

Sent: 03 December 2014 13:56
To: Matthew Heron; Planning
Subject: ✓ FW: S6/2014/1443/MA - Land off Comet Way, Hatfield

I refer to drawings 7127-202-F (Elevations) and 220914/001/SJT (Landscape Proposals).

- 1) I would have expected some soft landscaping to be planted in the area adjacent to the building by the parking. This triangular shape is marked on a plan for you. Planting here would help to diffuse the mass of the building and enhance its appearance. Even something as simple as a bamboo monoculture, e.g. *Phyllostachys nigra* or *aureosulcata*, would add amenity value and give contrast against the building.
- 2) The planting specifications and maintenance were not detailed enough. The tree pit construction detail does not comply with BS8545:2012 Annex F but this discrepancy may resolve when more detail is given with the planting specification.
- 3) Along the road front a native hedgerow is proposed. Of the five species, three have spines or prickles, not ideal in a pub garden. This would look far better as a one species hedge clipped hornbeam or beech or yew.
- 4) The hedge boundary also appears to have a variety of symbols. I was unsure if this meant some stretches would be different species.
- 5) The boundary would look better as one continuous hedge rather than the bitty one proposed. I am assuming the gaps have been left as a view through to attract passing trade. Although no maintained hedge height is given on the plan I would image at the very highest it would be 1.5m. Users of the Comet Way would still be able to clearly see the building and the use as a pub if the hedge was continuous.
- 6) An irrigation system is mentioned in relation to the planters. More details about the irrigation should be submitted, especially if this relates to the soft/tree planting.
- 7) Artificial grass used sparingly can be an effective surfacing. The make and model should be written on the plans – the quality and look of different models is very varied. I also have some concerns over the permeability of the surface with subservice combinations. Could the applicant clearly state that no geotextiles should be used between existing soil and any other layer of material installed.
- 8) The trees are going to be directly amongst the seating areas. It would be wise to use some sort of surface definition/wayfinding technique to deter people from passing/seating/skulking around the base of the trees to avoid compaction and tree damage.
- 9) As the trees are sited within pedestrian areas with resulting pedestrian traffic and machinery it would be appropriate to request the use of 3D cellular crates or structural soils within the tree planting pits.
- 10) A general query, which could be answered in a paragraph, will the stone flag surfacing, where two Liquidambers stand, need any sort of special cleaning to remove spillages? My concern is the use of industrial cleaners or hot water on a permeable surface poisoning the soil or scalding the root zone.
- 11) The shrub and hedge planting around the substation is really a bamboo screen with herbaceous and ornamental grass planting. Will a root barrier be used to control the spread of the bamboo? If so we would require details.
- 12) The section headed Tree Surgery and Maintenance had better note that these trees will be protected with a TPO and should not be pruned without permission from the LPA. They should also be pruned to BS3998:2010.
- 13) The section headed Replacements should read five years. It should also state what parameters plants and especially the trees are to be replaced for other issues and defects other than simply failure e.g. lost leaders, debarking, negative growth etc.

Thank you

Miriam Hill
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From: Miriam Hill
Sent: 27 November 2014 15:31
To: Matthew Heron; William Myers
Subject: RE: S6/2014/1443/MA - Land off Comet Way, Hatfield

Hello Matt,

Should the application be approved for the pub, the best species to plant would be six trees of the same species from either, *Corylus colurna*, Liquidamber Thea or Liquidamber Worpleston. These are not unusual species, will give a similar look to those that were removed and are not associated with general issues such as honeydew. The trees which were removed were horse chestnut and lime. These will not be ideal species to plant adjacent to the pub due to a combination of bleeding canker, horse chestnut leaf miner, honey dew, surface rooting and increased susceptibility to *Kretzschmaria deusta*.

The trees can be planted evenly along the road frontage, they do not need to be planted in a small group as the previous trees were.

Planting these trees may not dispose of any other tree planting which will contribute to the amenity of the site in relation to the proposed pub. Should the application for the pub be approved a detailed landscape plan, showing these trees and all the new soft landscaping still be required. Any other tree planting associated with the development rather than the contravention of the TPO should be of a different species.

These trees are likely to be planted in late spring or early summer, this is not an ideal time of year to be tree planting. The replacement trees should therefore be specifically container grown i.e. not bare root, root balled nor recently containerised from a reputable nursery such as Barcham's. As the trees which were removed were a significant feature of the landscape it would be reasonable to ask for a larger sized tree to replant such as a Extra Heavy Standard (girth of 14-16cm at 1m, height from ground level greater than 3.5m with a clear stem of 1.75 to 2m).

The planting and aftercare of these trees will be imperative to ensure they thrive and become an asset to the pub. A detailed planting and maintenance (including watering) schedule/specification will be required as part of the planning application. Due to the investment in the trees/soft landscaping it may be prudent to install an integrated drip irrigation system which is regularly checked for any maintenance needs. The specification should also clearly define what is considered to be a tree which is thriving and a tree which is not and needs replacing.

All preparation, planting, tree supply and maintenance should comply with "BS8545:2014 Trees: from nursery to independence in the landscape" unless justification can be given as to why deviation is required.

Let me know if you need any more information.

Thank you

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From: Miriam Hill
Sent: 10 November 2014 16:02
To: Matthew Heron; William Myers
Subject: FW: S6/2014/1443/MA - Land off Comet Way, Hatfield

The tree report which was submitted with the application is only a visual tree assessment of the trees protected with the TPO. It is dated the 20th August 2014 and the site visit was undertaken on the 5th August 2014. It does not:

- Include all the trees on or adjacent to the site
- Include any Implications
- Include all the basic tree survey information which would be submitted with a BS5837 survey
- Include any advice or guidance in relation to what the person commissioning the report needs to do.
- Include any photos of the trees
- Does not fulfil the criteria suggested for a Level 2 VTA as it is missing basic information such as quantification of faults, health, vitality and structural condition.

