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**From:** Steve Massey  
**Sent:** 07 February 2023 16:38  
**To:** Curley, Jane  
**Cc:** Planning Comments (SMDC)  
**Subject:** SMD/2021/0536 - Land at Barnfields Industrial Estate, Sunnyhills Road, Leek - Further Comment on amended plans

**Categories:**

Jane

The following further comments are made in relation to the latest amended plans, in particular the landscaping proposals, as now set out on:

21039/01 Rev J – proposed site layout  
21039/03 Rev D – boundary treatment layout  
21039/04 Rev C – boundary treatment details  
21039/05 Rev B – illustrative street scenes  
UG\_1145\_LAN\_GA\_DRW\_01 P18 – landscaping general arrangement plan  
UG\_1145\_LAN\_HL\_DRW\_03 P13 – hard landscaping  
UG\_1145\_LAN\_SL\_DRW\_04 P12 – soft landscaping (1 of 3: western area)  
UG\_1145\_LAN\_SL\_DRW\_05 P10 – soft landscaping (2 of 3: central area)  
UG\_1145\_LAN\_SL\_DRW\_06 P10 – soft landscaping (3 of 3: eastern area)

References to plot numbers relate to the latest Rev J layout/plot numbering.

1. Overall number of proposed new individual trees has increased slightly, from 277 to 301. Individual trees as streetscene greening has been increased notably, although this is partly accounted for by reducing tree planting from levels previously indicated in other parts of the site – some specifics below.
2. Species for trees on plot frontages have been reviewed and amended, to concentrate on “fastigate” varieties (upright, narrow crowns) of generally small/medium species more suitable for enclosed spaces.
3. Nonetheless, a large proportion of the plot frontage trees contributing to streetscene greening, including quite a number of the new additions, are still only shown sited 2.5 – 3.0m from dwelling elevations. Even with the more compact species indicated, it is difficult to envisage many of these trees being retained for more than a few years as they are likely to be perceived as being too close to habitable buildings with attendant concerns about shading, overbearing, restricted outlook, potential damage to buildings by direct crown encroachment and direct/indirect root action. The layout remains one which is not designed to reasonably accommodate the provision or long term retention of significant tree planting as contribution to streetscene greening.
4. Ornamental hedge planting to plot frontages has been notably increased – again to improve streetscene greening. However, there are quite a few instances where shrub beds only c.1m wide are located between plot frontage hedges and building elevations – I’m not sure what the real benefit of this would be nor even how successfully they would establish in such restricted positions (even given the “low shade” species mix specified).
5. Fewer new trees are now proposed to the existing tree belt along Sunnyhills Road, no doubt to off-set costs of additional trees in streetscene locations; however, this is not particularly a problem given general retention of existing trees, still some new trees to reinforce the belt, and general massed underplanting with native shrubs throughout the belt.
6. Fewer new trees are now proposed: at the western boundary of the site (access road to country park car park, and adjacent to pumping station; along the eastern boundary adjacent to the railway (either in gardens of plots 127-130 & 150-152) or in landscaped buffer to side of plot 131; around the proposed café (also with reduction of overall plot size for café and loss of outdoor sitting/eating area); along the southern boundary adjacent to the country park.

7. To offset this, there is increased tree planting now proposed along Barnfields Road, the estate spine road and the culs-de-sac off this – generally to plot frontages but see issue noted at point 3 above.
8. Also more trees proposed around the play area. Ok in landscape terms, but are the Service Commissioning team/Police Architectural Liaison Officer happy with the level of screening around the play area both from trees and the proposed peripheral beech hedge planting? Subsequent grounds maintenance would perhaps need to ensure this hedge is kept well trimmed no higher than adjacent railings height to facilitate natural surveillance.
9. More trees now shown along protected line of the future link road, which is good.
10. The 2 abutting culs-de-sac at plots 123-140 and 148-152 have been made pedestrian permeable, with the previously shown 1.8m closed board fence now omitted and ornamental hedging shown instead. Also additional trees added to plot frontages on these culs-de-sac. Good improvement.
11. One plot now omitted from plots 131-139, with corresponding omission of 2 parking bays. A couple of extra lengths of dividing hedge added, and a couple of additional trees behind the parking bays, but otherwise still a long, relatively unbroken run of parking/vehicles along the southern side of this cul-de-sac.
12. However, the northern side has been greened significantly with a number of additional new trees indicated.
13. There are additional trees along the south side of plots 131-139 facing the railway station and car park area, although the trees are still only c.3.5m from the front elevations and may well feel too enclosing once established. Again there may be pressure for early removals here.
14. 1.2m railings are now shown around the marina site, which is better than the previous 2.1m fencing although still separated. Perhaps if/when the marina itself is designed, its visual/spatial/functional interaction with the new housing estate can be revisited together with hard/soft landscaping to the basin (but still little room appears likely) in order to achieve a quality integrated urban waterside development/character.
15. 1.2m railings are now shown along the public footpath boundary between the Barnfield Road turning circle and the marina location, which is clearly a big improvement to replace the existing industrial steel palisade fence. However, whilst understandable to attempt to screen the scrapyards from the development, the proposed tree planting and mixed native shrub planting inside (application site side) this railing fence will still visually enclose the footpath in its existing narrow corridor. It is still considered a missed opportunity not to slightly re-align the footpath within the site with the new planting set against the scrapyards boundary (subject to landowner permission and any statutory legal diversion process required).
16. The 1.8m closed board fence to the rear of plots 12-14 and side of plot 16, standing at the top of the proposed crib wall retaining structure at the southern boundary of the site, will be elevated, prominent and intrusive in views from the adjacent country park, as would the development itself beyond – the more so due to the existing intervening tree/shrub belt being notably thinner in this location around the silted/vegetated pond. The fence has not been set back into the site, and there is no sensible opportunity within the application site for planting external to this fenceline to soften its visual impact. Possibly there could be scope for supplementary planting within the country park tree belt at the base of the crib wall, but species would need to be carefully chosen to suit the often waterlogged ground conditions.

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