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**Design, Access and Heritage Statement
Retrospective Planning Application
17 Back Lane, Charlesworth, SK13 5HJ
Within Charlesworth Conservation Area**



1. Introduction

This statement has been prepared in support of a retrospective planning application relating to engineering works at 17 Back Lane, Charlesworth.

The application seeks permission for:

- The removal of an existing earth bank, and
- The installation of a timber railway sleeper retaining structure and French drain to redirect existing man made land drain.

The document has been prepared in accordance with:

- High Peak Borough Council Local Validation Requirements
- The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Section 12

In line with HPBC validation guidance, this statement combines both:

- A Design and Access Statement, and
- A Heritage Statement, as the site lies within a conservation area

2. Site Context and Conservation Area Setting

The site lies within the Charlesworth Conservation Area, one of several designated areas within High Peak recognised for their special architectural and historic interest .

Conservation areas are designated to ensure that:

- The character, appearance, and historic layout are preserved or enhanced
- Features such as landform, landscape, and infrastructure contribute to significance

The application site comprises land adjacent to:

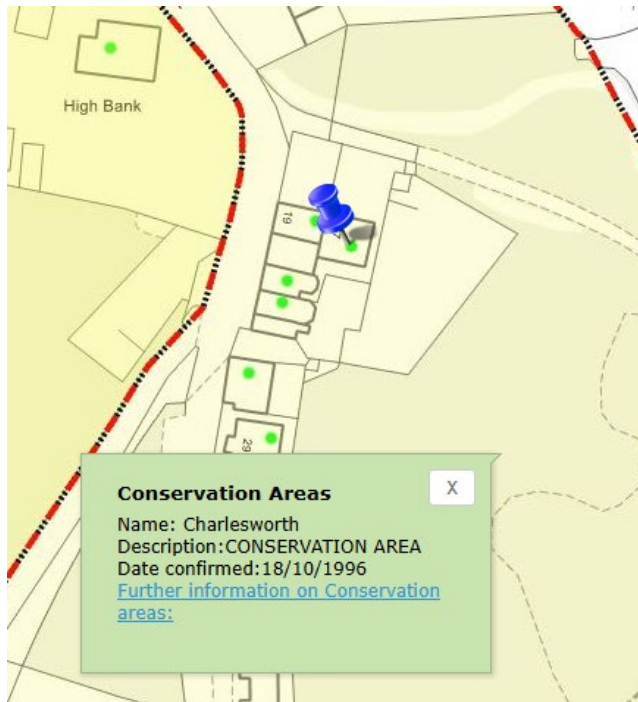
- A farm track
- A historic manmade land drain
- A previously sloping earth embankment of approximately 7 cubic meters

The wider character is:

- Semi-rural
- Functional/infrastructural in nature
- Influenced by transport and engineered landforms

Reference has been made to the Charlesworth Conservation Area Character Appraisal, which identifies the importance of:

- Landscape features
- Historic spatial relationships
- Functional infrastructure within the valley setting



3. Description of Development (Retrospective)

The works comprise:

- Removal of an unstable earth bank
- Repair and stabilisation works to a existing man made land drain
- Installation of a railway sleeper retaining wall with French drain behind.
- New Post and Rail Fence - so track is not widened

The works have already been completed due to urgent structural and safety concerns.



4. Justification and Need for Works

The development was required due to:

- Progressive erosion of the bank caused by existing man made land drain overflow
- Ongoing washout undermining the land and track
- Risk to the adjacent wall structure
- Potential land instability and collapse

The works were therefore necessary to:

- Enable safe access for culvert diversion
- Prevent further erosion
- Safeguard infrastructure and public safety

This constitutes a significant material consideration, particularly where failure to act could result in further damage.

5. Design Principles (HPBC Requirements)

In accordance with HPBC validation requirements, the following design principles have been applied:

5.1 Context Appraisal

The proposal responds to:

- The functional and engineered character of the site
- The semi-rural conservation area setting
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5.2 Design Approach

The design is:

- Engineering-led and minimal in scale
- Focused on stability and durability
- Designed to be visually recessive

5.3 Materials and Appearance

- Timber railway sleepers were selected as they:
 - Reflect traditional and utilitarian materials
 - Are commonly used in rural contexts
 - Provide a less visually intrusive solution than concrete

HPBC guidance requires materials and detailing to be appropriate to context, including finishes and appearance

5.4 Scale and Layout

- The structure is limited to the minimum required height
- It follows the line of the former bank and existing fence
- It does not introduce prominent built form

6. Access Statement

In accordance with statutory requirements:

- No changes have been made to:
 - Vehicular access
 - Pedestrian access
 - Highway arrangements
- Temporary access required for construction has ceased

The development raises no access or inclusive design issues.

7. Heritage Statement (Conservation Area Assessment)

7.1 Identification of Heritage Asset

The site is located within the Charlesworth Conservation Area, a designated heritage asset.

There are:

- No listed buildings directly affected
- No impact on designated structures

7.2 Significance of the Conservation Area

The significance derives from:

- Historic settlement pattern
- Relationship between built form and landscape
- Presence of infrastructure such as transport routes and watercourses

These elements collectively contribute to the area's character and appearance, which must be preserved or enhanced

7.3 Impact Assessment

The proposal has been assessed in accordance with NPPF and HPBC policy.

Impact on character:

- The works are engineering in nature, reflecting existing site use
- The timber sleeper structure is low-profile and visually recessive
- The intervention replaces a visually degraded and unstable bank

Impact on setting:

- No interruption of key views or spatial relationships
- No impact on historic buildings
- Retains the functional infrastructure character

Impact on significance:

- The proposal results in no harm to the conservation area
- It supports the ongoing maintenance and stability of the landscape

7.4 Compliance with Policy

The proposal accords with:

- Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (duty to preserve or enhance conservation areas)
- NPPF Section 12 (conserving and enhancing the historic environment)
- High Peak Local Plan and Design Guide (requiring context-led, sympathetic design)

7.5 Justification (Public Benefit)

Even in the absence of harm, the proposal provides clear benefits:

- Stabilisation of land and infrastructure
- Prevention of further erosion
- Protection of track and surrounding environment

These works ensure the long-term preservation of the site's physical integrity, which supports the conservation area.

8. Planning Considerations (Retrospective)

Although retrospective, the development is justified because:

- It was necessary and urgent
- It prevents further structural and environmental damage
- It complies with design and heritage policy requirements

HPBC requires sufficient detail to assess proposals in context, including materials and relationship to surroundings – this has been addressed within this statement.

9. Conclusion

The removal of the unstable bank and installation of a timber retaining structure:

- Is proportionate and necessary
- Has been designed with full regard to conservation area context
- Preserves the character and appearance of the Charlesworth Conservation Area
- Results in no heritage harm

The development is therefore considered compliant with:

- Local and national planning policy
- High Peak Borough Council validation requirements

Retrospective planning permission is respectfully sought.