Planning Officer's Report; S&DR Friends Meeting 5 May 2022

New applications and recent decisions are in red type. Any updates will be reported at the meeting. Items 2o Burtree Solar Farm, 2q Darlington Central Park, and 3d Eaglescliffe Station need to be discussed in order to agree what action we should take. Other items will be taken as read unless members have questions to ask or comments to make.

1 DURHAM COUNTY

d DM/21/01647/FPA Change of use of land for the keeping of horses and erection of stables together with the erection of domestic storage building. North Leazes Smallholding Low Greenfields St Helen Auckland

Further to last month's report, this application was **refused** on 8 April for the following reason;
In the opinion of the Local Planning Authority the development by reason of its design and location causes harm to the character and appearance of the countryside and setting of the Stockton to Darlington Scheduled Monument, contrary to Policies 10, 29, 39, 44 and 46 of the County Durham Plan and Parts 12 and 15 and 16 of the NPPF.

e DRC/22/00103 | Discharge of conditions 4 (contamination), 6 (landscaping), 8 (external appearance) and 11 (bridleway resurfacing) pursuant to DM/21/01954/FPA | Land To The South Of Bridge Inn Gordon Lane Ramshaw

Further to last month's report, these submitted landscaping details have omitted the hedge required along the northern boundary next to the site of the Haggerleases branch. We have asked for this to be remedied.

f **DM/04293/FPA Installation of below ground pipeline from Lartington Water Treatment Works to Shildon Service Reservoir**

h DM/22/00002/FPA Change of use of public house to mixed public house and hotel including three storey rear extension and conversion of loft space including 3no. dormer windows to front and 1no. box dormer to rear to provide guest and owner sleeping accommodation Timothy Hackworth 107 Main Street Shildon

i DM/22/00717/FPA Construction of a new collection building for Locomotion with associated access and landscaping; Land West Of Locomotion The NRM At Shildon Dale Road Industrial Estate Shildon DL4 2RE

Further to previous reports, no progress has been made in deciding the above three applications.

j DRC/22/00067 | Discharge of condition 4 (phasing plan - Phase 1 ONLY) pursuant to planning permission DM/19/00283/OUT | Land To The North Of Newton Park Services Newton Park Coatham Mundeville DL1 3N

Further to last month's report, permission has been granted for the extent of Phase 1 of the development but not yet for its details. Agents for the developers have held a consultation exercise seeking views before submitting the detailed planning application. Comments based on the views of last month's meeting were submitted to meet the deadline of 24 April. These, with a plan of the proposals, can be found at Appendix 1j at the end of this report.
County Councillor Jim Atkinson kindly arranged for me to meet the developers' representative and Council Officers on site and I will report the outcome of the meeting.

k DM/22/01041/AD Lectern information board for Northern Saint's Trail at Low Greenfields

Durham CC has applied to erect a series of information boards about the Northern Saints Trail and one is on the S&DR Etherley Incline at Low Greenfields. The board includes information about the S&DR.

2 DARLINGTON BOROUGH

a Land at Vulcan Street/East of Wards Industrial Estate 19/00108/FUL

Further to previous reports, landscaping proposals have still not been submitted.

d Fighting Cocks Platform 1 conversion from public house to Sainsbury's convenience store 22/00216/FUL | Installation of ATM on west elevation

Further to last month's report, permission was **granted** on 19 April.

22/00254/ADV | Display of 1 no. externally illuminated double sided projecting sign, 1 no. ATM surround sign and re-location of 4 no. wall mounted signs on west elevation

Further to last month's report, permission was **granted** on 19 April with the condition we requested that the illuminated signs be extinguished when the store is closed.

f 21/00529/FUL Residential development comprising of 260 no. dwellings including access, open space, landscaping, sustainable drainage systems and associated infrastructure and works Land To The West & South Of Station Road Station Road MIDDLETON ST GEORGE

m 21/01353/FUL Site of Former Corus Works (East Site) Whessoe Road DARLINGTON

n 21/01468/OUT | Outline application with all matters reserved for mixed use development consisting of light industrial, general industrial, storage and distribution uses and/or hot food takeaway and a petrol filling station with associated retailing Land East Of Lingfield Estate Lingfield Point DARLINGTON

Further to previous reports no progress has been made in deciding the above three applications.

o 22/00213/FUL | Installation of a solar farm comprising of ground mounted bifacial solar panels, access tracks, string inverters, transformers, substation, storage containers, underground cables and conduits, perimeter fence, temporary construction compound and associated infrastructure and planting scheme | Land North Of Burtree Lane Burtree Lane DARLINGTON

Further to discussion at last month's meeting, comments have been submitted to meet the deadline of 25 April based on the views of members. These are attached as Appendix 2o at the end of this report. The Heritage Action Zone Projects Officer, the Council's Footpaths Officer and the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (Durham CPRE) have submitted comments supporting our position.
Members' views are sought on Sedgefield MP Paul Howell's offer to discuss our concerns.

