

From: [Steve Massey](#)
To: [Johnston, Christopher](#)
Cc: [Planning Comments \(SMDC\)](#)
Subject: SMD/2021/0568 - Bradley Elms Farm, Alton Road, Threapwood
Date: 27 October 2021 15:59:33

Chris

This current application proposes to create a single dwelling from the existing 3 dwellings allowed as conversion from previous B & B units under planning permission SMD/2018/0524. A belt of established trees runs along the eastern side of Bradley Elms Farm, connecting at its north with a larger woodland area which wraps around an adjacent property Birchwood and partially fronts onto Alton Road. Bradley Elms Farm itself is located at the southern end of a long tree-lined private drive off Alton Road. None of these trees are protected.

The section of trees immediately to the east of the application site/buildings is denoted as group G4 in the application's accompanying tree survey, comprising a mix of Birch and Goat willow which individually have grown tall and spindly due to close spacing. These trees partly encroach directly onto the rear (east) elevation and roof of the eastern range of the application buildings. The application plans indicate the trees forming group G4 to be removed.

These same trees were recommended to be removed as part of the previous application SMD/2018/0524, to which I had no objection; several were identified then as being in poor condition, and others as being potentially weak. The same arboricultural consultancy company has now produced the report submitted with the current application, albeit authored by a different individual person, and these trees are now generally described as being in good physiological condition and with no particular structural condition issues noted other than the direct encroachment onto the building! However, in the final analysis the trees forming group G4 alongside the application buildings are not visible from Alton Road nor Bradley Lane, and although partly visible across fields from Public Footpath Alton 38 to the east of the site they are not considered to be of substantial amenity value and application tree report notwithstanding, they are not generally of high quality. I would therefore maintain my position of no objection.

That said, removal of these trees is not directly required in order to implement the proposed creation of a single dwelling, and it may be that the direct encroachment issue – possibly together with some improvement to the outlook from the rear elevation of the eastern-most building (mainly not primary living accommodation) – could be acceptably dealt with by a combination of pruning and/or selective felling of the poorest specimens rather than wholesale clearance, in order to retain a few trees in mutually supportive smaller groups.

As the site abuts open fields, and appears likely to involve the loss of some trees, it would be appropriate from various points of view (landscape, biodiversity, action for climate change) that the development provides some suitable replacement planting as compensation – this would most obviously be addressed by provision of a new mixed native species hedgerow incorporating several standard hedgerow trees along the eastern boundary of the application site, and should be secured by a landscaping condition in the event that planning permission is granted; in this instance this could be acceptably dealt with by way of a “within two months of commencement...” type condition rather than pre-commencement, as follows:

1. Within 2 months of the commencement of development (including any demolition, site clearance, site stripping and site establishment) a

comprehensive landscaping scheme shall be submitted to LPA for approval. Such a scheme shall in particular make provision for the establishment along the eastern boundary of the site of a new mixed native species hedgerow also incorporating a minimum of 5 irregularly spaced standard hedgerow trees such as native Rowan, native Crab Apple and Field Maple. The submitted landscaping scheme shall include full details of all proposed new trees and shrubs, giving specification for species, positions, planting sizes and numbers/densities of all new planting. The landscaping scheme once approved shall be fully implemented before the end of the first available dormant season (November to February inclusive) following completion of the development hereby approved. The trees and shrubs planted in accordance with this landscaping scheme shall be properly maintained for a period of 5 years following planting. Any plants which within this period are damaged, become diseased, die, are removed or otherwise fail to establish shall be replaced during the next suitable season.

I would also suggest that the following informative note could be usefully included on the decision notice:

1. It is suggested that the issue of direct encroachment onto the rear of the building by tree canopies, and dealing with those trees which may be structurally compromised and unsuitable for long term retention, may be acceptably addressed through a combination of pruning and/or selective felling, rather than the wholesale clearance of all existing trees within group G4 as denoted in the tree survey report accompanying the application. The applicant is therefore advised to consider a balanced approach to site landscaping, involving the provision of a new hedgerow as required under Condition 1 *(amend this reference to suit if the above condition is re-numbered for inclusion on the decision notice)* of this planning permission together with the selective removal of the poorest quality existing trees and retention of any suitable specimens perhaps in a few, smaller, mutually supportive groups. This could enable the best balance to be achieved between maintaining the setting of the development, dealing with any problem trees, and providing suitable replacement planting where removal is required.

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