

**9. FULL APPLICATION - TO INSTALL 4 ADDITIONAL PICNIC BENCHES ON TOP OF THE EXISTING 4 FOR ADDITIONAL SEATING USED BY THE CAFÉ AT MILLERS DALE STATION, UNNAMED ROAD FROM GLEBE FARM TO B6049 MILLERS DALE (NP/HPK/0621/0709, SW)**

**APPLICANT: PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**

**Summary**

1. The proposal for 4 additional timber benches will not harm the setting of the heritage assets, will enhance the amenities available on the site, will not obstruct the main route of the Monsal Trail and does not raise any significant other issues. It is therefore considered to be in accordance with the policies of the development plan and therefore acceptable.

**Site and Surroundings**

2. 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.
3. 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 and is considered to be a non designated heritage asset.
4. 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.
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.
6. Part of the former station has been converted to a café and also provides public toilets, and the recent restoration of the goods shed provides an interpretation point.
7. The benches would be situated on the platform and former track.
8. The Monsal Trail public right of way runs alongside the site, whilst some of the benches are shown down at the level of the old track they would not obstruct the main part of the Monsal trail itself.

**Proposal**

9. The proposal is for 4 no. additional picnic benches to serve the café. The details show these would be timber, 1800mm x 1500mm with a height of 785mm.
10. The submitted layout which includes the existing benches as well as those proposed shows that a total of two benches for the café would be sited on the platform with 6 located on the track level which is slightly lower than the platform.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the application be **APPROVED** subject to the following conditions or modifications -

1. **Standard time limit**
2. **The benches hereby permitted shall not be installed other than as shown on the approved plan 'PB03' and in accordance with the submitted specifications.**

**Key Issues**

11. Would the benches block the public rights of way or make it difficult to manoeuvre around the site.
12. Would the benches harm the significance of the heritage assets.

**History**

13. 2018 NP/HPK/0518/0407 this granted planning permission for change of use of the former station building from office accommodation and workshop to visitor information point and café and an extension to the car park. Condition 17 of the permission requires no outside seating other than in accordance with the approved plans. The approved plan CP02\_EXT showed a total of 4 no. new benches for café customers. These were shown positioned in a line on the platform.

**Consultations**

14. Highway Authority - No highway safety comments to additional benches.
15. District Council – No response to date.
16. Wormhill Parish Council – No Objection.
17. PDNPA Archaeology – No archaeological comments.

**Representations**

18. None have been received

**Main Policies**

19. Relevant Core Strategy policies: GSP1, GSP2, GSP3, GSP4, L1, L3, HC4, RT1, E2.
20. Relevant Local Plan policies: DMC3, DMC5, DMC7, DMC8, DMT5.

**National Planning Policy Framework**

21. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has been revised (2021). 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 particular Paragraph 176 states that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues.

### Core Strategy

22. 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.
23. Policy GSP3 sets 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.
24. 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.
25. Policy L3 would not permit development which failed to conserve or enhance the significance of a heritage asset or its setting.

### Development Management Policies

26. DMC3 requires a high standard of design that does not harm the amenities of the site or neighbouring properties.
27. DMC5 Require that development affecting a heritage asset assesses the impact of the development on the significance of a heritage asset and requires that the significance is conserved or enhanced.
28. DMC7 and DMC8 would not permit development which harmed the significance of a heritage asset or its setting and requires their significance is conserved or enhanced.
29. DMT5 would not permit development which obstructed the route of a public right of way.

### Assessment

30. The benches would be sited permanently on the site and therefore given their impact is permanent, they are considered to be development even if they are not fixed into the ground.
31. The number of benches permitted by the 2018 permission for the café was limited to just the 4 shown on the plans. The reason stated on the decision notice was to enable the National Park Authority to retain control over the extent of the use and to prevent any adverse effect upon the character of the area and the interests of nearby residents.
32. The additional 4 shown raise no further planning issues, they will improve the amenities available at the site and will not harm the amenity of neighbouring properties or the setting of the heritage assets.

33. Whilst it is noted that some are shown on the route of the trail, this section spurs off to Millers Dale Station Car Park so the main route of the Monsal Trail would remain unobstructed by the benches.
34. The proposal is also considered to be in accordance with RT1 and E2 as it is only a small scale addition to an existing facility at an existing recreation hub which currently provides parking for the Monsal Trail, a café, public toilets and interpretation in the recently restored Goods Shed.

#### Conclusion

35. The proposal is in accordance with the policies of the development plan and should be approved.

#### Human Rights

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

#### List of Background Papers (not previously published)

37. Nil
38. Report Author – Steven Wigglesworth