

High Peak B.C. – Tree Comments

Date: 8th July 2025

Planner: Rachael Simpkin

Planning Ref: HPK/2025/0158

Site: Buckingham Hotel, Buxton

Trees on Site:

- 9 trees protected by the Buxton Pre-1974 conservation area.
- 6 of which are classed as B class trees in tree report.
- No new trees proposed.

Tree Concerns:

- Trees are being removed without need - Why the need to remove the Lime T9 (B quality tree with 40+ years of safe life)?
- Lost trees are not being replaced - Why can't trees be planted to the front of the site?
- Full impact can't be assessed, as no plan over laying the proposed scheme with the retained trees provided.
- Does not comply with Local plan policy EQ9 – Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows.

Discussion:

Whilst there is no objection to the principle of the development, the Tree Service objects to this iteration of the proposal due to its impact on tree cover in the area.

Trees being removed without need

Tree T9 (Weddle Landscape, Tree Constraints Plan) appears to be growing in a location that will remain largely unchanged following development. No reasons beyond it is growing near to a neighbouring property has been provided for the need to remove it. The tree however has been identified as a large, mature Lime tree, with no significant defects and with a long life expectancy (40+ years).

The tree is worthy of protection with a TPO and, based on the current information provided, efforts should be made to retain this tree.

The conservation areas of Buxton are characterised by large mature trees growing on boundary lines framing the buildings between them and the loss of this tree would erode the character of the conservation area.

Lost trees not being replaced

There are currently no proposals to replace the 4 trees proposed for removal. HPBC's local plan requires the replacement of removed trees for developments to be carried out at a 2 for basis; so 8 new trees are required to replace the proposed losses.

Whilst there is no objection to the removal of the Lawson cypress tree, the loss of the tree lined frontage and the mature Lime, discussed above, would be detrimental to the appearance of the site and the character of the street and conservation area.

As stated in the supplied Design and Access Statement:

"The treelined roads are a characteristic of the Conservation Area"

This will be the case except in front of the Buckingham Hotel site, thanks to the removal of the cherries to the front.

Can the front car parking lose two spaces to accommodate two planting bays for 2 x replacement trees?

With the retention of the Lime T9, this will leave a shortfall of tree planting of 4 trees. A section 106 agreement would be required to see these trees replaced in the local area. Locations in Pavilion Gardens or Serpentine Walks would be appropriate.

Poor level of detail provided

The supplied tree reports are of poor quality. One is 11 years old, and relates to the previous application and a different design, so cannot be relied upon, whilst the new one cobbles together a new tree survey with a basic level of information provided with excerpts from the old tree report and then fails to overlay the new proposal with the current trees.

As a result the report is neither clear nor informative.

A good tree report would show the effect of the proposal on all the existing trees so that a clear judgement can be made on the impact. Instead a very cloudy and cobbled together report is presented that fails to provide any clarity.

It is likely that in relation to the 5 Lime trees proposed for retention, the scheme is possible. But that same detail should be provided to the other trees, even if it is just to rule out the possibility of retaining them.

Does not comply with Local plan policies

This proposal does not comply with:

Policy EQ 9 - Trees, woodland and hedgerows

- Requiring that existing woodlands, healthy, mature trees and hedgerows are retained and integrated within a proposed development unless the need for, and benefits of, the development clearly outweigh their loss
- Requiring new developments where appropriate to provide tree planting and soft landscaping, including where possible the replacement of any trees that are removed at a ratio of 2:1

Policy EQ 1 - Climate Change

- Requiring new development to be designed to contribute to achieving national targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by using land-form, layout, building orientation, **tree planting**, massing and **landscaping** to reduce likely energy consumption and resilience to increased temperatures

Policy EQ 2 - **Landscape Character**

- Requiring that development has particular regard to maintaining the aesthetic and biodiversity qualities of natural and man-made features within the landscape, such **as trees and woodlands**, hedgerows, walls, streams, ponds, rivers, ecological networks or other topographical features

Policy EQ 6 - Design and Place Making

- Requiring development to be well designed to respect the character, identity and context of High Peak's townscapes and landscapes.
- Requiring that public and private spaces are well-designed, safe, attractive, complement the built form and provide for the retention of significant landscape features such as mature trees

The removal of T9 appears to go against the NPPF section 131:

“that appropriate measures are in place to secure the long-term maintenance of newly-planted trees, and that existing trees are retained wherever possible.”

Decision:

The Tree Service objects to this development as it will have a long-term detrimental impact on tree cover in this location.

If the Planning service is minded to grant consent then please come back to me for tree protection conditions and sums for section 106 agreements.