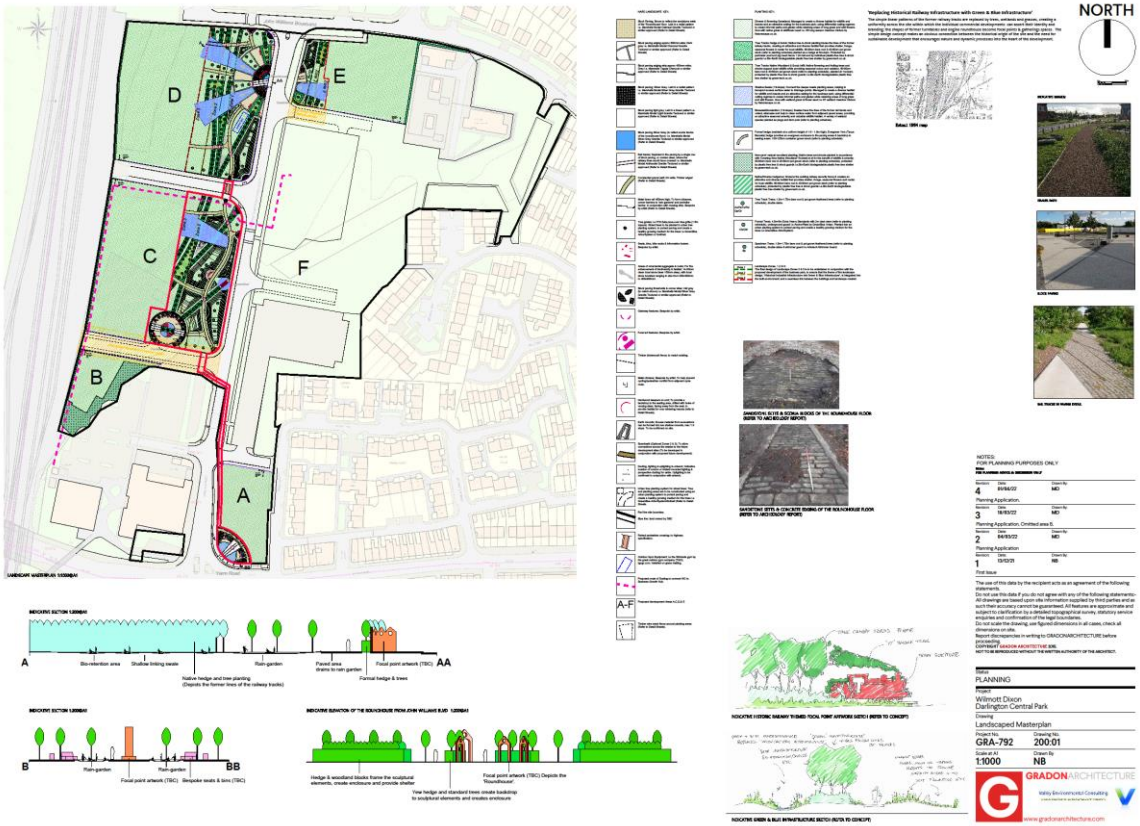
p. Greater Faverdale (Burtree Garden Village) Design Code SPD

We have been consulted on a Supplementary Planning Document regarding the design of the proposed Burtree Garden Village to the north of Faverdale. The Bishop (ex S&DR) Line forms its eastern boundary. The document is mainly devoted to the physical design and appearance of the proposed 'garden village', but we have submitted the following comments in order to highlight matters relevant to the S&DR:

The Friends of the Stockton& Darlington Railway are concerned that the proposed development will further reduce the rural gap between Darlington and Newton Aycliffe and thus harm the setting of the Stockton & Darlington Railway as it existed when it opened in 1825. Every effort should be made in the design, appearance and landscaping of the Garden Village to compensate for the change from rural countryside.
The Master Plan should include the Walking and Cycling Route within an attractively landscaped railside corridor which protects the setting of the S&DR (Local Plan Policy ENV2) and provides links into the adjoining development.
Any new railway station should incorporate design elements and features which are inspired by and acknowledge association with the former S&DR.
The development should provide financial or in kind contribution to the S&DR Heritage Action Zone proposals for interpretation and waymarking.

q 22/00352/ DC and 22/00353/DC Land At Central Park John Dixon Lane, with construction of footpaths, installation of artwork features, seating, etc.

