From: planningcomments@staffsmoorlands.gov.uk
To: Planning Comments (SMDC)
Subject: Comment Received from Public Access
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Application Reference No. : DOC/2019/0082 Site Address: Yew Tree Farm Cheddleton Heath Road Leek Staffordshire ST13 7DX Leek
Comments by: Elizabeth Johnson
From:
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Submission: Objection
Comments: Reference to discharge of condition 4 (SMD/2019/0082)

Case officer Hannah Hollins

After reading the delegated decision report on the original application for the proposed building (SMD/2019/0283) it was noted that,

'There will be a strong and it may be considered unfortunate visual impact for the users of Fynneylane due to the imposing scale of the building.'

It was also commented that the building would be, ' large and imposing ...with little other than functional design.'

As such, and as the owner occupier of the neighbouring grade II* listed building, I appreciated the comment that¿.

¿Reference is made in the application to introducing landscape planting and a condition should be added to require this. It would be appropriate to require a substantial tree group off the NE side of the development.¿

With this in mind, I welcomed a landscape scheme but am significantly disappointed. I would not consider four trees, to be planted in a single line, to be a significant group. This still leaves a large visual impact of the building from the NE side and when approaching the building from the neighbouring property, the four proposed trees would do little to screen the large and imposing building. It should also be noted that the existing ¿trees¿ denoted on the plan in orange are currently a hazel shrub, a holly shrub and only one species I would consider to be a tree to provide any form of screening.

I would like it to be considered that the NE side of the development includes the triangle of land on the applicant¿s side of the boundary. I believe a substantial group of trees carefully placed here would be of great improvement to reducing the visual impact of such a building. If this included the addition of hedging on the NE elevation it would add greatly to the screening effect once left to grow and mature naturally in both height and breadth.

I would like to draw the council¿s attention to a previous application made, and approved with conditions, in 2013(SMD/2012/0960), for an ¿extension to an already existing silage pit¿. Condition 4 of this development required the applicant to submit landscape plans to provide screening for that building. It was stated that in the interests of visual appearance,

¿Owing to the large size of the building, in particular its height; its location within the Special Landscape Area and its prominence, in particular from the Fynney Lane public right of way, a defined and protected area of tree and/or hedge planting is considered essential to complement and augment the proposed embankment screen to the eastern side and a condition of the approval is that a landscape planting scheme shall be devised for approval by the Local Planning Authority and completed by the end of the planting season following the completion of development.¿

No such screening has ever been provided and indeed no such planning application has been submitted to the council for a discharge of this condition. It is my understanding that this condition should have been met to satisfy the planning application and I believe this should be rectified as soon as possible.

The applicants own local requirements statement says (SMD/2019/0283),

¿Landscaping Details

The applicant is happy to carry out any landscaping scheme specified by yourselves in order to protect the amenities of the site and the area. Any trees planted will be fenced from livestock and will be protected by either spiral-type rabbit guards with canes or Netlon mesh-type guards including canes. A circle of 1 metre around the base of each tree shall be kept weed free for a period of at least 2 years. Any trees that die, become seriously damaged or diseased will be replaced by trees of similar size, unless there is reason to believe that the original species chosen was unsuitable for the site, in which case an alternative appropriate species will be used. All planting would be carried out in the first planting season following the construction of the building. Trees will be provided in accordance with BS 3936 and planting to be in accordance with BS 4428.¿

With this in mind, I believe that the current landscape plan should be of an even larger group of trees for screening purposes. My hope would be that the small area of field to the NE elevation of the building, between the boundary and both north and south of the concrete track, should have a significant group of trees, planted at different points to provide a copse effect, which would enable rapid canopy closure and screening. (See attached proposal). These should be allowed to grow and develop in both height and breadth to break up the outline of the imposing utilitarian structure. This would be similar to the effect of screening provided on the Basford Lane industrial site (which was used to screen similar large and imposing industrial structures), and I believe that the council also used the wording significant group of trees to denote a planting scheme for that site, which I must admit, cannot be seen from the road due to the excellent positioning of those trees.

At no point in the landscaping plan submitted on 9th October, 2019, is reference made to the trees and hedging to, ¿grow and be maintained for the lifetime of the development.¿ It is my concern that this needs to be added to the landscape plan to stop the removal of trees in the future.

The proposed site for the trees is not on the applicant¿s property. It is clear from the attached landscaping plan that the birch and maple trees, along with the hedging, are to be planted on the land belonging to the neighbouring property. As the owner of the neighbouring property and land, permission has never been requested or granted.

When measurements are taken from the scale drawing showing the elevations, there should be a gap of approximately 1100 - 1200mm between the northern wall of the building and the boundary wall. This gap, if the plans have been followed accordingly, should provide adequate space to plant hedging of mixed plants. The existing building to the west of the proposed structure also has space on the north elevation for hedging and trees to be planted, as per condition 4 on the 2013 application.

I believe that since the planning permission has an attached condition to provide a planting scheme, then that scheme needs to be on land belonging to the applicant and not on property to which they do not have title. The proposed plan includes the statement, ¿in agreement with the neighbour¿¿ It is true that I am in full agreement that a planting scheme to reduce visual impact is essential, however, if this is a condition of the applicants permission, then the condition should be met using the applicants own land for both the trees and the hedging. I

do not agree with the landscape plan submitted on 9th October 2019.

I would also like to make it clear that the first time I saw the landscape plan was when attached to the application for discharge of condition. I am therefore unsure how the statement, ¿in agreement with the neighbour¿ can be included, when I have never before seen the aforementioned plan and certainly do not agree with it.

The approval of the planning permission has provided the applicant with a large building of nearly 700M2. Surely the applicant cannot disagree that the huge advantage of having this building is worth the small price of a significant group of trees, on a small and insignificantly sized piece of land to them given the size of the farm.

As such I would like to request that the proposed planting scheme be amended, to include, a large group of trees placed strategically on the triangular area of grazing land on the applicants side of the boundary, between the boundary and both north and south of the concrete track, as well as more trees being placed along the hedge line on the NE side of the development to the east of point199.0M on the attached landscape plan. All proposals should be on the applicants land and not rely on property to which they do not have title. I would also like to see additional hedging placed on the NE elevation of the proposed building, and also planted between the boundary and the northern elevation of the existing structure, to the west, and the proposed structure, to screen the north elevation when approaching from Fynneylane. I feel that such a landscape plan would be appropriate to screen the building and provide additional screening as per the condition 4 on the previous 2013 application that has never been discharged. Trees should be of a natural and indigenous species to suit the soil of the area, it would also be beneficial if these were semi mature as screening would be provided quicker and this would partly act to rectify the unmet conditions of the previous 2013 application.

I have also sent a hard copy of my objections into the council to include a suggested landscape plan with the applicants plans overlaid with a plan I feel would be more suitable.