

12. FULL APPLICATION - DEVELOPMENT OF AN EXISTING COMPOUND AREA WITHIN THE CURTILAGE OF MILLERS DALE STATION INTO A CHANGING PLACES FACILITY THAT WILL BE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. (NP/DDD/0823/0972 GB) P. 10804

APPLICANT: Peak District National Park Authority

Summary

1. The proposals comprise the erection of a new 'Changing Places' building within the car park of Millers Dale station yard.
2. The proposed building is to provide public changing and washing facilities for people with profound mobility or learning difficulties who cannot use regular toilet facilities. The building would provide for sufficient room for users and their carers. The building would also provide secure storage for a 'Tramper' off-road mobility scooter which would be available for hire using a free booking system.
3. The proposed purpose-built building would reflect the appearance of a Midland Railway goods wagon, but be permanently attached to the ground to allow for services connections and wheelchair access.
4. The proposals, are considered to further opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the National Park whilst conserving its built and landscape heritage.
5. The application is therefore recommended for conditional approval.

Site and Surroundings

6. The application site falls within the Millers Dale Station complex approximately 400m south-west of Millers Dale, and 1.6km south-east of Wormhill, on the mid-slopes of the Wye Valley. The site stands within Millers Dale Conservation Area.
7. The proposed building would be located immediately north of the Monsal Trail and between the former station building and restored former station shed known as the Goods Shed, now operating as visitor and interpretation centre. The site is currently part of the wider yard serving the trail and visitor centre, and would be accessible from the car park.
8. The Visitor Centre and its car park is a popular visitor destination and important access point to the multi-user Monsal Trail. The station building is located on the old platform. Attached to the building are conventional public toilets, an open compound where the sewage treatment plant is located, a small brick tool shed and the recently conserved goods shed.
9. The site is highly accessible and visible by the public due to its close proximity to the trail and car park. The Goods Shed is a visitor attraction providing engagement and interpretation for visitors and the National Park Authority owned car park which caters for visitors travelling by car.

Proposal

10. The proposal comprises the construction of a permanent bespoke changing facility which is designed to accommodate more complex needs in terms of internal space, access and internal washing, changing and sanitary facilities. Changing Places is a national consortium campaigning for the provision of appropriate facilities for users with more complex mobility and learning needs. The Changing Places Consortium supports the

installation of CP toilets in key public buildings. Members of the Consortium are: PAMIS, Muscular Dystrophy UK, Martin Jackaman and Centre for Accessible Environments

11. A Changing Places facility will normally comprise: A height-adjustable, adult-sized changing bench; Ceiling track hoist system; Adequate space for the disabled person and up to two assistants; Peninsular toilet with space both sides for assistants; Privacy screen; Wide paper roll; Large waste disposal bin; Washbasin, preferably height adjustable, and; Back rest on toilet seat.
12. The range and specifications of such facilities determines the scale of the space within which they are presented in an accessible form. To accommodate these facilities at the visitor centre a new bespoke building is proposed.
13. An innovative design approach has been developed whereby the building will reflect the form and character of a former Midland Railway goods wagon which historically would have been utilised on the former railway through Millers Dale. The simple goods carriage form of the building would include a distinctive shallow arc-profile to the black corrugated sheeting roof and horizontal larch cladding with external visible steel framework in anthracite to the side elevations. A single wide-access door would be provided to the front elevation with double doors to the gable end of the Tramper store section. The floor height will allow ramp-less access to the building from the car park.
14. Specifically the building footprint would measure approximately 6.7m x 3.2m, (including a lower Tramper mobility scooter storage section with an overhanging eaves of 0.1m all around. The building would have a maximum height of 3.2m height to the shallow arched roof, with eaves height to 2.5m. The Tramper store section would be to the western elevation and have a lower roof height to 2.4m.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **That the application be APPROVED subject to the following conditions -**
2. **Standard time limit**
3. **Carry out in accordance with specified approved plans**
4. **External paintwork to be maintained as dark recessive colours**

Key Issues

- 15 The principle of the provision of visitor facilities for people with specific needs and its implications in relation to National park purposes.
- 16 The impact of the development on the appearance of the built environment and landscape of the National Park, including Millers Dale Conservation Area.

History

- 17 1982: Planning permission granted conditionally for public toilets, ranger base, car park and septic tank.
- 18 1992: Planning permission granted unconditionally for car park extension.
- 19 2004: Planning permission granted on a temporary basis for siting of mobile refreshment vehicle.
- 20 2018: Planning permission granted conditionally for change of use of former station building from office and workshop to visitor information point and café, extension to car park (NP/HPK/0518/0407).

- 21 2018: Planning permission granted conditionally for replacement roof to derelict railway goods shed and change the use of the building to incorporate interpretation (NP/HPK/1118/1010).
- 22 2022: Planning Permission granted to install 4 additional picnic benches for additional seating to the café NP/HPK/0621/0709).

Consultations

23. Derbyshire County Council Highways - No objections.
24. Wormhill Parish Council - No comments received
25. Derbyshire Dales District Council – No response received.
26. National Park Authority Archaeologist: No objections.

Representations

27. No representations received.

Main Policies

28. Relevant Core Strategy policies: GSP1, GSP2, GSP3, GSP4, L1, RT1.
29. Relevant Development Management policies: DM1, DMC1, DMC3, DMC4, DMC5, DMC8.