We have been asked for our comments on proposed landscaping with footpaths, artwork features, seating, etc on land at Central Park, the site of existing and proposed prestigious enterprise and research development. These proposals reflect the post-S&DR rail heritage of the site in the footprint of the roundhouse and turntable, replicate the former rail lines in new green plantings and take inspiration in materials from the sandstone setts and scoria blocks excavated in the archaeology works.
I recommended that we write in support and recommend that directional signing will take people through here on the way from Bank Top Station to join the S&DR walking/cycling route at Haughton Road; and suggest the focal point sculpture train ought to be an S&DR engine, not necessarily No.1 but something early perhaps.
Comments are requested by 11 May and members' views are sought.



3 STOCKTON BOROUGH

d 22/0904/DLO | Prior approval for erection of new footbridge including lifts and new staircases, demolition of the existing footbridge, ticket office and taxi office, construction of new modular waiting shelter and taxi building. | Eaglescliffe Railway Station Station Road Eaglescliffe TS16 0BT

Presumably passengers with cycles will be able to wheel their machines across the bridge, using lifts, in order to access trains. However we should ask if it will be permitted for non-passengers to use the bridge as part of the Walking and Cycling Route and for it to be available at all times.
Some members have questioned the need for such a comprehensive replacement of the bridge, removing features of railway heritage, even though these are not of S&DR significance. Also, should there be ramped accesses, to replace or in addition to lifts? These, and any other issues of concern, need to be discussed so that we can submit our comments by the deadline of 13 May.

e 22/0664/FUL | Application for a new access roads for the creation of 100no vehicle spaces to include the installation of 10no electric vehicle charging station and any associated ancillary works to include 2 metre high palisade fencing. | Land To The East Of Cleasby Way Eaglescliffe

Comments were required by 28 April and we submitted the following:

The Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway support this application and they have the following comments for your consideration:
The proposed car park will provide a link in the Stockton & Darlington Railway Walking and Cycling Route between Durham Lane and Yarm Road, via the proposed new station footbridge, until it is replaced by the longer term intention to route it through the Black Diamond subway.
The submitted layout plan shows a 'footway only' connection to Wass Way; this should be available also to cyclists.
The cycle storage area next to the access to the proposed new footbridge is noted and a marked route between it and the Wass Way access should be provided to guide cyclists safely through the car park.

Ross Chisholm
Planning Officer
FSDR
02 05 2022

Appendix 1j Forrest Park Phase 1 pre-application consultation: FSDR Comments

Thank you for seeking the comments of the Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway on this pre-application consultation.
Notwithstanding the following comments, the Friends have resolved to continue to campaign for the Walking and Cycling Heritage Route to be provided in a landscaped corridor within the site on its western side and alongside the railway line. This could be provided now and would reflect the importance of the route as an attractive asset for the bicentenary in 2025 and hopefully the county's years as City of Culture. If needs be the route could be relocated to the proposed route through the development, if necessary, should a rail served user appear in the long term. Such an arrangement would ensure a more relevant and attractive route for the many hoped for national and international visitors in time for the Bicentenary rather than going through a dreary industrial estate.
With regard to the current matter The Friends note the proposal for the S&DR Walking and Cycling Heritage Route through the site as part of Phase 1 and in accordance with the route approved by the outline permission granted in 2019. This should be constructed to be suitable for both walkers and cyclists as it will form part of the link between Millennium Way to the north and Coatham Lane to the south.
The existing unsurfaced bridleway alongside the northern boundary of the site requires improvements to make it suitable for cycling. Paragraph 123 of the 2019 committee report and condition 15 of the outline permission recognises this and refers to improvements between the site and Millennium Way. Can you please confirm that these are to be funded by the developer as part of Phase 1?
There are uncertainties regarding providing a cycleable path from the site southwards to Coatham Lane. At present this is an unsurfaced public footpath as marked on the plan and it crosses over the County boundary into Darlington Borough. The right of way then crosses the railway line at an uncontrolled level crossing and it is unlikely that Network Rail will agree to it being upgraded and promoted for cycle use. This objection would be overcome if Darlington Borough Council provides an alternative path on the east side of the railway to Coatham Lane.
An alternative diversion for cyclists to Coatham Lane could be made available by continuing eastwards on the existing bridleway alongside the northern boundary and then southwards on the proposed diverted bridleway within the eastern boundary of the site. This will join the existing unsurfaced bridleway at the south eastern corner of the site, within Darlington Borough and following the side of the motorway to Coatham Lane. Substantial improvements will be necessary for the off-site bridleways to make this route useable.
It is essential that a continuous suitable link between Millennium Way and Coatham Lane be created in time for the 2025 Bicentenary celebrations of the S&DR. In view of the above, the Friends strongly recommend you to discuss the various off-site options with the appropriate officers of the S&DR Heritage Action Zone and the

County Durham and Darlington Rights of Way officers in order to ensure that the section of the route within the site connects effectively with the rest of the route and is made available by 2025.

