

From: [Steve Massey](#)
To: [Jane Curley](#)
Cc: [Planning Comments \(SMDC\)](#)
Subject: SMD/2021/0610 - Land East of Froghall Road, Cheadle
Date: 19 February 2024 13:48:06
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Jane

Summary: Loss of hedgerow H5 and tree T8 would be inevitable to accommodate site access as proposed, and would have to be accepted if the application is approved. No objection to the principal of this application at outline stage on grounds of impact on trees, but noted that the indicative masterplan layout and parameters plan would not be acceptable in subsequent detail as currently shown. Conditions requested in the event that outline planning permission is granted.

I have the following comments relating to trees/hedgerows in connection with this application.

It is noted that the application seeks outline planning permission for **up to** 228 dwellings (my emphasis) with access details also to be considered at this stage, and I understand that those access details relate only to the proposed new access into the site off Froghall Road. Proposed internal road network and layout shown on masterplans and parameter plans are purely indicative at this stage.

A tree survey and arboricultural impact assessment report (AIA) accompanies the application, identifying existing trees and hedgerows, assessing them for retention priority based on their significance/condition/quality, and defining their associated Root Protection Areas as shown on the report's Tree Constraints Plan. The AIA also assesses the likely losses of and impact on existing trees/hedgerows as far as reasonably possible, given the outline-only status of the application and the absence at this stage of any detailed layout.

Needing particular comment in relation to the development proposals are the roadside field hedgerow (denoted "H5" in the AIA) containing 2 mature hedgerow trees ("T8" & "T9") along the Froghall Road boundary at the north-west of the application site, and the internal field hedgerow ("H4" & "H6") dividing the application site, running approximately north-east from the side/rear of 204 Froghall Road towards the north side of Broad Haye Farm and containing 4 mature hedgerow trees ("T3", "T4", "T5" & "T6").

Existing trees are shown only schematically/indicatively on the masterplan and parameters plan, and their RPAs are not shown at all; nevertheless it is apparent that tree RPAs have not been fully taken into account when drawing up these plans. In addition, existing trees (and therefore their RPAs) are not shown at all on the Proposed Site Access Plan, which is a matter for detailed consideration at this stage (although the AIA Tree Retention and Removal Plan does show existing tree positions and RPAs in relation to the proposed new site access arrangements).

The AIA acknowledges that the hedgerow H5 along with Ash tree T9 would need to be removed to accommodate the proposed new site access point and its required visibility splays, involving re-alignment of Froghall Road and construction of a new roundabout. The AIA suggests that Oak T8 could be retained, and this appears to be feasible from the AIA's Tree Retention and Removal

Plan, albeit some crown lift pruning would be required in order to provide and maintain visibility beneath the canopy.

Ash T9 is already showing clear signs of Ash Dieback Disease; progressive decline would be expected and this tree would not be anticipated to have any worthwhile future, with removal likely to be required in the near future anyway on arboricultural/safety grounds irrespective of development proposals. I therefore have no objection to the loss of T9.

It appears that T8 could be retained without direct construction impacts within its RPA, and retention of this tree would be welcome if this is acceptable to the highway authority (its stem would be within the northern visibility splay).

Removal of H5 would be inevitable given the proposed site access arrangements. This would initially have a substantial adverse impact on local landscape character, and in this event medium term mitigation would require planting of a new native hedgerow behind the splay. This is typical of new access to major new development in open countryside, and if this residential development scheme as a whole is considered desirable and acceptable in principal then we would be forced to accept the loss of this hedgerow.

There are also a few additional locations where potential “puncturing” of existing hedgerows is suggested to accommodate pedestrian permeability and footpath links within the site. These are unlikely to be of major impact or fundamental concern, but would be appropriately considered in detail at subsequent reserved matters stages if outline planning permission is granted.

Trees T4 (Oak), T5 and T6 (both Sycamore) within hedgerow H4 are all large mature Category A trees (retention highly desirable). The AIA demonstrates that there would be significant direct construction encroachment and impact within the RPAs of T4 and T5 arising from the (indicative) alignments of the principal site road and secondary highway layout. As the layout is only indicative but also indicates the footprint of new roadway immediately adjacent to the RPA of tree T6, the possibility of impact on this tree from subsequent detailed layout and associated potential construction effects should also be borne in mind. The AIA commentary acknowledges these potential impacts as shown arising at outline stage and suggests that later detailed design would refine such incursions to “reduce” conflicts, with any remaining footway encroachment being constructed to special measures specification (eg “cellweb” – a no-dig, cellular confinement load support specification sometimes acceptable for private drive installation within RPAs).

