

Front Lawn Recreation Ground

Arborist's comments on construction of new all-weather sports pitch, extension to pavilion, provision of cage cricket and multi use games area.

My comments are with reference to drawing 27973 – PD101 rev 0 Proposed Site Plan and take into account information provided verbally by Richard Wood, namely;

- 1) All weather pitch requires extensive excavation to form base, will be lit and may require drainage;
- 2) Existing car park is to be re-surfaced not re-constructed;
- 3) Multi use games and (optional) cage cricket will be provided without removing existing hard surface, may be lit, may require drainage.

My comments only apply within the red outlined area on drawing 27973-PD100 rev 0 Existing Site Plan. Please note I have not been able to acquire a scaled Proposed Site Plan so I am unable to provide an annotated plan to accompany my comments.

Background information:

Over the past 15 years or so, new trees have been established on all edges of the recreation ground; a double avenue of small leaved lime and wild cherry on the west and north boundaries; “Elsrijk” Field Maple and Bird Cherry on the east boundary; Poplar (euroamericana) and “Snowgoose” cherry on the south boundary. Because of the particular locality and use of the recreation ground, establishment of these trees to their present semi mature stage has required a heavy investment of resources, especially in terms of replacement remedial and guarding work.

For this reason the loss of any of these trees is conceded with great reluctance. Members of the public may be critical of tree removals if they are aware of the investment that has been made in them.

The proposals do provide for generous mitigation planting but the loss of 15 years tree growth and establishment cannot, in a sense, be compensated for.

Impact of the proposals on trees:

Six trees will be removed to facilitate the car park extension – “Snowgoose” cherry x 4, Small Leaved Lime x 1, Wild Cherry (Gean) x 1.

One Wild Cherry (Gean) will have to be removed towards the north end of the west boundary of the multi sports pitch – it is situated almost on the proposed fence line.

One mature Lawson Cypress will be removed on the south boundary to facilitate the pavilion extension. This is an older long-established tree of low amenity value.

A further Small Leaved Lime and Wild Cherry (Gean) are at risk at the west end of the car park extension. They are too close to the area to be excavated for adequate protection to be provided and will suffer extensive root damage. The protective fencing can be pulled in to within 2 metres of the trees (it should be at 6 metres for the lime and 5 metres for the cherry. The trees might survive but I am not hopeful.

Can I support the proposals?

Yes, the tree losses are reluctantly accepted in the context of overall community benefit.

Tree Protection during construction work:

A high degree of protection will have to be provided for the double avenue of lime and cherry west of the proposed all weather pitch and north of the west corner of the car park extension. I recommend that this avenue should be protected on both the east and the west side. The west side needs protection because – I assume – the construction company will need vehicle and plant access to the existing tennis courts along the east side of the bowling green.

The two drawings named above indicate that on the east side of this double avenue, protection can be provided at 5 metres from the tree bases, leaving 2 metres working room for construction of the all weather pitch. On the west side of the double avenue, protection can be reduced to 4.5 metres from the tree bases but this will provide only 3.5 metres width of access alongside the bowling green.

A semi mature Giant Redwood at the north east corner of the tennis courts and a pair of mature ashes at the north west corner will also require protective fencing.

The protective fencing must be constructed so as not to be moveable at any time during construction. The fencing must be in the form of “Heras” type panels bolted to a framework of vertical and horizontal scaffold tube braced by angled scaffold tube. A total of 264 metres of such fencing is required. This is a major item which must be incorporated into the project costs. A working diagram of the specification for the fencing can be provided.

If it is practicable for the all weather pitch to be shifted eastwards by even just 2 metres this will provide a better degree of protection for the double avenue and more generous working space for construction.

Installation of cabling and drainage.

Full details of any cable or drainage runs must be provided ahead of Planning Consent being granted. Any such cabling or drainage must be designed to avoid any areas occupied by trees.

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