National Planning Policy Framework

30. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was revised in September 2023. 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 the Development Management Policies 2019. 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 Government guidance in the NPPF.
31. Para 176 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.'
32. Para 177 explains that when considering applications for development within National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:

- (a) the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;
- (b) the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and
any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.

Core Strategy

- 33. 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). GSP1 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.
- 34. Policy GSP2 says that opportunities for enhancing the valued characteristics of the National Park will be identified and acted upon, and opportunities will be taken to enhance the National Park by the treatment or removal of undesirable features or buildings.
- 35. 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.
- 36. Policy L1 requires that development must conserve and enhance valued landscape Character, as identified in the Landscape Strategy and Action Plan and other valued characteristics, and other than in exceptional circumstances, proposals in the Natural Zone will not be permitted.
- 37. RT1 states that 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. New provision must justify its location in relation to environmental capacity, scale and intensity of use or activity. 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. 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.

Development Management Policies

- 38. DM1 sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development in the context of National Park Purposes.
- 39. The Development Management Policies DPD requires a high standard of design (DMC3), and require any heritage asset's significance to be identified and conserved or enhanced through development (DMC5).

40. DMC4 seeks to ensure development respects and complements the historic form and extent of settlements and landscape character.
41. DMC5 requires proposals to have regard to the significance of any designated or non-designated heritage asset it may affect, proportionate to the level of significance and why the proposals are desirable or necessary.
42. DMC8 relates to Conservation Areas and requires development proposals to preserve or enhance the particular qualities of the particular heritage asset.

Assessment

Principle

43. The proposal for the provision of a specialist changing and toilet facility to meet the needs of a wider spectrum of visitors to the national park would be supported through policies GSP1 and DS1. Planning permission was granted for the provision of a Changing Places facility at Chatsworth House in 2022 (NP/DDD/1122/1441) with the principle accepted as positively furthering the second statutory purpose.

Design and Appearance

44. The proposal comprises an innovative design for the freestanding facility which would not reflect the built vernacular of the national park in most locations. The proposals as described above present a structure in the form and appearance of a vintage goods wagon of the former Midland Railway. The scale of the building reflects the need for additional internal space for the changing places room but would still be subservient in scale to the station building café and visitor centre (restored former goods shed) between which it would be sited. Whilst not authentic rolling stock, and without bogies (railway wheel assemblies) the building would reflect the heritage of the site and strengthen the historic association of the wider site with the railways network and former use.
45. The materials and external finishes as proposed would be broadly faithful to the rolling stock it reflects, but would be atypical of conventional masonry-built buildings in the vicinity. Nevertheless, this is considered to be an imaginative and sensitive approach to the provision of a new building within the former railway station yard context. The location of the facility immediately between to the former railway station office and the Goods Shed provides an appropriate and mutually supportive context for the specific design proposed.
46. As well as being an innovative design solution appropriate to its particular setting and historic context, the proposed building would be screened to a considerable degree in views from the Monsal Trail area by both the Goods Shed and station office building and by the retained former façade of the railway building linking the station building to the Goods Shed which separates the car park from the trail and former platform areas which are used partly as outdoor eating area to the café. The site of the building would be within a service compound area separated from the car park and not used for public parking.
47. Consequently, the building would have very low landscape prominence and be viewed only in immediate vistas from nearby on the trail (through the windowed façade) and from limited parts of the car park environs. Tree cover to the north of the car park and the steep valley terrain beyond the station yard area would serve to screen the building in the wider landscape.

48. Consequent to its unique setting within the station yard, its screened setting and subservient scale, the innovative non-conventional design concept as historic rolling stock is considered to be appropriate to the site. It is considered to satisfy policies GSP3, L3, DMC3, and would therefore be satisfied in relation to design and conservation matters as a consequence of the proposals.

Heritage Considerations

49. The site falls within the Millers Dale Conservation Area. The building would be positioned approximately 45m north-west of the Grade II listed north and south viaducts carrying the trail over the River Wye. The screened position of the proposed changing place building is considered not to affect the setting of the viaducts.
50. Policy requires that proposed development which falls within or affects the setting of a Conservation Area must preserve or enhance the heritage significance site. The current site is a utilitarian service compound standing between the Monsal Trail (former platforms), the station office (café), Goods Shed visitor centre and the National Park owned car park. The specific compound within which the building would stand is characterised by a concrete hardstanding, sewage package plant building and general storage space.
51. The siting of the proposed building within the semi-enclosed space would have no harmful impact on the historic character or integrity of the wider yard site, and as such be considered to at least preserve the site's heritage significance. The innovative design concept, whilst generally screened from the trail, could be found to also present modest enhancement value.
52. the National Park Authority Archaeologist has confirmed there are no archaeological concerns arising from the proposals.

Conclusion

53. In conclusion, the proposals would provide an important public facility that would directly allow for people with more profound physical and learning challenges to more easily experience and enjoy the special qualities of National Park, and thereby furthering the second statutory purpose. The building would complement the wider visitor attraction and accessible multi-user trail facility at Millers Dale. The innovative design of the changing facility would have a low overall landscape prominence and would conserve the character and appearance of the site and setting, including its heritage significance. No conflict between the first and second statutory purposes are considered to arise, and the Sandford Principle would no therefore be material to the determination of the application.
54. The proposals are therefore considered to be in accordance with the policies of the development plan and the NPPF and are recommended for approval.
55. There are no further material considerations that would indicate that planning permission should be refused.

Human Rights

56. Any human rights issues have been considered and addressed in the preparation of this report.
57. List of Background Papers (not previously published) Nil
58. Planning Officer – Graham Bradford