

Toddbrook Wood Supporting Documentation

Toddbrook Wood, Whaley Bridge, Derbyshire

March 2024

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – ATV AND CHIPPER EXAMPLE

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1.1 This document is intended to provide supplementary information to support submission of a permitted development prior approval application under the Town and Country Planning Act (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 for Toddbrook Wood, Whaley Bridge.

1.2 Background

- 1.2.1 The proposed development is located within a plot of land 3.46 ha which includes an extensive area of ancient woodland comprising 0.8 ha ancient semi natural woodland (ASNW) and 1.87ha of plantation on ancient woodland (PAWS). The remaining land is unmanaged semi-improved grassland.
- 1.2.2 The site was formerly part of a wider area of woodland known as Scar Wood which has since been divided into smaller plots. This plot is now known as Toddbrook Wood though may, in older documents, be referred to as Tom Wood or Scar Wood.
- 1.2.3 The site lies to the west of Toddbrook Reservoir, Whaley Bridge, Derbyshire, SK23 7BP. OS grid reference SJ 998 806. It is bounded to the north by Start Lane and pastoral grazing land and to the south by the Todd Brook, a feeder stream for Toddbrook Reservoir.
- 1.2.4 The site does not have an all-weather access track to all woodland margins. Access to the woodland margins via standard road vehicles is limited to a stretch of grassland bounded by the pastoral field to the north east and ancient woodland to the south west. This area is only accessible by road vehicles in periods of dry weather in the summer months.
- 1.2.5 The proposed development is visible year-round from the neighbouring pastoral field.
- 1.2.6 There is no visibility to the proposed development site from the B3470 to the south and the limited number of properties on Start Lane to the north east (Figure 1 and 2). Screening is offered by existing woodland. During summer and autumn when trees are in full leaf the development site will not be visible at all from these locations.

Figure 1: View from B3470 OS grid ref SJ 999 811



Figure 2: View from Start Lane OS grid ref SK 002 805



- 1.2.7 The site lies within the High Peak Green Belt.
- 1.2.8 The ancient woodland lies within a designated Local Wildlife Site (site reference HP001) and acts as a nature corridor within such.
- 1.3 Reason for development**
- 1.3.1 Toddbrook Wood was purchased with the sole intention to restore and preserve this area of designated ancient woodland.
- 1.3.2 As identified in the Woodland Trust's Ancient Woodland Assessment¹ completed in August 2019 the woodland has been assessed as "Critical" in Zone 1 and "Threatened" in Zone 2 (shown in Figure 3 below). A "Critical" allocation means that urgent action is needed to avoid irreversible loss or damage. "Threatened" means that Remnant features are unlikely to be lost in the short term under current conditions, but long-term survival is doubtful without appropriate intervention.
- 1.3.3 The allocations cover the entire woodland and it is essential that work is carried out as soon as possible to prevent further damage.
- 1.3.4 Whilst other minor threats to the woodland have been identified, the major threat, and primary reason for the allocations is the presence of non-native invasive species, notably *Rhododendron ponticum* which is extensive across the site.
- 1.3.5 *Rhododendron* has already caused significant damage to the woodland soil; this includes the physical and chemical effects of its leaf litter (acidification), over-shading that prevents the natural regeneration of native trees, shrubs, flowering and non-flowering plants (ancient woodland seed banks have a finite life-span), and nutrient cycling².
- 1.3.6 The reduced biodiversity created by extensive *Rhododendron* coverage is likely to make the woodland more susceptible to tree disease and other non-native invasive species. This is identified in both the Small Woodland Management Plan, Forestry Commission 2018 and Ancient Woodland Assessment, Woodland Trust 2019.
- 1.3.7 The proposed development will ensure that works to restore and preserve this area of ancient woodland can be undertaken whilst minimising any potential impacts.
- 1.3.8 *Rhododendron* removal will be undertaken over winter outside of the nesting bird season (March-August) and is expected to take 4 years to complete.
- 1.3.9 Removed *rhododendron* will be chipped on site and spread to the woodland floor and to create temporary access tracks within the woodland to ease access by an all terrain vehicle. The chipped material will degrade over time and not be a permanent feature of the landscape. The practice of chipping on site will remove the need to burn material on site or transport material off site for disposal.
- 1.3.10 Key pieces of equipment needed for the woodland restoration will be an All Terrain Vehicle (ATV), trailer and chipper. The ATV will transport equipment to the forest margins. Given a lack of an all-weather roadway suitable for road vehicle access and the terrain on site an ATV is deemed the most suitable vehicle to transport the chipper and other tools around site. Exemplar specifications for this key equipment is provided

