about the potential impact of the proposed development upon visitor numbers, traffic and associated issues such as illegal parking, environmental damage and anti-social and illegal behaviour. Concern has also been raised about the potential impact on existing local businesses.
120. The intention stated by the applicant is to provide additional facilities for visitors to the site. There are existing food and drink, shop, interpretation and toilet facilities on the site and the proposed development would provide additional space for each of these elements along with a 'changing places' facility. The concern raised by the Parish Council and in representations on the other hand is that the proposed development and the café in particular would be a destination in its own right and attract additional visitors.

121. It is acknowledged that the visitor centre and the surrounding reservoirs and valley is popular with visiting members of the public. There is evidence that on busier days such as on weekends and bank holidays that the car parks at and near to the site become full quickly and rather than leaving the area additional visitors arriving by car choose to park illegally either on highway verges, on private land adjacent to Derwent Lane or on the lane itself. This culminated last year with very significant illegal parking issues reported along Derwent Lane and the A57 likely due to interest in the exposed Derwent Village.
122. Within that context therefore, any new development that has the potential to generate significant additional visitor pressure, particularly those arriving by car should be carefully considered. It is likely that existing visitors to the site will make use of the proposed facilities but it is also likely that the presence of a café on site, as opposed to the existing kiosk, could attract additional visitors or encourage visitors to stay longer on site especially taking into account that the facilities may provide new opportunities for different groups of people.
123. It is therefore not possible to conclude that the development would have no impact upon visitor numbers or traffic levels. However this is a popular and well established site and in the context of visitor numbers the scale of the proposed 60 cover café and enlarged shop and exhibition space is not excessive and would not reduce existing off-street parking facilities. Derwent Lane is a clearway and subject to double yellow lines that prohibit stopping and parking at any time and Officers cannot assume that traffic restrictions will not be enforced by the relevant Authority. Therefore while Officers are sympathetic to the issues raised, especially during busier days, it is also therefore difficult to conclude that the development would result in a significant impact.
124. The proposed development would provide additional facilities for serving food and drink on site and it is acknowledged that there are existing pubs and cafes within the local area and nearby villages which provide this service. Given the scale of the proposed development it be unlikely to undermine the viability of any existing community facilities or services (such as pubs or village shops) and issues of competition between businesses is not a material planning consideration.
125. The higher ground around the valley is located within designated conservation sites including the Peak District Moors Special Protection Area (SPA), the South Pennine Moors Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Dark Peak Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Given the distance of the development from these sites it is considered unlikely that the new building and alterations to the car park would have any direct impact.
126. Natural England have been consulted and raise no objection and advise that the Authority can conclude that a significant impact upon the designated sites can be ruled out. Officers agree with Natural England and consider that given the distance of the site from the SPA and SAC that any significant impact upon those sites can be ruled out and that the development would not harm the SSSI for the same reason.

#### Transport, parking and highway safety

127. Notwithstanding the above conclusion Officers have discussed potential means of mitigating the impact of the proposed development upon the local area with the agent along with means of reducing the frequency of illegal parking along Derwent Lane.