Appendix 2o 22/00213/FUL Burtree Lane Solar Farm: FSDR Comments

1. The Friends are seriously concerned about the harmful impact of the proposed solar panel farm on the setting of the Stockton & Darlington Railway and hence its conflict with policy ENV2 of the adopted Darlington Local Plan. Harm is caused to the settings of the Grade 2 listed overbridge at Whessoeville (designated heritage asset), and the Myers Flat embankment incorporating the Coatham Grange accommodation bridge (non-designated heritage assets) when seen from the public footpath and the A1(M). Descriptions of these assets can be found in the S&DR Historic Environment Audit, commissioned by the Borough Council and others in 2015. It is also not clear if original buried, arched drainage ditches exist outside the railway wayleave within the site and parallel to the line as have been identified on the east side of the line, trial trenching and assessment of impact should have been considered in the proposals.

2. It is a proposal of the Heritage Action Zone to designate the S&DR, both active and abandoned sections, as a conservation area, thus affording its features the status of designated heritage assets. Council officers have completed their assessments in consultation with the Friends and Historic England and the proposed boundaries are due for public consultation later this year. The importance of the Myers Flat embankment, the accommodation bridge, the overbridge and other features in the vicinity have been assessed and they will be included within the proposed boundary and their settings identified for protection.

3. The application recognises that there will be some harm to the setting of the embankment when seen from the public footpath that runs to the west of the line northwards to the accommodation bridge. This will replace open pasture foreground with ranks of solar panels. Furthermore the footpath will run for some 150 metres between arrays at areas 6 and 8, destroying its ambience in open countryside and affecting the setting of the nearby listed overbridge. It should be noted that this bridge was recently listed by Historic England as it is an almost intact example of a pre-1840 railway structure. As such it requires greater protection as a designated asset.

4. The application identifies a number of distant viewpoints but does not assess the impact of the proposals on the view from the A1(M) Durham motorway. This is across a rural landscape of gently undulating fields offering pasture for grazing cattle and sheep, providing a setting for the embankment of the S&DR not unlike when it opened in 1825. Such a setting will be completely destroyed by the arrays of solar panels. Any suggestion to screen the solar farm from the motorway would obliterate the view and setting of the railway.

5. The application claims that passengers on the railway will experience only transient exposure to the solar farm when crossing the embankment, but this must be assessed in the context of the diminishing rural gap between Darlington and Newton Aycliffe, currently about 4 kilometres. When the Burtree Garden Village and Forrest Park developments are complete, this will reduce to 2.7 km. The solar farm would reduce this further to only a single kilometre.

Recommendations

6. While the Friends acknowledge the benefits of providing renewable energy, we believe the current scale and location of this proposal causes significant harm to the setting of designated and non-designated S&DR heritage assets. As such the proposal in its current form is contrary to the following planning policies and should be refused;

