

Consultation Response from KC, Conservation and Design		
2021/90304 off, Low Westwood Lane, Wellhouse, Golcar, Huddersfield, HD7 4EW		
Erection of 7 dwellings, car parking and associated works (within a Conservation Area)		
Date Responded: 29.3.21	Responding Officer: Sue Oakley	Responding Ref:
<p>The brick arches on Low Westwood Lane in Wellhouse are unlisted structures within the Linthwaite Conservation Area and are located adjacent to a group of coal drops. Historic maps and photograph show a former goods shed / warehouse on the site and the arches appear to be the remains of this structure. They have some historic interest as an interesting remnant of railway architecture and industrial history within Linthwaite, although in its present condition the site makes a slight negative contribution to the character of the conservation area.</p> <p>The arches are situated on a prominent hillside directly in front of the main railway line running through the Colne Valley, and are visible from many aspects including from the opposite hillside and along Manchester Road. The steep hillside behind is semi-rural, with scattered terraces of C19 cottages and other dwellings amongst fields which are bounded by dry stone walls, all within the Wellhouse Conservation Area, and opposite the coal drops within the Linthwaite Conservation Area are the Grade II listed 3 and 3a Low Westwood Lane. The predominant material in this area is stone, with some structures, including the arches, constructed in red brick.</p> <p>An application for the conversion of the adjacent former coal drops into storage and office units was approved in 2019 (2019/91524).</p> <p>The applicant proposes to convert the seven arches into seven two-storey town houses / apartments, with the structures extended forward of the arches by 3m to create additional accommodation. The projecting element is constructed with brick dividing walls, full glazing with Juliet balconies, and flat sedum roofs. The arches will be fully enclosed and the application states that they will be partially visible through the glazed facades of the new dwellings.</p> <p>Policy LP24 requires the form, scale, layout and details of all development to respect and enhance the character of the townscape, heritage assets and landscape.</p> <p>Policy LP35 of the Kirklees Local Plan requires development proposals affecting a designated heritage asset (in this case the conservation areas and nearby listed buildings) to preserve or enhance the significance of the asset and ensure that proposals within conservation areas conserve those elements which contribute to their significance. The use of extensive glass will add a construction material which is not typical of the vernacular materials in this area and will be highly visible across the valley and along Manchester Road. The use of this material, along with construction in front of the arches, is not considered to enhance the conservation area or conserve this historic railway structure which contributes to its significance.</p> <p>It also states that proposals which would remove, harm or undermine the significance of a non-designated heritage asset, or its contribution to the character of a place, will be permitted only where benefits of the development outweigh the harm, having regard to the scale of the harm and the significance of the heritage asset. The proposal to build extensions in front of the arches, which are non-designated heritage assets, will obscure them, although with possible glimpses of them through the glass.</p> <p>Although the Conservation and Design Team support the principle of bringing these arches into use, this proposal, which is in a prominent location and semi-rural setting, is considered to lead to less than substantial harm the character and significance of the Linthwaite and Wellhouse Conservation Areas.</p>		

Paragraph 196 of the NPPF requires public benefits to be demonstrated to outweigh this harm. The public benefits of bringing a derelict site into use goes some way towards justifying development on this site but the design and access statement does not demonstrate that alternative, less harmful, options have been considered, which retain an unobstructed view of the arches without the use of an expanse of glazing.

The Conservation and Design Team do not consider these benefits to outweigh the harm and are therefore unable to support this proposal.