

Gallacher, Hayley

From: Planning Comments
Subject: FW: Comment Received from Public Access

-----Original Message-----

From: planningcomments@highpeak.gov.uk [mailto:planningcomments@highpeak.gov.uk]
Sent: 21 November 2016 00:46
To: Planning Comments
Subject: Comment Received from Public Access

Application Reference No. : HPK/2016/0398
Site Address: Land Off Orchard Road Whaley Bridge Derbyshire SK23 7AQ
Comments by: Martin Petch
From: Martin Petch

23
Reservoir Rd
Reservoir Rd
Whaley Bridge
Derbyshire
SK23 7BL

Phone:

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Submission: Objection

Comments: I believe that this planning application is wholly unsuitable for the plot which is described in the application as 'vacant', uncared for and litter strewn etc. As the applicant owner themselves have been responsible for the upkeep of this attractive wooded slope for many years this assessment if true would be damning. In fact this little wood is attractive not only to local people enhancing the boundary of the Conservation area but also to several species of animals and birds attracting woodpeckers, tawny and little owls, pipistrelle bats, long tailed tits, bullfinches, sparrowhawks and common toad to name but a few.

The houses and gardens below this precious site (which is designated an area of important trees according to the local council area character appraisal) are protected by their conservation zone status which, of course includes their setting. Any change such as applied for would clearly threaten not only this 'setting' but even more importantly the high unbuttressed dry stone retaining walls, both above and forming integral structural elements of the important character villas directly beneath the site. There is a considerable concern as to the destabilising effects of any tree felling, piling and general construction let alone the additional weight burden on the land between Orchard Rd and Reservoir Rd. These steep, slopes are of a known unstable nature, believed to consist of running sand and of a generally loose nature likely to require deep piling which itself would endanger the popular right of way known as 'Cow Lane' and the protected stone structures beneath it, potentially too the stability of Orchard Rd itself above which ironically the applicant appears to seek to protect.

Any building on this portion of land is undesirable in terms of the density of the local built environment and loss of amenity in terms of parking for Orchard Rd residents. Views of the Reservoir Rd conservation area from other conservation areas on Old Rd and Bings Rd etc (which are to be protected according to HPBC planning policies) would be compromised. There will be a deleterious effect on light to the rear of the properties on Reservoir Rd below (particularly Malvern Villas and Springbank Terrace) this is in short supply to the northern aspect of these properties. The applicant kept possession of this land despite selling the property that previously seemingly possessed this parcel of land when moving out of the county, namely 13, Orchard Rd seemingly as banked land perhaps with a view to selling it with extant planning permission at a later date for an enhanced sum.

The suggested design is clearly inappropriate as in no way does it enhance or marry into its suggested environment, merely maximising development of a seriously disadvantaged plot. The boundary with 27, Reservoir Rd appears to

have been guessed at and possibly over-reached. An apparent roof viewing platform would overlook neighbours bedroom windows and breach privacy. There would be a net negative impact on Cow Lane, a busy pedestrian thoroughfare which has been looked after for decades by the residents of both Orchard Rd and Reservoir Rd involving the assistance of the Groundwork Trust volunteers, the local Council and HPBC have helped to sustain the gardens planted as a community project with the donation of plants by a local business along Cow Lane (recently strimmed flat by persons unknown- though fortunately most will recover for next spring).

Rather than discuss the proposed plan I think the question is more whether building anything at all on this woodland plot is appropriate as I believe you have to conclude it is not. I'm not sure if the garage that currently occupies the eastern end of the plot was ever granted planning permission itself? In any case it seems not to have been used for the last twenty years, over which time it has become more and more dilapidated.

Any construction here would mean the loss of valuable green space within the built up area of the town. It has never been built on and is virgin land with a pleasant mixture of wild and cultivated species of plants and trees which attracts a plethora of wildlife acting as part of a green corridor stretching all the way into the national park to the west, something well worth preserving as it has encouraged such rarities as waxwings in the last few years. The boundary of the conservation area being historic should not be altered (amendment of the stone wall and addition of metal fencing is suggested on the planning application).

Construction traffic, disruption and chaos to the residents of Orchard Rd and roads off it who rely on this route for access and egress would be unwelcome and potentially dangerous and would likely involve the temporary closure of the public right of way (Cow Lane) an important safe route for school children en route to and from school and popular walk through from one side of town to the other via park or reservoir paths.

The current plans, such as they are, do not take account of the difficulties of drainage (both foul and surface water) from the site as there is no foul drain/sewer on Cow Lane. The design is poor and uncomplementary, not even alluding to natural re - used stone elevations, preferring the cheap, generic rendered and or reconstituted stone option. The provision of two parking spaces flies in the face of the push towards sustainability with good local rail and bus provision in close proximity.

In conclusion this application is a threat to local amenity, wildlife, highways access and rights of way, especially in construction phase, light and privacy to neighbouring properties. It threatens trees, some identified as important in the local area character appraisal. Buildings pivotal in identifying Whaley Bridge's Victorian heritage (special case mention in HPBC's own local area appraisal) are at threat both physically and structurally and in terms of their setting. There is a clear threat to local already inadequate parking provision (loss of road parking space) and to yet another of the shrinking wild areas falling prey to predatory infill development. HPBC Planning department will no doubt demonstrate adherence to their platitudes over protection of the built environment around their appointed conservation areas. I myself am confident in their commitment to the future of these areas and to their serious and professional consideration of the cohesiveness of the built environments of the towns under their jurisdiction..