

25-01-2025

Tim Abbott

Barnsley MBC
Planning and Building Control

Re: **Providence Baptist Chapel, Ingbirchworth Road, Thurlstone S36 9QN
Gates and Car Park. Approved application 2023/0961**

These notes relate to the application dated 25 January 2025 for removal or variation of a condition following grant of planning permission No 2023/0961.

1. The approval required that the car park surface “shall be surfaced in a solid bound material (i.e. not loose chippings but grasscrete would be acceptable.”) It also required that the development be “carried out strictly in accordance with...Plan Revision Drawing 4B.” This drawing states of the trees on the site: “T1 retained.”
2. The Tree Officer (Ed Jowett) report via Georgina Brayford 14-12-2023 states: “T1 is a significant and prominent specimen, unfortunately this is located close to the existing access and in the area where the proposed new hard surfacing is located. Looking at the site it appears that there is the potential to retain this tree as part of the scheme by using a permeable no dig type construction for the new hard surfacing in the vicinity of this tree. Whilst the new surface would ultimately occupy a significant amount of the trees rooting area I do feel that this would be worth trying in an attempt to keep the tree and provide much needed parking for this community facility. I am not sure if this is attainable but would ask that it is at least considered so every effort can be made to both keep the tree and help the parishioners of the Chapel.”
3. The Planner’s (Robert Payne) email to me 28 October 2024 states: “Highways would require a solid bound surface with appropriate drainage and would not allow gravel within 10m of the highway. Following a request for advice of a suitable surface, they are unable to advise and referred to the original planning condition.”
4. As requested by the Tree Officer, I have made “every effort....to keep the tree.”
 - 4.1 Firstly, Grasscrete Ltd were met on site but would not price for the work. It would be a very small scale job for them. Access would be very difficult for large concrete mixer lorries There is concern over the extensive root system of tree T1. In any case, the grasscrete system does not seem to accord with the Tree Officer requirements. It is a continuous insitu mesh reinforced concrete slab with quadrefoil holes in which grass can be seeded. The slab itself is 75 / 100 mm thick on sand blinding, 125/150mm Type 1 sub-base and Type 3 below as necessary—the sub-bases being compacted by heavy roller.

The investigation trench on the attached drawing No.6 shows tree roots within 150-200mm of ground level.
 - 4.2 Secondly, I sent the drawing to Group Technical Services of Marshalls Mono Ltd, Elland inquiring about their permeable block paving systems such as Piora. They stated that they do not offer any products designed for installation directly over tree roots.

- 4.3 Thirdly, I consulted and obtained prices from a reputable tarmac company who raised consideration of permeable tarmac. But this seems a non-option for the Tree Officer and is questionable anyway because of the likely damage through root movement.
5. My conclusions are as stated in my email to the planner 31-10-2024.

I cannot source a “solid bound material” as required by the Highways Officer which is a “no dig type construction” as required by the Tree Officer. There is therefore not “another suitable material.”

On the other hand, tarmac is a solid-bound material. It is satisfactory to Highways, Conservation (Planner’s email 28-10-2024) and most importantly it satisfies Part M2 of the Building Regulations requirements for urgently needed disabled access (including pedestrian / wheelchair access) to this public building.

I can only conclude that it is “absolutely unavoidable” (Tree Officer quoted from planner’s email 20-10-2024) that T1 has to be removed. Hence this application for variation to the approved application 2023/0961 — removal of tree T1 and use of tarmac for the car park, as shown on the attached drawing number 6.

An application for tree work to this site in a conservation area, in effect a section 211 notice, was made to the LPA 30-09-2023 (Planning Portal date). It included the tree in question — T1. Ed Jowett phoned me 29-11-2023 and I agreed to his request that the application be absorbed into the main application for the carpark (2023/0961). I therefore hope that this issue can again be handled within this application for variation of conditions without my having to repeat a “work to tree” application.

As with the 2023/0961 submission, this request for an essential variation of condition is for creating a disabled access to a public building and may therefore be exempt from planning fees?

Yours sincerely,

Tim Abbott

On behalf of the chapel trustees