

Conservation Team Advice

Date: 27/05/2026

Application Ref: HPK/2026/0137

Site Address: 17 Back Lane, Charlesworth

Proposal: Retrospective application for the removal of an existing earth bank, and the installation of a timber railway sleeper retaining structure and French Drain. A new 950mm high post and rail fence also constructed to avoid track being widened

Heritage assets affected:		
Designated Heritage Asset(s):	☒	Charlesworth Conservation Area
Non-Designated Heritage Assets(s) (NDHAs):	☐	

Conservation Advice

Summary of Significance

No. 19 -25 Back Lane are a row of original cottages, characteristic of the conservation area, in both proportions and materials. The application site consists of a section of land to the rear of no. 17 Back Lane of a private access track to the rear of the row of terraces. The section of trackway leads to a former quarry located to the rear of Back Lane.

Assessment and Impact

The application seeks retrospective consent for the removal of an earth bank, and the installation of a timber railway sleeper retaining structure with post and rail fence in front.

The use of railway sleepers is uncharacteristic of the conservation area. Due to the land levels across Charlesworth retaining walls are common within the conservation area. However, these are traditionally dry-stone walls. The Grade II listed retaining wall at the Independent Chapel offers a key local example of this.

On this basis a dry-stone finish would be more in keeping with the tradition of retaining walls within the conservation area. While an alternative dry-stone wall would be a more in keeping final appearance, it may be possible to clad the retaining wall in natural stone slips to create the visual appearance of a dry-stone retaining wall.

Legislation and PolicyTown and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Section 72(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that with respect to any buildings or land in a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of that area.

National Planning Policy Framework

In determining applications, local authorities should take account of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation, the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality, the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness (par.210).

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, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use. (para 215)

Local Development Framework

Consideration should also be given to the following documents and local development framework policies:

- High Peak Local Plan (Adopted 2016) – EQ7 Built and Historic Environment
- Charlesworth conservation area character appraisal (Adopted October 2010)

Conclusions and Recommendations

In summary, the use of railway sleepers as a retaining wall is uncharacteristic of the Conservation Area. A dry-stone wall would be a more in keeping finish, to match the entrance to the private lane. However, the visibility of the structure from the public domain is very limited and restricted predominantly to the boundary fence. As such the level of harm to the conservation area is low, in terms of planning policy this is considered to be less than substantial harm (NPPF 215).

Conservation Officer: Rachel Robinson
High Peak Borough Council