¹ Ancient Woodland Assessment, Toddbrook Wood, Woodland Trust, August 2019

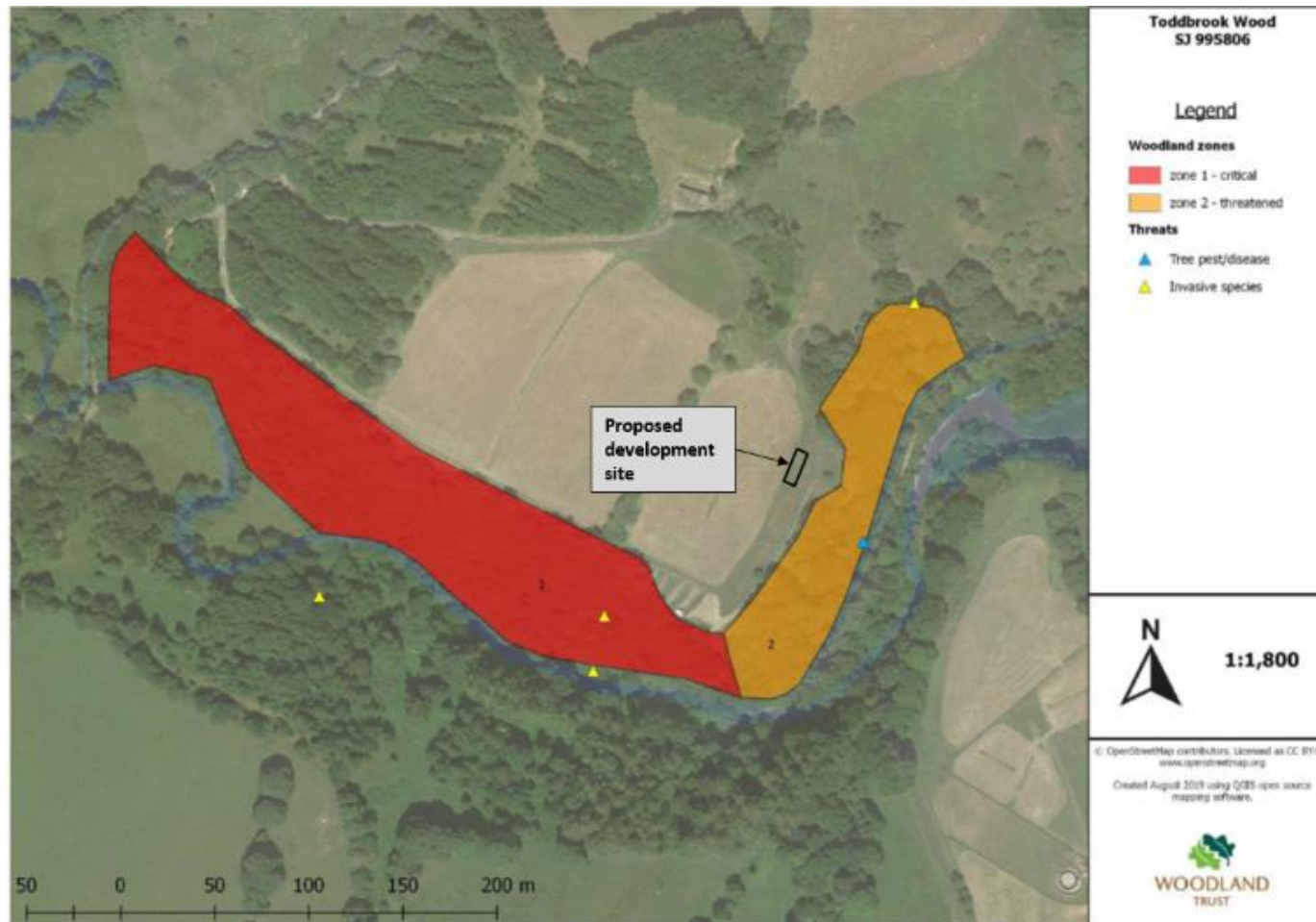
² Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Toddbrook Wood, Miranda Cowan Ecology, November 2019