128. The Authority's transport Officer advises that the scheme is acceptable in principle but recommends that a small number of additional parking spaces within the established car park should be provided to off-set the potential for visitors to the development.
129. The Authority's transport policies 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. 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.
130. The existing site has a total of 175 car parking spaces and 2 bus spaces. The majority of these spaces are for use by visiting members of the public (i.e. non-operational parking) with a small number of operational parking spaces used by staff. The Highway Authority has raised no objection to the development on the grounds of access, parking or highway safety and therefore ordinarily the Authority would expect the proposed development to make use of the existing car park without the provision of any new spaces.
131. However given the very clear concerns raised by the Parish Council and in representations it is considered reasonable to seek a modest increase in spaces within the footprint of the existing car park to aid in the management of the wider area without harming the site or the National Park. Therefore the proposed additional 12 spaces are considered to be appropriate.
132. Additionally the agent has been in discussions with Derbyshire County Council Highways in regard to the applicant potentially providing funding for civil enforcement officers to patrol Derwent Lane and to potentially propose this as part of the development to be secured with a planning obligation.
133. However Derbyshire County Council have advised that there is no requirement for the applicant to provide funding as the serving of enforcement notices funds the service. Further Derbyshire County Council have agreed starting immediately to pick up Derwent Lane as part of their patrols every weekend for a provisional 6 month period, after which the requirement for continued enforcement will be reviewed and continued if required. This will be the case irrespective of whether planning permission is granted for the proposed development.
134. The commitment from Derbyshire County Council to begin enforcement on Derwent Lane is welcomed. Although this cannot be secured as part of this permission it does potentially provide some comfort that the issues of illegal parking and interference with access for local people reported along Derwent Lane can potentially be resolved or at least mitigated irrespective of whether planning permission is granted for this development.
135. In addition, the applicant proposes to re-paint the double yellow lines along Derwent Lane and to undertake daily patrols of Derwent Lane and inform the civil enforcement team of any parking issues witnessed or reported by local people. The applicant also proposes to review the verges along Derwent Lane with the County Council to establish if any further action can be taken to dissuade illegal parking on these.
136. Finally the applicant proposes to provide a sign on Derwent Lane just before the turning loop. This sign would allow for messages to be displayed such as to inform visitors when the car park is full and allow vehicles to turn using the loop rather than drive all the way up to the visitor centre and back.

137. There is an ongoing need to engage better with the community and stakeholders (Severn Trent, DCC Highways and others) in relation to visitor impacts and officers are considering setting up a liaison group for discussion of the wider issues on a regular basis.
138. Combined, the proposed actions proposed by the applicant are welcomed but with the exception of the proposed sign could not be enforced or formally required as part of this planning application. Officers have concluded that the proposed development would not have a significant impact upon visitor numbers, traffic or illegal parking in the locality and therefore it would not be necessary to require the erection of the sign. If Members determine that the proposed sign is required then this could potentially be secured by a planning condition requiring a sign to be installed before the first occupation of the development.
139. The proposed development includes secure cycle storage adjacent to the building and this is welcomed in accordance with policy LT17.

#### Other Issues

140. Concern has been raised that the proposed development would be contrary to the Equalities act. The proposed building is designed to be accessible and the proposal includes improvement to existing facilities and the inclusion of a changing places facility all of which would potentially improve accessibility at the site to all groups of people. In this regard it is noted that the application is supported by Accessible Derbyshire. It is not appropriate to assume that occupants of the development would operate in a manner that could exclude groups of people.
141. Alternative options for development have been put forward such as a development at Hetherdene car park. These are noted, however the application must be determined on its own merits.
142. Finally the application proposes to utilise an existing septic tank on site for foul drainage. The National Planning Practice Guidance states that foul drainage should be to a mains sewer wherever possible and if not a package treatment plant. Only if this is demonstrated to not be viable or practicable should a septic tank be considered. No evidence has been provided to justify the use of the existing septic tank, given the distance to the main sewer this is unlikely to be viable, however a package treatment plant would seem appropriate. Therefore if permission is granted a condition to require the submission and implementation of a scheme incorporating a package treatment plant would be recommended.

#### Conclusion

143. The proposed development would be of an appropriate design and scale and subject to conditions would not harm the valued characteristics of the National Park, the amenity of the local area and neighbouring properties or highway safety. The proposal would provide enhanced more accessible facilities within an established recreation site. Having taken into account all issues raised in consultation responses and representations and in the absence of other material considerations the proposal is considered to be in accordance with the development plan.
144. The application is therefore recommended for approval subject to conditions.

**Human Rights**

145. Any human rights issues have been considered and addressed in the preparation of this report.

List of Background Papers (not previously published)

146. Nil

Report Author

147. Adam Maxwell – Senior Planner