

**Mrs HELEN KIRK:**  
**SUMMARY PROOF OF EVIDENCE ARBORICULTURAL MATTERS**

Local Authority Planning Application Reference: 2024/62/91242  
APPEAL Reference: APP/Z4718/25/3375000

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**SUMMARY PROOF OF EVIDENCE:  
ARBORICULTURAL MATTERS**

Appellant

**Newett Homes Limited**

Respondent

**Kirklees Council**

Site

**Shepley Road, Stocksmoor**

Date

**January 2026**

- 1.1 My name is Mrs Helen Clair Kirk, Director at FPCR Environment & Design Ltd, and a chartered professional with over 30 years of arboricultural experience. My evidence addresses arboricultural matters only in relation to the proposed residential development of 50 dwellings at Shepley Road, Stocksmoor and addresses matters raised by the Rule 6 Party from an arboricultural perspective, in respect of the Ancient Woodlands.
- 1.2 I have undertaken an independent site review and confirm that the opinions expressed here are true and based on professional guidance.
- 1.3 The Local Planning Authority (LPA) Kirklees Council did not refuse the application on arboricultural grounds, and the Council's Tree Officer, Mr Dunn raised no objection confirming the scheme was well-designed with respect to trees and the Ancient Woodland (CD4.11 Trees).
- 1.4 A Rule 6 Party raised concerns with the application, with regards to impacts on Ancient Woodlands (CD 8.11) with an emphasis on the effects to Shepley Mill Wood, an area of designated Ancient Woodland adjoining the eastern site boundary, prompting this arboricultural response.
- 1.5 The application was submitted with an Arboricultural Assessment produced by FPCR and dated April 2024 (CD 1.25) which identified 41 individual trees, 2 groups, and 1 woodland (Shepley Mill Wood). Trees range from low to high quality (Categories A-C) with Shepley Mill Wood (W1) being recorded as high-quality Category A due to its Ancient Woodland designation. No ancient or veteran trees were identified.
- 1.6 Three low-quality (Category C) trees—T1, T2, T3 are identified to be removed for site access. The Council's Tree Officer confirmed this loss is acceptable and can be mitigated through planting. Some minor crown pruning to T6 and Group G1 is also proposed which again is considered acceptable and avoids further tree removal.
- 1.7 The appeal scheme provides a 15m Buffer Zone from the Ancient Woodland (Shepley Mill Wood) boundary in accordance with Standing Advice. This is a distance which is considered acceptable where there are no ecological or arboricultural constraints requiring an increased Buffer Zone be provided.
- 1.8 All dwellings, roads, and structures are situated well outside the 15m Buffer Zone and outside of the 6m calculated Root Protection Area (RPA) of any individual tree within the Ancient Woodland (Shepley Mill Wood). With the nearest structure (a pumping station) approximately 34.5m and a retaining wall approximately 23.5m from the Ancient Woodland but importantly outside of the Buffer Zone.
- 1.9 A drainage outfall connecting to an existing stream sits 1.7m outside the 15m Ancient Woodland Buffer Zone but encroach into the RPA of T38 (a sycamore not part of the Ancient Woodland), but these effects are minor and would not require the tree be removed.
- 1.10 While all construction activities are proposed outside of the Ancient Woodland Buffer Zone, it would be appropriate to provide protection to the Ancient Woodland and all other retained trees through a condition-secured Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) and Tree Protection Plan (TPP) in accordance with British Standard 5837 Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction (BS5837:2012). Such a condition is routinely applied to ensure no direct arboricultural harm is caused to any retained tree and the case of the appeal scheme, safeguarding of the Ancient Woodland and is entirely appropriate.

- 1.11 No direct pedestrian access to Shepley Mill Wood is proposed with a steep slope (1:4) directly adjacent (west) of the woodland thereby naturally discouraging informal access and proposed fencing and landscaping being provided to further discourage access to the woodland from the site, through a condition-secured Landscaping Scheme.
- 1.12 Any additional footfall within the Ancient Woodland resulting from the appeal scheme will likely use existing public access points on Shepley Road and is not expected to degrade Ancient Woodland soils or habitats from an arboricultural standpoint.
- 1.13 The potential for any hydrological changes that may adversely impact Shepley Mill Wood is addressed in detail through the evidence of Mr. Gavin Shepherd (Section 7) covering matters of Flood Risk and Drainage and through the evidence of Mr. Robert Edmonds covering matters of ecological effects to the woodland (Section 3). In summary, Mr Shepherd and Mr Edmonds concluded that the appeal scheme would not result in any deterioration of the Ancient Woodland from hydrological changes.
- 1.14 Proposed off-site improvements on Shepley Road and Stone Wood Lane may require minor trimming of roadside vegetation but no tree removals are anticipated. Any unforeseen loss would be limited to low-quality self-set material that could be replaced locally through new planting. No works in relation to off-site improvements are proposed within Ancient Woodland or Buffer Zones.
- 1.15 From an arboricultural perspective the scheme complies with BS5837:2012 and Standing Advice. Tree losses across the site to deliver the appeal scheme are minimal and restricted to low-quality specimens which could be mitigated for through new tree planting.
- 1.16 There will be no loss or deterioration to the Ancient Woodlands resulting from the appeal scheme. Accordingly, from an arboricultural perspective, the appeal proposals are considered acceptable, policy compliant, and there would be no justification for dismissal of the

**FPCR Environment and Design Ltd**

Registered Office: Lockington Hall, Lockington, Derby DE74 2RH

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