

Biodiversity Statement

The planning application relates to changes to a privately owned “plot of land south-east of Fynney Street” [measuring 103.7m²]. The key changes are:

- Replacement of the existing 6-foot boundary fence with a combination of hedgerows [totalling ~6.7m] and double traditional-look gates
- Creation of a multi-purpose gravel area [measuring 48.85m²] to allow use of the land in all-weathers

We consider these changes to be proportionate with the intended overall purpose and heritage of this site, our larger privately owned “plot of land south-west of Fynney Street” [measuring 318.3m²] and the surrounding area.

Our two plots have been neglected for many years [decades even]; in part due to the lack of access as a consequence of a former owner erecting the 6-foot fence along the boundary with Fynney Street [this effectively removed access]. Whilst seeming green in appearance the plots lack diversity [predominantly brambles, nettles, ivy and bind weed] and showed evidence of a former owner's [a self-employed builder] use for storing/disposing of building materials and equipment [bricks, slabs, scaffolding, scrap metal, glass etc].

Our vision for the combined plots is for it to be a vibrant, attractive, robust and actively maintained space for the whole community to enjoy [albeit for most this will be limited to the improved appearance/view]*. The creation of the multi-purpose gravel area is to improve access and help future-proof the plots (enabling increased use and maintenance).

*Aligned to SMDC's “Green Space Strategy 2023-2024”.

The attached document [REF: Biodiversity-PL] shows our initial plans for how we are looking to achieve this.

Note: These plans are subject to change as we need to seek guidance on matters such as the best location for the wildlife pond, etc.

Hedgerows

To minimise disruption to wildlife:

- The ~26m of holly have been retained [albeit it with some pruning]
- ~12.5m of “wild” hedgerow have been retained [as is]
- An existing dead hedge has been maintained [with plans to extend to ~5.3m to support further composting]

The remaining boundaries [which belong to our plot(s)], consist of rusty scaffolding, wire mesh, panes of glass [apparently as a cat deterrent] overgrown with brambles, nettles, ivy and bind weed. As with the boundary fence, our intention is to replace the above with hedgerows. On top of this we have already planted:

- ~10.75m of mixed hawthorn (x25) and blackthorn (x25)*
- ~7.2m of wild privet (x16)*
- ~13.75m of variegated laurel (x25)

- ~9.7m of Portuguese laurel (15)

* Gifted by the Macclesfield Community Tree Nursery [a voluntary group who grow trees to combat climate change, increase biodiversity and create green spaces]

A further ~14.75m of hedging is planned [see Zone #3] and preference will be given to working with the Macclesfield Community Tree Nursery to obtain different species – ideally native to the UK.

Zones #1 -7 [318.3m²]

The intention is to create a number of interconnecting zones [shown here as #1-7] each with differing contents/features to increase biodiversity (different choices of flora/flora), use and interest. Zones #1 and 2 are on the higher ground level, whilst each subsequent plot is at a lower ground level.

Zone #1 [48.85m²]

This area is overlooked by one of two large sycamore tree and neighbouring garages; which limit sunlight.

The choice of the multipurpose gravel area supporting all-weather use of the plot and providing single level entry. Bench sitting [with view of larger plot plus church] is incorporated, along with raised planters – these are aimed at individuals who cannot (through mobility issues, etc) access the larger plot.

This area also provides vehicular/trailer access required for maintaining the site (i.e., uploading soil, manure), removing waste, etc.

The open design of the gateway, provides passers-by with a view of the garden and neighbouring church. We have already found that it helps to provide an increased sense of community as people often stop to chat; and it has provided an opportunity to pass on produce (i.e. surplus apples, fir/holly cuttings for crafting, etc).

The plots slope down to the neighbouring church; which ensures that the positioning of a vehicle does not block the view from the pavement. The combination of the slope with the choice of 10mm gravel provides a porous surface and allows excessive surface water to drain to the borders.

Zone #2 [26.2m²]

Grass with fruit plants (blackberries, blackcurrants). With the exception of the pathway, the grass will be allowed to grow longer to benefit wildlife.

Zone #3 [56.6m²]

“Allotment” style area with hedgerow border. Zone will incorporate general garden compost bins and leaf composter to maximise the recycling process(es).

Zone #4 [27.2m²]

Wildlife pond with wild garden (i.e., nettle beds, bug hotels). In the absence of electric, the pond will need to use plants, etc. to achieve a level of natural filtration. The pond (and wildlife that it will hopefully attract is aspect that we hope that will help safeguard this land from future development.

Zone #5 [34m²]

Contains the first of three apple trees which had been neglected and consumed with ivy. The ivy has been removed and the trees appear to be responding positively. Future thinning/shaping will be required but delayed/minimised to avoid upsetting the tree.

The area will be utilised as a wild flower meadow to attract insects and butterflies.

Zone #6 [37.4m²]

Creation of two rockeries, a small stumpery and use of canopy cover [provided by ours and neighbouring fir trees] to accommodate a selection of flora/forna. Use of woodpiles to support wildlife.

Use of stumps, large branches to encourage play (i.e., stepping stones, balancing beams, etc as seen as locations such as Coombes Valley)

Zone #7 [66m²]

Grass with borders (containing ferns, hostas, bluebells, etc).

Established apple trees (2x) and beech tree. As before, now cleared of ivy.

Rope swing to encourage play.

Pathways

To support predefined access between the zones, the intention is to use reclaimed “cobbles on a mat” placed directly on to the soil. This allows them to be repositioned [if required] whilst allowing for natural joints (i.e. moss, etc.)

Seating

A selection of upcycled benches positioned across the plot.

In summary

The gravel area represents 48.85m² of the combined 422m² plots which will form a vibrant, attractive, robust and actively maintained green space for the whole community to enjoy [This is aligned to SMDC’s “Green Space Strategy 2023-2024”].

We consider these changes to be proportionate with the intended overall purpose and heritage of this site and our larger privately owned “plot of land south-west of Fynney Street” [measuring 318.3m²] whilst allowing us to increase biodiversity levels across our two plots.