Cc:	Planning (SMDC)
Subject:	SMD/2016/0801 - Abbey Farm, Abbey Green Road, Leek
Date:	21 February 2017 17:35:27

Arne,

I have the following comments on this application:

The application proposes the construction of a new private drive and vehicle parking/turning area for the northerly of the two dwellings forming the now-divided farmhouse. The site and its wider farmstead sit in an attractive rural landscape including an avenue of mature Lime trees along the existing farm drive leading from Abbey Green Road, a small mature woodland immediately to the north of the dwelling, and numerous mature and established parkland-type individual trees within the surrounding fields. The proposed new drive and parking area would be partly located close to various existing trees. Given these circumstances, it is a notable and unfortunate omission that there appears to be no tree survey and arboricultural impact assessment report submitted with this planning application.

That said, in terms of its physical make-up, the proposed development would be of relatively low-key construction, giving the potential to create the new drive and parking area without significant harmful impact on trees. It is noted that acceptable construction measures exist to enable the installation of new access for low levels of traffic near trees, such as a private drive to a single dwelling. This is subject to the adoption and implementation of appropriately specified and supervised working methods and construction specification, often involving undisturbed retention of existing ground levels, use of no-dig cellular confinement systems and temporary tree protection barriers within the normally derived Root Protection Areas of significant trees to be retained.

It is noted that the application drawings include generalised site sections showing proposed minor alterations to ground levels for the parking area, although this may still prove to have no significant impact on trees due to the existing stone retaining wall with woodland trees growing at the higher level.

In view of the potential to construct a low-key drive construction which avoids significant harm to trees, and for this to be secured through imposition of suitable conditions on granting planning permission, it is considered that there would be no substantive reason to object to or refuse this application on grounds of impact on trees. However, I would request that the following conditions be imposed in the event that planning permission is granted:

1. Before the commencement of the development hereby approved (including any site clearance, stripping or site establishment) a tree survey shall be submitted to and approved by the LPA showing the accurate positions, species, measured stem diameters and derived Root Protection Areas of all existing trees within or adjacent to the site which may be affected by or may influence the development, in accordance with British Standard 5837:2012 *Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction – Recommendations*.

2. Notwithstanding any indication of the applicant's site location/cross sections plan Drg. No. AAL 10, there shall be no alteration of existing ground levels within the identified Root Protection Areas of any existing trees to be retained, unless otherwise approved by the LPA.

3. Before the commencement of the development hereby approved (including any site clearance, stripping or site establishment) full details of all tree protection measures shall be submitted to and approved by the LPA. Such details shall include full construction specification for a no-dig cellular confinement system for the proposed driveway and parking/turning area within the identified Root Protection Areas, or such other specification as may be approved by the LPA, together with an arboricultural method statement setting out working methods and special protection measures for the avoidance of harm to existing trees on and adjacent to the application site. Such method statement and protection measures shall specifically include details and timescales to ensure that appropriate measures are implemented at appropriate stages of the development to protect tree roots in the vicinity of the development, from the initial outset of any construction activity and maintained for the duration of construction. Thereafter, the development shall be constructed only in full accordance with details approved under this condition.

4. Before the commencement of the development hereby approved (including any site clearance, stripping or site establishment) temporary protective fencing and advisory notices for the protection of the existing trees to be retained shall be erected in accordance with guidance in British Standard 5837:2012 *Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction – Recommendations*, and shall be retained in position for the duration of the period that development takes place, unless otherwise agreed by the LPA. Within the fenced areas there shall be no excavation, changes in ground levels, installation of underground services, provision of hard surfacing, passage of vehicles, storage of materials, equipment or site huts, tipping of chemicals, waste or cement, or lighting of fires unless otherwise agreed by the LPA.

Steve Massey

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