The Topographical Survey does include the trees but does not have all the information recommended in BS5837. The heights, crown spreads and girths vary from the VTA in several instances.

Handily Google StreetView has pictures of this boundary which are dated September 2014. I have confirmed that they were taken after the 2nd July 2014 rather than just modified/edited in September by viewing some trees 150m down the road which were pruned for me on the 2nd July 2014. Embarrassingly the Council had only just learnt that these trees were ours to manage and were causing significant obstruction to the public footpaths, the trees are clearly pruned in the footage.

Taking the VTA as a primary source of tree information I have a few concerns regarding the conclusions.

- 1) T5 is identified as having basal decay but no comments have been given as to what type of basal decay was visible, were there any fungal fruiting bodies visible or if it had been a recent or older failure. A tree on this stretch of the road did fail in October 2012 as part of it fell into the road – it is possible it might be something to do with this. Irrespective of when this tree failed the land owner has a duty under section 206 of the T&CPA1990 to replace the tree.
- 2) T2 is a horse chestnut which reportedly has decay. The area of decay has only been identified as affecting 50% of the trunk and extending up to 3m but the report does not give any further information or detail on the decay, the size of opening compared with cavity or any associated reaction wood. Without further detail it is difficult to establish whether felling the tree was appropriate but I suggest erring on the side of caution and taking it that it was appropriate and should an application been submitted to fell the tree it would have been approved with the condition to replace the tree.
- 3) The remaining four limes (T1, T3, T4 and T6) are reported to be all early mature with the only notable issue being an unbalanced crown with a natural lean. The unbalanced crown has not been quantified, ideally the radius at cardinal points, or as appropriate would have been given. The crowns dimensions have been given as "average crown spread" with no further detail. I am going to assume this means crown radius due to what is visible on StreetView. The natural lean has not been quantified except T1, T3 and T4 with the bias to the west and T6 with bias toward north. The StreetView does not show the trees have a significant stem sweep. A crown which is unbalanced enough to cause concern can generally be evened up through gentle pruning. Commonly trees, especially in urban areas, do not grown evenly due to the environment they live in and pruning back over extended branches etc would be a common prescription.
- 4) The limes (T1, T3, T4 and T6) are all noted as being ivy clad (second paragraph of conclusions). This would reduce the ability of the survey to inspect the trees. It also increases the density of and weight in the crown – removing ivy from a tree can often remedy concerns over failure from wind.
- 5) The conclusion paragraph 3 suggests the loss of the two horse chestnuts will accentuate the degree of lean. This is unlikely or the meaning poorly explained.
- 6) The conclusion paragraph 3 suggests there may be an increasing risk of tree failure due to the loss or damage to interlocking roots. This is highly unlikely.
- 7) As T5 had already failed I would have expected any significant faults to have already been apparent, in 2013/14 winter alone we had three significant wind events.

8) The conclusion paragraph 5 suggests the lime trees are likely to double in size over the next 20-30 years. I find this unlikely as they are already approaching their likely end height. Although lime can grow much larger than this, the urban setting, the amount of hard surfacing within the root zone and the amount of trenching these trees must endure in this location will all restrict the ultimate size of the tree. The conclusion also assumes that the growth will be "unfettered" which would be irresponsible and unlikely with the presence of the adjacent A road, parking and proposed building.

9) No reference has been made to bats in the trees.

On the whole I don't agree with the conclusion that the four limes would have to be felled due to the loss of the two horse chestnuts from the row.

The Design and Access Statement dated June 2014 notes there are 5 existing decaying trees on site. This is written more than one month before the VTA had been undertaken. It does not refer to the tree that had fallen within the site already. Only one of the five trees had decayed.

The Location plan with boundary details also features some impressionistic landscape information. The layout of the site does not consider the protected trees on site and shows them as removed. The only soft landscaping on the proposed site appears to be a small area on the road front between the substation and car park. This has been identified as having a woodland under planting within the Landscape Concept Scheme. This would be ambitious given the size allotted to landscape. One plan also shows seating within this woodland area with a balustrade between seating and pub. The Concept Scheme also shows significantly more landscaping along the road front. As no BS5837 survey was undertaken it is hard to say if the proposed building could be erected without removing the trees but it could have been a possibility.

Having spoken to Nick Bunt and Paul Stephens from Absolute Interiors it seems like they asked Sandersons Construction to clear the vegetation off site (along with hypodermic needles etc) and their subcontractor (unknown at the moment) felled the trees. Absolute gave the instruction to Sandersons via e-mail. It is suggested that there was a communication breakdown between Sandersons and their subcontractor. However the costs associated with felling, removing and disposing of the trees from site would have been more than the reported quote from Sandersons to Absolute for the general works they identified, £1,708. I also can't think of any tree surgeons who offer a service to remove hypodermic needles. Tree surgery for this size of tree is quite a specific profession and would not be undertaken by landscapers. I am therefore intrigued as to how Sandersons issues its work.

My conclusion is that irrespective of my query with Sandersons and their subcontractors:

- the four lime trees (T1, T3, T4 and T6) should not have been removed in respect to their health or structural condition. Their loss is detrimental to the amenity of the area and they should be replaced in a similar location along the road front, possibly with a different large crowned species
- the horse chestnut T5 which already failed should be replanted under section 206 of the T&CPA1990 along the road front
- the horse chestnut T2 which was removed to extensive decay should be replanted under section 206 of the T&CPA1990 along the road front

At this stage I would not like to say if the tree removal was undertaken with purpose or through stupidity.

Thank you

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