

High Peak B.C. – Tree Comments

Date: 25/5/23

Planner: James Stannard

Planning Ref: HPK/2022/0353

Site: Zion Methodist Church

Tree on Site:

- A collection of good to high quality trees.
- Trees are worthy of protection but not currently protected.
- 12 new trees proposed

Tree Concerns:

- Western boundary hedge will dominate the back gardens of plots 5-8
- Plot 8 backs directly onto the line of the woodland – causing pressure for heavy reductions or tree removals of high quality trees with long life expectancies.
- Tree planting appears poorly thought out with trees proposed for locations just 2-3 metres from building lines.
- New trees will lead to excessive shading, dominance of the properties and will be either heavily pruned or removed before reaching maturity.

Discussion:

Object based on over development of the site and excessive pressure on the neighbouring trees.

The plans have been assessed with HPBC's published guidance on trees in relation to development in mind (https://www.highpeak.gov.uk/media/117/Good-practice-guide-3---trees-on-development-sites/pdf/Tree_Strategy_-_Good_Practice_Guide_3_-_Trees_on_Development_sites_2016.pdf?m=1518172718280), particularly the following sections:

"3.5 Site layout avoiding future conflicts

Development layouts, even if not affecting trees directly, may not be acceptable if they would result in undue pressures, in the short or long term, for felling or excessive pruning of important trees. Therefore merely avoiding the RPA may not necessarily be adequate. Other factors must be taken into account.

The site layout and juxtaposition of trees and buildings should be such that it can be reasonably expected that the trees can be retained to maturity, thereby providing maximum amenity benefits with minimum maintenance requirements."

The below areas of the scheme show where this scheme fails to meet these requirements:

Western Hedge/tree line

The western tree line is made up of 9 14m tall Silver birch trees. These will be positioned at the end of rear gardens that will be approx. 10 metres in depth. The trees are still not at full maturity and could grow taller. The trees in relation to the shallow gardens will lead to excessive shade of the rear gardens of at least plots 6-8 and provide a feeling of being dominated by tall trees. Plot 5 being the first plot in the line will escape the most of the shading and pressure but will also feel many of these effects too.

Ideally this line of houses is moved further from the tree line to relieve the overbearing feeling. Otherwise this scheme will lead to the trees being heavily reduced or even felled to remove these pressures.

Plot 8 and interaction with Woodland

The trees along the border with plot 8 are described by the applicant's own consultant as being high quality trees. They also back onto the main road through Glossop and help to provide a verdant area along Dinting Vale, they should therefore be given the best protection this scheme can afford. However the position of plot 8 of the scheme will put the plot into direct competition with the woodland edge. The building line of the house is currently shown as touching the current woodland edge.

The current branch spread of the trees in this location is not the maximum that could be expected of trees of this species. Beech trees can easily attain branch spreads double what they currently are, which would place them far over the house and rear garden of plot 8 and in constant competition with this property.

This will lead to ongoing pressures to heavily reduce or remove these trees, which will undermine the integrity of this woodland.

Ideally this plot would be removed from the scheme so that there is a defensible strip between plot 7 and the woodland. This alteration may then help with providing the necessary room to give longer gardens to plots 5-7.

Tree Planting

As detailed in the council's guidance trees on site – both existing and proposed – should be able to grow to maturity with the need for little maintenance. The majority of the proposed tree planting locations are located in positions that will achieve the opposite of this aim.

The majority are positioned just 2-3 metres away from proposed building lines. As the trees grow and mature they will come into contact with the new homes requiring them to be regularly pruned away to stop them from becoming damaged or from causing damage. The necessity for regular maintenance will lead to pressures to either carry out large crown reductions or to remove the trees entirely – either way they will not grow to maturity or be low maintenance.

Ultimately this scheme will not see new tree planting successfully established and will likely lead to the erosion of an important woodland on a busy Glossop thoroughfare.

Decision:

Object.

Policies:

The scheme currently goes against the following policies:

- **Policy EQ 9 - Trees, woodland and hedgerows**
- **Policy EQ 1 - Climate Change**
- **Policy EQ 2 - Landscape Character**
- **Policy EQ 5 – Biodiversity**
- **Policy EQ 6 - Design and Place Making**

- NPPF - Section 174

Conditions:

Come back to me for conditions should you feel minded to grant consent to this scheme.