Burnett, James

From: Planning (SMDC)
Subject: FW: SMD/2016/0720 - Churnet View Middle School, Churnet View, Leek

From: Massey, Steven
Sent: Thursday, January 19, 2017 5:41 PM
To: Critchlow, Teresa
Cc: Planning (SMDC)
Subject: SMD/2016/0720 - Churnet View Middle School, Churnet View, Leek

Teresa,

I have the following comments on this application:

The application proposes a new security fence to part of the north-west and all of the north-east boundaries of the school site. There are trees and/or largely unmanaged hedgerow along virtually all of these locations. However, the nature of the proposed fence construction, comprising c.450x450mm post holes at nearly 3m centres, means that the large majority of roots would not be damaged or disturbed. Whilst there may inevitably be occasional root severance where a post position coincides with roots, in the main these are vigorous young/early-mature trees which are unlikely to be significantly affected by such impact. Furthermore, in some cases these existing trees/hedging have already been structurally compromised by lopping to erect and subsequently clear the existing somewhat dilapidated chainlink/concrete post fence.

The proposed replacement gate at the eastern-most corner of the school building would not have adverse impact on trees or hedges.

Overall, therefore, I consider that the aggregate potential impact on trees does not raise significant concerns, and I have no objection to this application. Temporary tree protection conditions would not be relevant or appropriate in this particular case due to the type of construction and the general nature of the trees/hedgerow.

In terms of visual impact, the proposed green painted new fence would generally blend in well with the tree/hedge vegetation and would not be considered to have significant adverse visual impact, either from within the school grounds or more particularly from the public footpath running along the farm track adjacent to the north-west boundary of the site.

The application does not appear to specify whether any existing boundary fencing would be removed. Existing fencing along the north-east boundary with the Severn-Trent access road, and short return along the first part of the south-east boundary, is a visually prominent galvanized, industrial style security fence. If this was removed, and replaced by the proposed new fence, this would be a notable enhancement in visual impact terms.

Whilst being in a partly broken down/broken through dilapidated state, the existing chainlink fence to the north-west boundary is considerably inter-twined amongst tree and hedge growth, and removal of this old fence would require considerable care and patience to avoid significant damage to the vegetation, although inevitably some pruning/cutting would be required. If this was kept to a reasonable minimum, subsequent re-growth would relatively quickly mitigate for any initial impact. It is noted that the application drawings confirm retention of the existing hedge, which is appropriate.

Steve Massey

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