

From: [DEV Planning Comments](#)
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Comments for Planning Application 23/04390/LI
Date: 21 November 2023 13:40:22

Comments summary

Dear Sir/Madam,

Planning Application comments have been made. A summary of the comments is provided below.

Comments were submitted at 21/11/2023 1:40 PM from - Micklefield Parish Council.

Application Summary

Address:	Overbridge Ridge Road A656 Garforth Leeds LS25 4BB
Proposal:	Listed Building Consent for the demolition of the existing Ridge Road bridge and adjacent gas pipeline and a new bridge erected in its place
Case Officer:	Mr Stuart Daniel

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Customer Details

Name:	- Micklefield Parish Council
Email:	clerk@micklefield-pc.gov.uk
Address:	[REDACTED]

Comments Details

Commenter Type:	Parish or Town Council
Stance:	Customer objects to the Planning Application

Reasons for comment:

Comments:

Following a meeting of Micklefield Parish Council on Monday 20th November 2023, at which the above application was considered, it was resolved that Micklefield Parish Council objects to the complete demolition of this Grade II Listed railway overbridge, which Network Rail itself acknowledges is rare and unique as there are few other examples. The Parish Council objects on the following basis:

- The A656 Ridge Road Bridge was given Listed Building status in 2015, due to its special architectural and historical state at a national level (i.e. as a bridge of rare design and high-level of craftsmanship located on one of the earliest railways in the world) in response to Network Rail's bespoke set of bridge alteration proposals along the railway between Leeds and Micklefield which was submitted as a consolidated planning application in 2014/15. At that stage, Network Rail was proposing to lower the track bed under Ridge Road Bridge and there would also have been some alterations to the existing arch.
- Even though this bridge is now Grade II Listed, Network Rail has decided that the only financially viable method of resolving the clearance problems for the overhead catenary is to completely demolish Ridge Road Bridge and build a new bridge to replace it. The Parish Council accepts that it would cost more money to lift the entire bridge arch structure - considerably more money - but that does not mean that to do so is financially unviable.
- The whole point of granting Listed Building status to the bridge is for the state to have a greater control in happens to it. Altering, or otherwise developing, listed buildings in such a way as to retain their visual integrity, as well as the myriad other properties that make them worthy of listing, is almost always a more costly exercise than completely demolishing them and re-developing the site. Indeed, one of the basic tenets of listed building protection is to prevent the destruction, or gross alteration, of certain structures simply because it is less expensive to do so.
- Jacking up the unique basket arch, as considered by Network Rail, may well cost twice as much as demolition and replacement with a new bridge, but

Micklefield Parish Council believes that is the correct thing to do. It must be noted that Network Rail is not saying that demolition and replacement is the only practical and physically possible way of resolving the clearance issues; merely that they do not choose to spend the money that lifting the bridge arch would require. The use of cost alone is arguably insufficient a reason for the demolition of a Grade II listed building.

- The Parish Council would respectfully ask that this particular proposal is tested to destruction. Heritage assets are invaluable and finite resources. Every effort should be made to retain them, particularly when they hold both national and international significance. The Leeds to Selby railway and its associated structures represents a global milestone in human history, integral as they were to the industrial revolution and the creation of the world we have today. The question is very simple: how much is it worth to retain this unique bridge, and to what extent should the state seek to ensure that Network Rail retains it?

In considering a decision, particular consideration must be made to paragraph NPPF 200, which states: "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." Further, paragraph NPPF 201 states: "Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and
- b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and
- c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
- d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

To grant consent Leeds City Council must not only be satisfied that the identified public benefits are deliverable, but also that there are no other viable or practical ways of delivering them which will cause a lesser degree of harm than that proposed within this application for listed building consent. It is Micklefield Parish Council's contention that the benefits of the demolition of the bridge do not outweigh the harm for the simple reason that the bridge does not need to be demolished in order to achieve the same public benefits. Furthermore, Network Rail has not established that this is the case.

It is for these reasons that Micklefield Parish Council believes permission for the demolition of the listed building (Ridge Road bridge) should not be granted.

Kind regards