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Application Reference No. : HPK/2026/0228 Site Address: Spring Shopping Centre & Land South of Station Road
Buxton Derbyshire Comments by: Gareth Hare
High Peak Borough Council
From:

Market Place
Buxton
Buxton

Phone:
Email: [REDACTED]
Submission: Neither
Comments: Existing trees

The application is supported by an Arboricultural Impact Assessment to BS5837-2012 by Tree Solutions (Ref 25/AIA/HPEAK/06 REV A). Chapter 8 of the document from points 8.1.2 to 8.1.6 presents an assessment of the proposals impact on retained trees, gives an overview of the proposal in total and the opportunities presented by the associated landscaping and tree planting and concludes with : “the proposed removals do not present a material constraint to development. The landscape proposals include a structured programme of new tree planting, which will secure a net gain in canopy cover, amenity value and biodiversity over the medium to long term”.

At present there is no reason to depart from this conclusion.

A preliminary impact assessment plan is presented but at present there are no tree protection plans. There are likely to be further amendments at this stage of a large scheme and therefore it is acceptable for tree protection plans to be supplied at a later stage and secured via pre-commencement condition.

Landscape proposals

The Landscape DAS provides substantial detail regarding the design concept/s and the integration of the green realm and built form. The green realm/soft landscape is very much at the heart of the design and should make a significant positive contribution to the way in which the site is perceived externally and visitors/residents lived experience. An indicative palette of tree species/selections is included in the DAS and the submitted general arrangement plans show the proposed locations and general types of trees proposed.

Again, given the early stage of the proposals, the detail of the planting could be subject to change which is presumably why species/selection is not indicated on the plans. The palette should accord with the 10-20-30 rule (An urban forest population should include no more than 10% of any one species, 20% of any one genus, or 30% of any family) and include as much diversity of form/colour/year-round interest as possible whilst ensuring that selections are sustainable in the specific location. Long lived, large canopy trees should be used wherever possible.

Notwithstanding detail already submitted, a fully detailed landscaping scheme should be secured via pre-commencement condition.

The shading/sunlight plans in the DAS are noted. It is not clear whether these have taken into account the potential or projected impact of existing or future tree canopies on residential property. If not, this should be extended to ensure that conflict is not created for future occupants. This could also apply- although to a lesser degree- to commercial premises and these should also be taken into account.

Much of the landscaping and tree planting is within engineered hardscape. The volume and quality of soil or media and the detail of tree pit design is especially important in this scheme. A number of approaches could be taken including soil cells, Stockholm tree pits or other engineered solutions allowing rooting volume to exist beneath shared surfaces. The interface between tree pits and subterranean services will also be critical in ensuring minimal disturbance and hence sustainability for trees within the scheme. If natural or reclaimed/site won soils are to be used, then these will need to be subject to a soils management plan. Areas for planting may also need to be safeguarded if they are to remain at existing level and planted directly.

The tree pits, and the trees planted within them are at the very heart of whether this scheme will work in the long term. The design and detail of the tree pits, dimensions, drainage, soil or other media, service locations, aeration, SUDS etc. etc. are going to determine whether the trees within them are able to reach maturity and thrive as functioning components of the scheme into the future. It's absolutely critical that these fundamental details are secured prior to the scheme commencing. The earlier in the process that landscape professionals can engage with the architects and engineers the better. There comes a point in the design process where retrofitting a successful scheme isn't possible and compromises are then made which negatively impact on the sustainability of the scheme.

All these elements are critical to the success of the scheme and will need to be secured via pre-commencement condition. It may also be useful to agree heads of terms for the detail to be submitted, prior to determination.

Early engagement and discussion of the Arboricultural elements with the HPBC Arboricultural Officer is welcomed and may assist in expediting the submission of acceptable detail.

Summary

There is no objection in principle to the scheme. Some details will need to be secured via condition and early engagement and discussion will assist in securing those details and shaping and delivering a sustainable scheme from an Arboricultural and landscape perspective.

Gareth Hare

Arboricultural Officer

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