Consultation Response from KC, Conservation & Design
2025/91217 Railway Viaduct MDL1/19, Halifax Road/Bradford Road, Dewsbury, WF13 2BD
Listed Building Consent for installation of five overhead electric line equipment portals on piers 1, 4, 6, 7 & 9 with supporting wall brackets
Date Responded: 24/6/25 Responding Officer: SC Responding Ref:

As this is a Re-submission of Application Reference 2022/90281 which was granted consent on 11th April 2022 (now expired), please find below the previous report and assessment.

Site Description

The Grade II Dewsbury Viaduct and officially numbered MDL1/19 is located to the immediate north North of Dewsbury Town Centre. The viaduct feeds direct out of the Dewsbury Station and the Viaduct is clearly appreciated from the Station platforms. The Viaduct spans some 204 metres over several key roads feeding into and out of the centre of Dewsbury of the inner ring road. The Viaduct forms a hugely important part of the Townscape and is a widely recognisable structure and can be appreciated from a wider setting. The Viaduct is not within the Dewsbury Conservation Area but is within its immediate setting.

The Viaduct was constructed in circa 1848, constructed in Rock-faced deeply coursed stone. The Viaduct has 12 segmental arches and is of a slightly curved plan form.

Description of Proposal

The proposed works are for the installation of 5 overhead electrically line equipment portals at piers 1,4, 6, 7 and 9 which include the fitting of supporting wall brackets to the outside of the parapet.

History of negotiations / amendments received

There has been prior engagement and discussion between Network Rail, The Local Authority and Historic England which has allowed for the detail to be agreed and no amendments required through the application process. The discussions as set out in the submitted Heritage Statement considered all options to reduce and mitigate impacts.

Assessment

Significance

The Grade II Dewsbury Viaduct is a good example of a largely unaltered 1840's railway viaduct, which is associated to the second main phase of railway developments. The significance of the viaduct is in part due to the association to the Leeds, Dewsbury and Manchester Railway. The Viaduct was constructed to unlock key links for the railway network and ensure the successful movement of not only passengers, but also commercial goods.

The railway Viaduct is a great example of the hugely impressive engineering achievements of the period with the continuing development of the railways in the 1840's and 1850's and the need to come up with engineered designs which would allow for the expansion of the railway, but also showed the passion of those designing these structures that it was not purely about function, but also about the form and design. The engineer responsible for the Viaduct is unclear, we do however understand the Viaduct was constructed for the L & N.W.R.Co.

As noted, the Viaduct was not only designed with function in mind, but also attention was given the design and aesthetic. The ability to span between the two section of higher ground, and yet create a structure which is so striking. The Viaduct forms a key recognisable element Dewsbury Townscape and is experienced by all that travel along it on the railway, travel beneath or alongside it.

Impact of the proposal on significance

The proposals will see the fixing of 5 overhead electrically line equipment portals to the exterior of the Listed Viaduct. As set out in the combined report there have been reasonable discussions prior to the submission of the application to discuss and understand the implications of the works and to consider all possible variables. The main consideration is that the proposals will see the 5 units affixed to the outside the viaduct structure of which create some harm to the listed structure. As set out in the submitted report consideration of placing the portals to the inside of the parapet were discounted due to requires distance and the works which would be required to attain this, which would have had a greater impact to the structure. The number of units has been kept the minimum required, to further reduce the visual impact. Given the span of the Viaduct 5 units will have some negative impact on what is currently unimpeded views looking along and onto the Viaduct.

As noted the Viaduct forms part of the setting of the Dewsbury Conservation area, with views of the Viaduct from several key site lines and vantage points. The addition of the portals will also create some negative visual impact, however the impact to the Conservation Area will be lesser.

It is considered that there have been reasonable steps to help to reduce and mitigate against impacts to the Listed Viaduct. Along with the proposed portals there are to be a series of repair works undertaken, of which will ensure the future maintenance and longevity of the Viaduct.

Conclusion

Paragraph 199 of the NPPF states that:

“When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.”

Paragraph 202 goes on to state that:

“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.”

Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that any

application for development must preserve the character and appearance of the listed building.

Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

This application has been assessed against relevant policies in the development plan and other material considerations. It is clear that the proposals will have a directly harmful impact on the Listed Union Mill Viaduct with the fixing of the 4 overhead portals to the exterior of the Parapet. The addition of the portals will also have some impact on the setting of the Conservation Area, view views onto the Viaduct from within the area altered.

This being said the proposals will also see repairs carried out to the Viaduct, which are in part a positive element of the proposals.

In regard to the harm. As stated previously works to the Viaduct forms part of a large improvement scheme to the line of which will deliver positive improvements to the service of the line. The harm to the Viaduct is considered to be less than substantial and therefore balanced against the Public Benefit. Given that the works form a part of line wide improvements of which are aimed at delivering rail improvement to the area the public benefits are clearly evidenced. The benefits of the scheme are therefore considered to outweigh the harm to the Listed Viaduct.

Discharge of Conditions

2024/92753 Discharged Conditions 3,4,5 on 19/11/24

2025/90625 Discharged Condition 6 on 1/5/25

Therefore, only Condition 1 & 2 are necessary for this application.

1. The development shall be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date on which consent is granted. Reason: Pursuant to Section 18(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in complete accordance with the plans and specifications schedule listed in this decision notice except as may be specified in the conditions attached to this permission, which shall in all cases take precedence. Reason: For the avoidance of doubt as to what is being permitted and to ensure the satisfactory appearance of the development on completion, in the interests of the significance of the heritage asset and to accord within the National Planning Policy Framework