

From: [Steve Massey](#)
To: [Chris Johnston](#)
Cc: [Planning Comments \(SMDC\)](#)
Subject: SMD/2024/0119 - Hollybrook House, Sandybrook Lane, Birchall, Leek
Date: 02 May 2024 17:38:42
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[SMD.2024.0119 sketch plan.pdf](#)

Chris

The application proposes a new detached garage within the curtilage of a newly constructed dwelling. The garage is proposed close to the Sandybrook Lane boundary where there is an existing old hedgerow and trees. There is no tree report submitted in support of the application. The indicated positions of the Conifer and, in particular the Cherry tree, are inaccurate.

I've attached a sketch plan showing my estimates of the positions of these trees, the extent of their Root Protection Areas (RPAs), and the proposed new garage. The garage footprint would encroach fairly substantially into the Cherry RPA, and less substantially but still notably into the Conifer RPA. Damage to roots from excavation for standard strip foundations and/or base slab and sub-base would be likely to cause harm to the trees, likely to lead to decline in condition.

However:

The Cherry is a small (c.6m tall) over-mature tree showing early signs of decline, and it has a very poor base structure with 2, becoming 3 main stems having weak unions between them and being wrapped around each other. Whilst I would not suggest this tree should be removed, it is of poor quality and little significance, and it would not be appropriate to refuse planning permission on the grounds of likely detrimental impact on this tree.

The Conifer is taller (c.14m tall), thereby having some greater visual presence, but is of a similar unremarkable character/appearance to Leyland Cypress and Lawson Cypress (i.e. typical and very common garden Conifers). It too has a poor structure, dividing into two co-dominant stems at c.5m above ground level with a potentially weak, very acute union between the two. Again I consider refusal on the grounds of detrimental impact on this tree would not be appropriate.

In addition to the above, I think it is likely that these trees anyway have already suffered damaging effects during construction of the new dwelling.

The hedge itself is unlikely to suffer significant harm as a result of the proposed new garage development, and should be retained.

I have no objection to this application. No temporary tree protection conditions would be appropriately required in the event that planning permission is granted.

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