From: Steve Massey
Sent: 27 November 2020 15:20
To: Lisa Jackson
Cc: Planning Comments (SMDC)
Subject: SMD/2020/0372 - 14 Cheddleton Heath Road

Categories:

Lisa

Summary: no objection subject to condition; informative note also requested.

There are several mature Sycamore trees in the adjacent field to the west of the application site; these are situated close to (c.1.0m beyond) the site boundary fence, and are protected within a projecting spur of Woodland W1 under TPO No. SM.48. Initially the application did not appear to have acknowledged the presence of these trees, and the originally proposed standard excavated trench footing would have been likely to cause significant damage to roots. As a result of raising these concerns, I attended a site meeting with the applicant and agent to discuss the trees in relation to the proposed development.

Subsequently, further information has been submitted as addendum/amendment to the application. This takes the form of photographs showing images of a trial excavation within the application site close to the boundary and trees, together with technical details of the now-proposed alternative form of foundation, comprising screw piles to be used in conjunction with a concrete ground beam.

Of significant relevance to the assessment of this application is the fact that there is an existing garage with concrete base present at the corner of the site, together with existing hardstanding partly of tarmac and partly of "crazy paving" covering the majority of the property frontage. The proposed replacement garage would be partly within the footprint of the existing garage – the base of which is likely to either have already impacted on tree roots or constrained their growth within the footprint – and is otherwise within the existing hard-paved area to the side.

The trial excavation photos show that the crazy paving has little or no base beneath the slabs, being laid onto compacted earth, there is visual evidence of numerous fibrous roots (these are important as they support the microscopic root hairs which actually absorb water and nutrients from the soil) and also a substantial woody root of a good few centimetres diameter located at about 30 - 32cm (12 – 13 inches) depth below the surface. This illustrates that the installation of the paving has not itself required significant removal of roots nor has it prevented root growth and development beneath the slabs. This is perhaps because there is no constructed/compacted base/sub-base, and also the crazy paving is old with eroded mortar joints which have no doubt allowed moisture and air to penetrate the ground to be exploited by the roots. Possibly the tarmac (being of bound construction and probably laid on some form of compacted base) has provided greater constraint to root growth and development, but the tarmac area is notably further from the trees. However this evidence does point to standard excavated strip footings being likely to cause significant damage to roots and consequently being considered unacceptable at this proximity to the trees.

Amended P4 Architecture Drg. No. STTU/PP/01/002 Rev A, and the ABC Anchors Technical Bulletin 17-12/01, now show the proposed use of screw piles to support a concrete ground beam. There is a small chance that one or more of the piles may meet and damage a structural woody root, but this can be reduced further by careful prior hand digging at each pile position to hopefully locate and avoid any major roots detected, as there is some flexibility with the precise position of the piles. The ground between pile positions, comprising the large majority of the Rot Protection Area, remains undisturbed. Small screw piles as proposed are driven into the ground using a driver which can either be hand-held, or mounted on a long-reach excavator arm with the machine itself standing outside the

RPA (and in this particular case, this can be on existing vehicle hard standing); therefore this avoids heavy machinery leading to soil compaction of the rootzone.

The details show a ground beam at an indicative base depth of around 350mm – whilst this would be subject to precise finishing level to suit ground conditions and resultant piling depth, this nevertheless indicates that whilst there may well be some very localised impact on fibrous roots, there is potential for the structure to site above woody structural root depth.

Also taking into account the already-invasive presence of the existing garage base and existing hard surfacing, it is considered that the proposed construction method is unlikely to have significant harmful impact on the roots of the nearby protected trees.

The proposed replacement garage would be taller than the existing building, but even so would not require crown pruning of trees in order to accommodate the new structure. In addition, as the proposal is for a domestic garage and not living accommodation, the fact that it would be partly located beneath tree canopies would not lead to problems arising from shading, overbearing effect etc.

In conclusion, I have no objection to the application as now amended, subject to the imposition and implementation of the following condition:

1. The development hereby approved shall be constructed only in full accordance with the proposed small screw piles, ground beam and supported raft foundation specification and construction methods as indicated on P4 Architecture Drg. No. STTU/PP/01/002 Rev A, and detailed in the supporting ABC Anchors Technical Bulletin 17-12/01, submitted as addendum/amendment to the application hereby approved.

Note that due to the position of the proposed replacement garage adjacent to the site boundary and surrounded within the site by existing hard-surfaced areas, there is no benefit and no requirement in this instance to impose a condition requiring provision of temporary tree protection barriers.

Please also include the following informative note on the decision notice if planning permission is granted:

1. It should be noted that trees situated on land adjacent to the western side of the application site are protected by Tree Preservation Order. Other than where may be **directly** required to implement the development hereby approved, the planning permission hereby granted does not authorise any work to these trees. and specific prior consent following separate application to the local planning authority under the terms of the Tree Preservation Order would be required to carry out any such work other than where specified as exempt under the Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation) (England) Regulations 2012.

Steve Massey

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