
From: Johnston, Christopher
Sent: 26 October 2021 15:32
To: Planning Comments (SMDC)
Subject: FW: SMD/2021/0491 - Land off Tenford Lane, Upper Tean

Categories:

From: Steve Massey
Sent: 22 October 2021 13:29
To: Johnston, Christopher
Subject: SMD/2021/0491 - Land off Tenford Lane, Upper Tean

Chris

Comments on this application as follows:

Some of the existing hedgerow trees along the Tenford Lane frontage are protected under TPO No. SM.71 as follows:

- Applicant's survey no. T51 = TPO SM.71 tree T4 (Ash)
- Applicant's survey no. T4538 = TPO SM.71 tree T5 (Oak)
- Applicant's survey no. T4539 = TPO SM.71 tree T6 (Oak)
- Applicant's survey no. T4540 = TPO SM.71 tree T7 (Oak)
- Applicant's survey no. T4542 = TPO SM.71 tree T8 (Oak)
- Applicant's survey no. T4543 = TPO SM.71 tree T9 (Oak)

Application includes a tree survey and arboricultural impact assessment report identifying all significant trees on/adjacent to the site (i.e. not just those protected by TPO).

Proposed layout would largely retain existing field structure, no existing trees would be removed in order to accommodate the development and only 2 short stretches of hedgerow (total 23.5m) at the proposed access point which would be readily mitigated by replacement planting as part of site landscaping scheme.

6 trees in the tree survey have been assessed as Category U (poor/dangerous condition) however the applicant's tree report notes that 5 of these 6 could actually be retained for habitat value (these 5 are all situated along the woodland edge/treeline at the northern boundary of the site, well away from dwellings, gardens, roads and open space areas. The 6th cat U tree (ref T4541) is in the Tenford Lane frontage hedgerow virtually opposite the junction with Cavendish Road, and removal is advised due to stem base decay with potential failure targets of adjacent public highway and proposed plots on the development – this is agreed and supported; this tree is not included in the TPO so no further procedural issues apply prior to removal, irrespective of development.

Other than for new main site access noted above, no dwelling footprints, garage footprints, private drives or estate roads would encroach within tree Root Protection Areas. A small corner of the indicated rear patios of Plots 35, 36 & 37 would very slightly encroach into RPAs, but would be low impact and as noted in applicants tree report could be constructed using no-dig geocell specification to avoid significant impact. Plot boundary fences in some cases would traverse through RPAs, but intermittent fenceposts at typical intervals would not have a significant adverse impact on roots and is considered acceptable.

The tree report advises that the arboriculturalist had not seen proposals for any underground services installations, but anticipates service runs beneath the estate roads and therefore suggests there are unlikely to be arboricultural

constraints. However, the strategic drainage plan submitted with the application shows individual soakaways to each plot specified as a cellular block system typically 9m x 9m, excavated/installed to 1m below incoming invert level (which itself will be below ground level) and where, as in some cases for plots backing on to Tenford Lane, these soakaways are shown beneath existing tree canopy extent this would also inevitably involve significant excavation and likely substantial root damage within RPAs. It is not possible to be certain which plots this issue would relate to, as the strategic drainage plan is notably not in accordance with the proposed layout plan. However, as a general principle excavation for and installation of these soakaways would not be considered acceptable within the RPAs of existing trees to be retained – especially, but not exclusively, those protected by TPO. I made this comment at outline stage when the provision of individual soakaways was also indicated.

Generally there would be little direct harmful impact on existing trees/hedgerows arising from the proposed layout – but with the exception of the soakaways within RPAs which is not acceptable.

Applicant's tree report includes shading patterns and considers that dwelling proximity to trees would not lead to undue shading/overbearing problems nor pressure for lopping/felling. However, I consider that for some plots the dwelling proximity is too close and there would be significant shading of rear elevation and/or private gardens at certain times of day – in particular Plots 27, 28, 29, 36 & 37, and to a lesser extent Plot 35; in addition the proximity of dwelling elevations to tree canopies would be inappropriately close in some instances (eg virtually touching at Plot 36) which is inevitably likely to generate concerns about overbearing impact on outlook, potential for damage from falling branches etc and thereby create pressure for crown reduction and/or felling. Substantially greater clearance should be sought in these cases.

In conjunction with this, it is noted that more and more larger residential developments are these days being designed as “outward-facing” to avoid presenting a closed off rear aspect to either the public realm or adjacent open countryside, which often involves provision of tall solid fences to gardens in order to provide privacy and security which can be visually abrupt and intrusive, especially in a rural edge location such as Tenford Lane. I haven't seen boundary treatment proposals, and whilst for instance the existing hedgerow to Tenford lane (and its trees) would be retained, such established hedges are often not considered by occupants to provide sufficient standard of privacy and security, especially if gappy or when out of leaf in winter. I wonder if a re-think to an outward-facing layout for this site would address and overcome some or all of the issues noted above, in addition to improving the appearance and setting of the development itself and allowing it to be assimilated better into the landscape with less intrusive visual impact?

The proposed landscaping scheme is heavily based on the use of native species which is good to see and supported. This would provide a new native hedgerow along the northern edge of the development area, and includes appropriate standard trees within the hedge. Individual native trees and massed woodland/scrub type planting are shown for the open space areas, together with orchard fruit trees in some locations on the open space which supports the council's current community orchard initiative. On-plot planting is more ornamental/garden-orientated as expected, but even so also includes native trees and hedging. Planting is fully and acceptably specified with regard to species, planting sizes, numbers/densities etc.

A Landscape and Habitat enhancement and management Plan is submitted in accordance with condition 17 of the outline planning permission; this is considered to be appropriate and acceptable, subject to any further advice/comment/request from Staffs Wildlife Trust.

If you are minded to approve this reserved matters application, please let me know so that I can suggest suitable conditions eg for temporary tree protection, any special measure construction specifications/working methods in relation to any encroachment into tree RPAs, implementation and maintenance of new landscaping, implementation of Landscape /Habitat Plan etc where not already provided for by conditions of the outline planning permission.

Steve Massey

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