The starting point of British Standard 5837:2012 *Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction - Recommendations* is that development layout design should exclude **all** structures (including roadways, hard surfacing, underground services etc) from within the RPA of trees to be retained; it goes on to advise that where development within RPAs is **unavoidable** then special measures specifications **may** be available and acceptable to avoid or reduce impacts on trees (my emphasis). Given that we are dealing here with a large open field/ greenfield development proposal at outline stage with no detailed layout design, then it is clearly **not unavoidable** to design a layout which avoids any structures or construction impacts encroaching within RPAs. This would and should include exclusion from RPAs of “unseen” construction elements such as excavations, compacted sub-base/base layers, roadside drainage infrastructure etc which may in practice be well outside the plan footprint position of the actual carriageway

and pavement.

The masterplan indicates that the encroachment within RPAs of T4 and T5, and possibly also T6, would be by the main site spine road and secondary street (both presumably to adoptable highway standards) and shared private drive serving several dwellings – none of these would anyway be acceptably constructed using no-dig/cellular confinement type specifications even if encroachment within RPAs was considered unavoidable or acceptable for some reason.

Again acknowledging that the layout is only indicative as yet, there is evidently ample opportunity to accommodate a significant amount of residential development and associated infrastructure within the application site boundaries without any encroachment and harmful impact within the RPAs of trees which must be retained. On this basis, I have no objection in principle to this application at outline stage on the grounds of likely or potential impact on existing trees. However, in the event that outline planning permission is granted, it should be made clear to the applicant that the current indicative masterplan layout would not be acceptable and subsequent detailed design would be required to give full and appropriate consideration to avoiding harmful impact on important trees – this may potentially have knock-on effects on the applicant's current thinking for layout and even target numbers of dwellings.

I would request that the following conditions be imposed in the event that planning permission is granted:

1. Notwithstanding any indication on the plans hereby approved, this outline planning permission does not give or imply any approval for the layout or position of any internal road, footpath, building, services infrastructure or other structure. All subsequent applications for approval of reserved matters shall demonstrate full and detailed consideration for the avoidance of harmful impact on trees and hedgerows to be retained, and shall be expected to show full compliance with guidance set out in British Standard 5837:2012 *Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction - Recommendations*.
2. No trees, shrubs or hedgerows shall be removed other than those whose removal is directly required to accommodate the development, as hereby approved or as subsequently approved in detail under a related reserved matters application, unless otherwise approved by the LPA. There shall be no removal of any trees, shrubs or hedgerows during the bird nesting season (March to August inclusive), unless otherwise agreed by the LPA and in this case only following careful inspection by a competent person immediately prior to removal in order to establish that such trees, shrubs or hedgerow are not in active use by nesting birds.
3. Any mature tree to be removed or to have substantial crown pruning operations carried out shall first be carefully inspected for the potential to provide bat roosting opportunities. Any tree which has such potential (which could include cavities, splits, decay pockets, hollow stems or branches, areas of loose bark, dense ivy cover or dense epicormic shoots) shall be subject to a further detailed and if necessary climbing inspection by a licensed bat worker immediately prior to felling or pruning, and all felling or pruning of such trees

assessed as having moderate or greater potential for roosting shall take place in the presence of the bat worker who can then immediately advise on appropriate measures if bats are encountered during dismantling, felling or pruning operations.

4. The first action on commencement of development, prior to any further action (including any, site clearance, site stripping, site establishment or formation/improvement of temporary/permanent access) shall be the erection of temporary tree protection barriers and advisory notices for the protection of the existing trees to be retained, in accordance with guidance in British Standard 5837:2012 *Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction – Recommendations*, and these barriers and notices shall be retained in position for the duration of the period that development takes place, unless otherwise agreed by the LPA. Within the fenced areas there shall be no excavation, changes in ground levels, installation of underground services, provision of hard surfacing, passage of vehicles, storage of materials, equipment or site huts, tipping of chemicals, waste or cement, or lighting of fires unless otherwise agreed by the LPA.

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