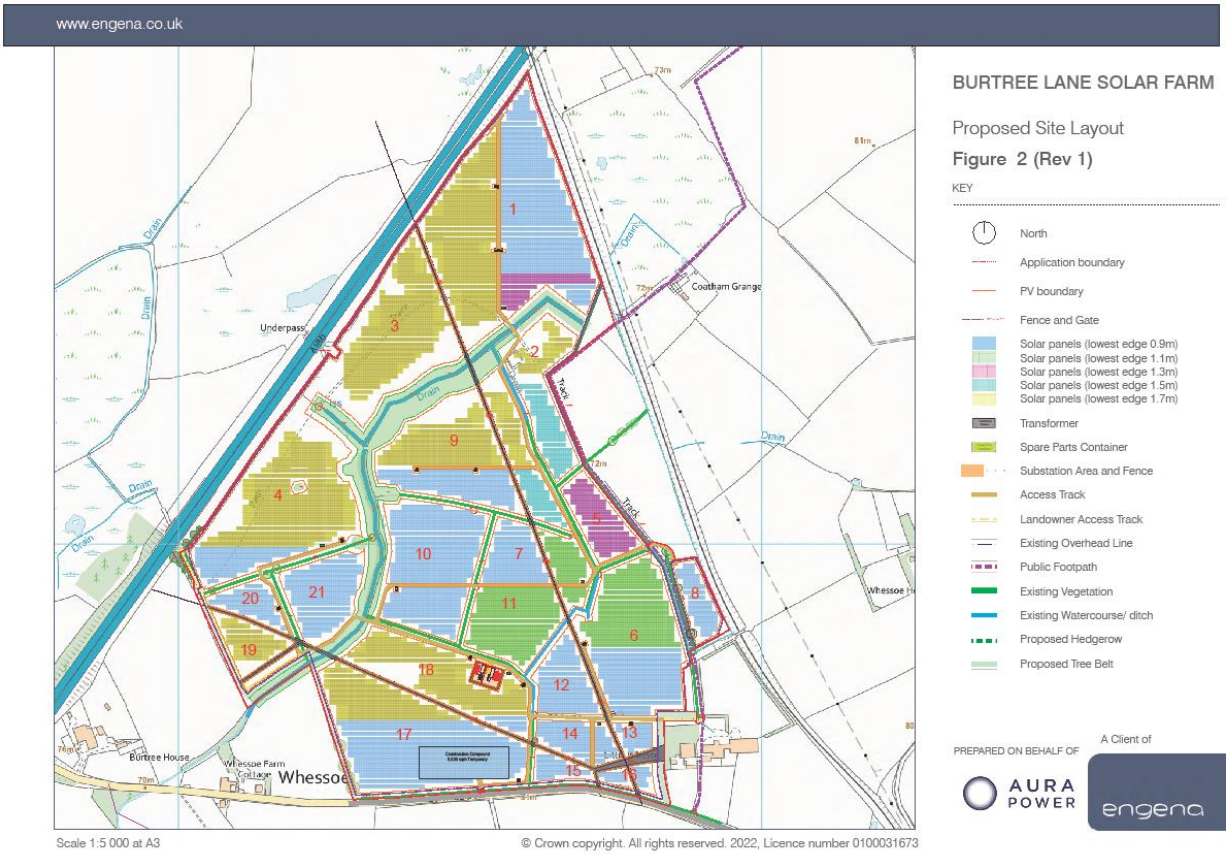
NPPF 197. In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:
B) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; the proposed scheme will impact negatively on the proposed S&DR walking/Cycling route and the enjoyment of communities and the tourist economy to enjoy the S&DR largely as it was first designed in 1825 within a rare survival of its original rural setting.
c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. The development provides no positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness and is negative in impact.

NPPF 200. Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:
a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;
b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional. We suggest that unless the boundary of the proposed solar farm is moved away from the S&DR as suggested in paragraph 8 below, that the current proposals do not have clear and convincing justification and amount to substantial harm to the setting of designated and non-designated heritage assets and should be refused.

7. Darlington Local Plan Policy
Policy ENV 2. Stockton and Darlington Railway (S&DR) (Strategic Policy)
Proposals which will conserve and enhance elements which contribute to the significance of the Stockton and Darlington Railway and its setting, including its trackbed and branchlines, will be supported. Proposals will be supported where they include measures that preserve any physical remains along the route, include site interpretation and where appropriate reinstate a legible route where those remains no longer exist. Development proposals that support the development of the S&DR as a visitor attraction will be encouraged. The proposed development does not conserve or enhance the S&DR and its setting, indeed it has a negative impact. It also will have a negative impact on proposals for development of the S&DR as a visitor attraction. For these reasons it is contrary to Policy ENV2 and should be refused.

8. We would suggest revisions to the scheme could make it compliant with planning policy and change the planning balance to less than substantial harm and a public benefit, and offer the following suggestions.
- Currently the applicants offer to make amends for the harm caused by their proposals by providing an information board. This is not sufficient. Harm would be reduced by removing arrays on sites 1,3,8 and the northern part of site 2 and retaining the land as open fields bounded by hedgerows. This will provide a continuous open corridor between the arrays of panels and the railway beyond the accommodation bridge to

the A1(M) and help protect the setting from the motorway. The offer of an information panel is welcomed and this should either conform to the approved S&DR walking/cycling route design and content, or provide a financial contribution towards the overall scheme. This would be a de minimis contribution and the developer should be asked to explore other interpretation such as public art or fund approved Highways England tourist signs on the motorway informing travellers that they are passing beneath the historic S&DR.

- The creation of the S&DR Walking and Cycling Route includes the option of providing an attractive path, replacing the existing public footpath, in an appropriately landscaped corridor between the accommodation bridge and Burtree Lane. This would be designed to enhance the setting of the S&DR. The developers should be asked to contribute as a further measure to repair the harm to heritage significance their proposals will be causing.

Please keep the Friends updated on developments on this matter and do contact us if we can provide further guidance.