

Yorkshire and North East Area

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Area Director

Mark Child

By email only

Date: 13th July 2026

Dear Sir/Madam,

Ref: 2026/60/91494/E

Outline application for erection of residential development, including associated infrastructure works. All matters reserved except means of access into (but not within) the site from Penistone Road.

Thank you for seeking the Forestry Commission's advice about the impacts that this application may have on the trees and woodland identified in this proposed application. As a Non-Ministerial Government Department, we provide no opinion supporting or objecting to an application. Rather, we are providing information on the potential impact that the proposed development could have on trees and woodland. The Forestry Commission is pleased to provide you with the following information that may be helpful when you consider the application:

- Details of Government policy relating to ancient woodland and ancient and veteran trees
- Information on the importance and designation of ancient woodland and ancient and veteran trees
- Details of Government policy relating to non-ancient woodland and trees

Ancient Woodlands (ASNW/PAWS), Ancient Trees and Veteran Trees (AVT)

Ancient woodlands, ancient trees and veteran trees, are irreplaceable. They have great value because they have a long history of woodland cover, with many features remaining undisturbed, including immensely complex ecological processes and relationships, above and below the ground. This applies equally to Ancient Semi Natural Woodland (ASNW), Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS)/Ancient Replanted Woodland (ARW), ancient trees and veteran trees (AVT).

It is Government policy to refuse development that will result in the **loss or deterioration** of irreplaceable habitats including **ancient woodlands and/or ancient and veteran trees**, unless “there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists” (National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 186c). It is not possible to fully compensate for the loss of an irreplaceable habitat.

The Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction (2024) requires local planning authorities in England to consult the Secretary of State before granting planning permission for certain types of development, including development that affects ancient woodland: [The Town and Country Planning \(Consultation\) \(England\) Direction 2024 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/town-and-country-planning-consultation-england-direction-2024)

Land off Penistone Road (A629), Birdsedge

There is an area of PAWS/ARW known as Green Wood or New House Wood, immediately to the east of the proposed development. Green Wood appears in Natural England’s original Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI), however its extent has been updated in the revised AWI, to include the area of woodland on the west side of Jordan Beck.

The Forestry Commission notes that an effective buffer zone of approximately 70m is created by the proposal for a BNG area between the site boundary and the ancient woodland. The Natural England and Forestry Commission standing advice for ancient woodland provides advice for the design of buffers, which should where possible contribute to wider ecological networks and be part of the green infrastructure of the area.

When planting trees in proximity to ancient woodland, the sensitivity, and irreplaceable nature of the habitat should be considered. Biosecurity best practices should be embedded into the planning and implementation of the BNG area, including sourcing trees that are free from

pests and disease. Sourcing stock from a nursery registered with The Plant Healthy Certification Scheme ([Plant Healthy Certification Scheme - Plant Healthy](#)) could contribute to achieving this.

Paragraph 136 of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that new streets are tree-lined (unless, in specific cases, there are clear, justifiable and compelling reasons why this would be inappropriate). The Indicative Landscape Masterplan does propose some trees within the development, however it is not clear whether the streets forming the new development will be tree-lined.

In relation to existing non-ancient woodland and trees within the site, or potentially impacted by the proposed development, we would like to draw your attention to paragraph 136 of the NPPF which states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that existing trees are retained wherever possible.

Joint Natural England and Forestry Commission Standing Advice on Ancient Woodland

For more information on the impacts of development on ancient woodland and how to assess these, please see the joint Forestry Commission /Natural England [Standing Advice on Ancient Woodland](#) – “Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees: advice for making planning decisions”, the supporting [guidance](#) included within it, and [Keepers of Time](#) – A Statement of Policy for England’s Ancient and Native Woodland (published June 2005).

Conclusion

The Forestry Commission’s principal concern in this case is ensuring that the proposed development does not result in the loss or deterioration of adjacent ancient woodland, whether through direct, indirect or cumulative effects.

We hope these comments are helpful to you. If you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact the Forestry Commission on the email address provided above.

Yours faithfully,

Dan Brown, Local Partnership Advisor
Yorkshire and North East Team