

Planning Officer: Michael Eastham

Planning Application Ref: AB/135/20/OUT

Location: Land at Ford Road, Arundel

Description of works: Outline application with some matters reserved (except for access) for the development of 90 dwellings & associated amenity land. This application is a Departure from the Development Plan, affects the setting of listed buildings & affects the character & appearance of the Arundel Conservation Area

Comments on Application:

- I have considered this application by means of a desktop review, using the information and plans submitted as well as online resources. Previous consideration from site (June 2020) and familiarity with surrounding areas provides further insight to the proposal.
- The applicants have employed SJA Trees | Arboricultural Planning Consultants to prepare an Arboricultural Implications Report inclusive of Tree Protection Plan (TPP) and Outline Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) for this project.
- The Tree Survey data is comprehensive and accords with the requirements of BS5837:2012. I am broadly in agreement with the retention category ratings for on and off-site trees. The TPP and AMS are similarly of high quality and their submission is encouraging and informative although that level of detail (layout) will only be necessary for Reserved Matters stage.
- Although I find the proposal for such a development incongruous with the wider setting (high number of potential and several existing veteran trees across the site, proximity to ancient woodland, uninterrupted views of significant landscape) I find the Illustrative Masterplan to be generally sympathetic and accommodating of existing green infrastructure.
- In respect of dwg. IM003 Rev. 1, I make the following comments:
 - The interior arterial road which bisects the established tree line has been carefully positioned to minimise landscape impact.
 - I see no obvious major problem with the proposed location of dwellings and the majority of associated infrastructure, nor vehicle access onto Ford Road, although I am disappointed not to see 2m buffer zones beyond the root protection area (RPA) of significant trees incorporated into the layout. This will need to be addressed and can be done so without impacting heavily on unit size and quantity.
 - Areas identified for essential refinement:
 1. T10 & T11 - 2m buffer required at W aspect of RPAs
 2. T13 - No overriding justification for RPA incursion. 2m buffer required at W aspect of RPA
 3. T76 - No overriding justification for RPA incursion. 2m buffer required at S & W aspects of RPAs
 4. T66 & T71 - No overriding justification for RPA incursion. 2m buffer required at S aspect of RPAs
 5. T58 - 2m buffer required at E aspect of RPA
 6. T55 & T56 – TPF to be re-positioned, fully respecting RPA +2m buffer zone on E aspects.
 - In respect of any soft-landscape proposals, I defer to our Leisure and Landscape Officer, although I would encourage the selection of native tree species of potential stature (>15m ht.) and longevity such that they will grow to enhance the local landscape, ultimately compensating for the proposed removal and foreseeable decline of individual trees and groups/hedgerow across the site.
- General principles of design layout to be considered
 - Careful consideration should be given to the intended land use beneath existing canopy of established trees and the potential for further tree growth (root and crown extension). With such a large and open site to work with I would expect any substantive evolution of layout proposals to place great emphasis on eliminating future ‘pressure to prune’ of retained trees. Furthermore, there would need to be a compelling argument in favour of any Root Protection Area incursion (aside from two areas of manual excavation illustrated/detailed on Tree Protection Plan, dwg. no. SJA TPP 19515-041a – NW corner within ancient woodland buffer zone and north side of internal arterial road) as this site

clearly lends itself to a harmonious design that avoids any direct interference with established trees of current and future landscape value. This is especially relevant where there are trees of high amenity, landscape and potential heritage value (which qualify for statutory protection), as is the case here.

- Trees that provide high visual amenity should be made focal points both within any development and from beyond, not obscured by built form; in addition to allocating sufficient area of undisturbed ground around their ultimate root and crown spreads.
- I take this opportunity to remind the applicant's design team that early approval of their surface water drainage strategy for the site will be beneficial. This fundamental element of the design ought to be addressed to our satisfaction in association with layout proposals (Reserved Matters), so that we are not subsequently held hostage to flood mitigation measures which could then impact heavily on retained trees/landscape plans/open space provision. Securing long-term success of those elements is critical to achieve a quality development at this location.
- I draw attention to the nominal root protection areas (RPA) of retained trees and their growth potential as obvious constraints to the siting of any SUDS (e.g. attenuation pond) or introduction of subterranean utility apparatus.
- Any improvements to existing or creation of new watercourses within or adjacent the RPA of preserved trees to be fully considered, details provided in advance and to our satisfaction. Where there is a significant risk of damage to those trees arising from such operations, then an alternative strategy should be proposed. If after consultation with our Drainage Engineer and Tree Officer it is determined that RPA incursion is unavoidable, then a watching brief from the project arboriculturist will be necessary and only manual excavation performed where significant roots are anticipated.

Conclusions:

- The principle of development and access as described is certainly achievable without undue detriment to retained trees. The Illustrative Site Layout is encouraging from an arboricultural perspective, no doubt informed by the quality submission from the project arboriculturist, with only a few minor refinements necessary to satisfy our requirements.
- If this comes back in as a full and detailed application it will need to be supported by an **Arboricultural Method Statement Report** inclusive of a revised **Tree Protection Plan** - to both describe and illustrate the mitigation measures which are to be employed to ensure that the trees survive without detriment to their vigour and vitality and are given adequate protection both above and below ground.

Recommendations:

- The absence of **buffer zones around RPAs** as promoted within our Supplementary Planning Documents: Arun District Public Open Space, Playing Pitches and Built Facilities (Appendix 9) and emerging Arun Design Guide (E.02 Landscape Structures & Trees, p48) to eliminate risk of construction activity 'spilling over', is disappointing but can and **should be incorporated in future revisions of layout** and without impacting adversely on the overall design.
- I repeat my earlier recommendation for **the making of a Tree Preservation Order** in respect of 1x hawthorn and 25x pedunculate oak to preserve their place in the landscape and control their future management. TEMPO forms and GIS plan for this purpose can be found at the following location: [REDACTED]
Road. Due to the time lapse since first proposed, I recommend prompt attention is given to this latest request. Please advise both me and SJA Trees on the outcome of this specific recommendation.

Mark Warwick
Tree Officer / Parks and Greenspace Team