in Appendix A. Additional tools relevant to forestry works will also be stored on site though these are small in size when compared to the ATV and chipper.

- 1.3.11 A higher-level Countryside Stewardship Scheme woodland management plan has already been approved for the restoration of the woodland³.
- 1.3.12 The proposed development, by enabling the removal of non-native invasive species, will support the development of a healthier more diverse ecosystem.
- 1.3.13 In 2022 the woodland was considered for funding for the Queen's jubilee woodland scheme and was listed as a project on their website

³ Small Woodland Management Plan, Forestry Commission 2018

Figure 3: Woodland zones and proposed development site



2 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 2.1.1 The proposed development is for a Scandinavian redwood shed with pitched green roof to store tools and equipment needed for the restoration and ongoing maintenance of Toddbrook Wood. The shed will also be used as a shelter and drying area for workers whilst on-site. There will be no overnight accommodation.
- 2.1.2 The proposed shed will be 14.5m x 3.95m with two sets of outward opening doors to the front, south facing, elevation. This will allow for easy access in and out of an (ATV) and wood chipper as shown in Figure ~~xxx~~.
- 2.1.3 A green roof will be installed to reduce visual impact and further embed the structure into the environment.
- 2.1.4 In line with national guidance from the Woodland Trust the proposed development is greater than 15m from the woodland canopy at all aspects. This will prevent any potential damage to woodland root structures caused during installation.
- 2.1.5 All installations works will be undertaken in line with recommendations made in the Preliminary Ecological Assessment, Toddbrook Wood Proposed Phase 2 Accommodation, 2019. Whilst the proposed shed is larger than that assessed in this report the location remains the same and the essential 15m buffer to woodland canopy is maintained.
- 2.1.6 Installation of the shed will be undertaken in the summer months when vehicular access to site is possible along the edge of the ancient woodland. Machines using the track will be kept to a minimum, including a single return journey of a small tracked digger and no more than 10 return journeys of a pick-up vehicle to deliver the shed in sections and bags of aggregate that will form the substrate for the shed.
- 2.1.7 The shed will be located approximately 1 metre from the fence line. As the shed will be located on a slope a small tracked digger will be used to level the ground which will in turn "sink" the shed into the ground thus lowering its position and appearance in the landscape. The digger will strip the top turf and store on tarpaulin directly next to the shed footprint. The footprint will be equal to the size of the shed with a 100mm movability. The soil will be excavated and a small bund formed around the perimeter of the shed. Previously removed top turf will be placed on the bund to facilitate growth of the existing grassland assemblage.
- 2.1.8 At the eastern extent of the works (the lower slope section) a membrane will be put in place to capture any suspended sediments. The access track is bounded by trees, which will not require any form of pruning to facilitate the works.
- 2.1.9 The shed will be constructed in situ, with the overall construction phase extending for a period of 3 weeks. This schedule may extend where poor weather conditions prevail. It is intended that the works only proceed under dry conditions to avoid run-off from soil.

