

Planning Officer: Mr S Davis

Planning Application Ref: AL/113/21/OUT

Location: Land at Bayard, Level Mare Lane, Eastergate, PO203RZ

Description of works: Outline application with all matters reserved, apart from access, for up to 69 no. dwellings with access, parking, landscaping & associated works. This application is a Departure from the Development Plan

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 and familiarity with surrounding areas provides further insight to the proposal.
- The applicants have employed Lizard Landscape Design Ltd to prepare an Arboricultural Implications Assessment & Method Statement along with a Tree Protection Plan (TPP) 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 provision of a Tree Protection Plan and Method Statement at this stage is premature, as the application is only concerned with *access* and *principle of development*.
- Given the relatively high level of intrusion into nominal Root Protection Areas (RPAs) shown on the TPP; this is an important early opportunity to consider evolution of layout proposals in advance of any Reserved Matters application. I hope the following comments will inform that process:
 - The Proposed Site Layout Plan, 29662C_100H looks sympathetic to existing tree cover on paper, but the scheme is not when one considers the TPP showing accurate crown spread and root protection areas.
 - There must be an overriding justification for RPA incursion, not a presumption (often mistakenly) that BS5837:2012 – Trees in relation to Design, Demolition and Construction promotes activity in the RPA. It does not. It presents a range of options to consider, where such incursion is unavoidable or where no reasonable alternative exists whilst in pursuit of an otherwise quality development proposal.
 - There is a significant population of established trees largely confined to the perimeter of the site. They constitute an impressive and ecologically important landscape feature, of high amenity value. Many individuals are also subject of a Tree Preservation Order. Given their obvious value and convenient position, a suitable development proposal ought not to conflict with any of them.
 - With only one tree of note wholly within the site and the remainder growing along perimeter, it seems unreasonable to see any mature tree of good health and form as anything other than an asset to development of this site. As such I find it disappointing to see that substantial RPA incursion is being considered. Those trees must be afforded sufficient room to allow future growth without constraint if they are to flourish post-development.
 - I am also concerned for the extent of shading and oppressive feel which some residents might experience, particularly at the SE corner of the site where residential building density and position may not ensure long-term harmony with established trees. Perhaps consideration should be given to a wider landscape buffer zone to the west of the entire tree line (TG17 – TL20), such as exists within the development ongoing to the east. A canopy shading plan might be especially informative.
 - Surface water drainage (and foul water sewer) strategy for the site should be addressed to our satisfaction in association with layout proposals, so that we are not subsequently held hostage to flood mitigation measures which could then impact heavily on retained trees, landscape plans and open space provision.

- 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. The provision of appropriate buffer/easement around such features must also take into account that growth potential (roots), to limit the risk of damage occurring during future maintenance of the same, from compaction/contamination of the soil structure.

Conclusions:

- A sympathetic and high-quality development of this site is certainly achievable without undue detriment to retained on and off-site trees. While Illustrative Layout is far from sympathetic, there is plenty of time for the design to evolve in line with our recommendations and uphold the higher-level development principles promoted within Supplementary Planning Documents: Arun Design Guide (emerging) and Arun District Public Open Space, Playing Pitches and Built Facilities.
- SPD advice on trees and development promotes the use of 2metre buffer zones in addition to nominal RPA (to form an effective Construction Exclusion Zone), such as appears to have been applied to T04 on the TPP. This should be replicated across the site wherever achievable and essentially for all trees subject of TPO.
- I see no obvious problem with the access linking both development sites. An area has already been cleared within the tree line to facilitate construction.

Recommendation:

- I recommend we approve the application.

Mark Warwick
Tree Officer / Parks and Greenspace Team