3 ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS

A number of alternatives to the proposed development have been considered and are detailed below.

3.1 Transport of equipment to site on a daily basis.

- 3.1.1 Equipment would need to be transported to site via standard road vehicles towing a trailer.

Commented [SW1]: Updated site plans as requested

- 3.1.2 Access to the site is via Start Lane to the north east and Kishfield Lane to the west. Start Lane is a narrow country lane unsuitable for large vehicles with trailers and is prohibited to through traffic. Kishfield Lane is also a narrow country lane unsuitable for large vehicles or trailers and prohibited to through traffic. Access to site via Kishfield Lane also includes use of Kishfield Bridge which is Grade II listed⁴.
- 3.1.3 Local residents already report excessive use of these lanes by vehicles and the applicant wishes to minimise any long-term vehicle impact via the proposed development and on-site activities associated with Rhododendron removal and future woodland management.
- 3.1.4 Transporting equipment on and off site each day would generate an unacceptable and unnecessary impact on these narrow country lanes and a Grade II listed structure.
- 3.1.5 Additional vehicle movements to site on a daily basis would also generate a greater carbon impact and run against HPBC's desires to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030 across the Borough and is in line with Policy EQ1: Climate Change, of the High Peak Local Plan 2016.
- 3.1.6 The site does not have an established access track suitable for use by road-based vehicles year-round. Given that Rhododendron removal needs to be undertaken over winter a compacted stone track would need to be installed in order for equipment to be transported onto site and to the woodland margins. This has the potential to create visual impact from surrounding properties, the B5470 and the neighbouring field. Given its proximity to the woodland canopy (within 15m) works to install a permanent track are also likely to have a significant negative impact on the woodland root system. On a visual impact and ecological damage basis an all-weather compacted stone track to allow for access is not deemed suitable.
- 3.1.7 The preliminary ecological appraisal deemed that repeated vehicle movements on and off site would create a significant risk of introduction of other non-native invasive species to site.
- 3.1.8 Daily transport of equipment to site has been discounted as an option due to: creation of excessive vehicle movements; potential impacts on a Grade II listed structure; potential damage to the woodland from installation of an all-weather access track and regular daily access by vehicles; risk of introduction of non-native species via daily vehicle access to site.

3.2 Temporary storage structures

- 3.2.1 The use of caravans as mobile storage of equipment and shelter of workers has been considered for the site.
- 3.2.2 Use of caravans without a site license are permitted under the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960, First Schedule. Agricultural and forestry workers, paragraph 7 and 8, site licenses shall not be required for the use of land as a caravan site for the accommodation of a person or persons employed on land being used for the purposes of forestry⁵.
- 3.2.3 Given access limitations to the site and the required ability to be able to remove such facilities from site at a later date, the only appropriate location for such would be on the

⁴ <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1138937?section=official-list-entry>

⁵ [https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Eliz2/8-](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Eliz2/8-9/62/enacted?fbclid=IwAR3JrWfgGDXY4GQSN7gGOzjiNw0DQ3i0KmhZuJECwLSYuDhp39h1T5AT18)

[9/62/enacted?fbclid=IwAR3JrWfgGDXY4GQSN7gGOzjiNw0DQ3i0KmhZuJECwLSYuDhp39h1T5AT18](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Eliz2/8-9/62/enacted?fbclid=IwAR3JrWfgGDXY4GQSN7gGOzjiNw0DQ3i0KmhZuJECwLSYuDhp39h1T5AT18)

area of terraced land adjacent to the north east edge of zone 1 (Figure 1). This location will create a visual impact to the B5470 and properties on Start Lane.

- 3.2.4 Whilst the use of caravans is permitted the applicant does not wish to create such a significant visual impact to the local landscape.

4 PLANNING CONTEXT

4.1 Town and Country Planning Act (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (T&CPA GPDO)

- 4.1.1 This application is being submitted in line with Town and Country Planning Act (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, Part 6, Class E. Forestry Developments – “The carrying out on land used for the purposes of forestry, including afforestation, of development reasonably necessary for those purposes consisting of—
a) works for the erection, extension or alteration of a building”⁶.

- 4.1.2 The development does not fall within any of the none permitted developments stipulated by Class E1.

- 4.1.3 No restrictions are imposed by Class E on the size of any buildings.

- 4.1.4 Prior communication with the Planning Inspectorate in 2020 stated that when determining Part 6 prior approval applications such as this a LPA: “does not have power under the prior approval provisions of the GPDO...to determine whether or not the proposed development comes within the description of the relevant class in the GPDO.”⁷.

4.2 National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF)⁸

- 4.2.1 The proposal site lies within the High Peak Green belt. Section 13 Protecting Green Belt Land, paragraph 149 of the NPPF instructs that the construction of new buildings within the Green Belt should be deemed to be inappropriate. However, there are exceptions to this which includes buildings for agriculture and forestry. The proposed development is therefore appropriate and in line with national policy.

- 4.2.2 Section 15 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment, paragraph 174, point b) states that “Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: b) recognising the intrinsic character of the countryside, and the wider benefits of natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland.” The proposed development will help support this policy by enabling restoration and maintenance of an ancient woodland.

⁶ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/596/schedule/2/part/6/crossheading/class-e-forestry-developments/made>

⁷ Planning Inspectorate Letter, December 2020

⁸

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1005759/NPPF_July_2021.pdf

4.3 High Peak Local Plan 2016

- 4.3.1 Policy EQ2: Landscape Character. The proposed development seeks to minimise visual impact and be complimentary to the local landscape and in line with similar local developments.
- 4.3.2 Policy EQ4: Green belt development. This policy defers to national policy with which this development is in accordance.
- 4.3.3 Policy EQ5: Biodiversity. The proposed development will enable the conservation and enhancement of a locally designated site (local wildlife site, reference HP001). The preliminary ecological appraisal recommended mitigation measures for any potential impacts on the local wildlife site resulting from installation of the shed. All such recommendations will be adopted. No long-term impacts of the structure on the local wildlife site were identified in the preliminary ecological appraisal.
- 4.3.4 Policy EQ9: Trees, woodland and hedgerows. The proposed development, in it's ability to enable restoration of an ancient woodland, will support this policy. The location of the proposed site will ensure no damage is incurred on ancient woodland, veteran trees and ancient or species-rich hedgerows.

5 COMPARABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE LANDSCAPE

A number of similar structures exist within the neighbouring landscape

- 5.1.1 A similar structure was granted permission under a general permitted development order by HPBC at Walker Brow Woodland, Macclesfield Road, Whaley Bridge, Derbyshire, SK23 7DR in 2016⁹.
- 5.1.2 The site is approximately 600 metres to the south east of the proposed development in similar woodland surroundings.
- 5.1.3 The structure is 15metres x 10metres with a maximum height of 6 metres.
- 5.1.4 Figures xx to xx show other similar structures in the surrounding landscape. Figure xx shows the locations of each development in context to the proposed development site.
- 5.1.5 Given existing neighbouring developments it is not thought that the proposed development is out of character with the surrounding landscape.
- 5.1.6 Any other local sheds/buildings – Tom had loads of pics in original planning submission.

⁹ <http://planning.highpeak.gov.uk/portal/servlets/ApplicationSearchServlet?PKID=204606>

6 SUMMARY

- 6.1.1 The proposed development complies with a number of national and local planning policies. Is in line with developments permitted under the T&CPA GDPO and seeks to minimise impacts of development within the development site and the wider landscape.
- 6.1.2 The proposed development offers the best available solution to enable the restoration and long-term management of this ancient woodland.
- 6.1.3 Without this development the ancient woodland will further degrade and may eventually fail. This will remove the ecosystem service, natural capital and important wildlife corridor that the woodland provides.