

Planning Officer: Mr S Davis

Planning Application Ref: AL/126/21/PL

Location: Ryefields Farmhouse, Oak Tree Lane, Woodgate, PO20 3GU

Description of works: Demolition of existing building and erection of 5no. houses comprising 1no. 4-bed detached, 2no. 4-bed link detached & 2no. 3-bed detached houses with associated access & parking (resubmission of AL/81/21/PL). This site falls within Strategic Site SD5, CIL Zone 1 (Zero Rated).

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 Impact Assessment & Method Statement along with a Tree Retention and Protection Plan (TRP) for this project.
- This latest proposal appears more sympathetic to its predecessor in that it seeks to retain the mature oak (subject of a Preservation Order) T20. Unfortunately, both T20 and its companion oak T39 (subject of the same TPO) will be impacted by the installation of a car parking area. A no-dig construction method is to be employed.
- The combined extent of ground protection and no-dig construction areas, as shown on the TRP plan is already extensive. Whilst they propose recognised engineering solutions for working in close proximity to retained trees, it must be noted that that element is very ambitious and carries a high risk of accidental damage.
- It is important to consider the greater volume of the oak trees' roots would likely be found within the development site and so any RPA incursion (irrespective of mitigation measures) may be more extensive than apparent on the plans.
- As previously, a relatively large number of trees would be removed to facilitate the development. While the majority of those are of low quality it would undoubtedly change character of the lane. Any mitigation by way of landscape planting is unlikely to be sufficient to compensate for their loss. Roadside trees particularly, contribute to the character of the area and have public amenity value.
- Several trees proposed for removal appear to be off-site and in 3rd party ownership.

Conclusions:

- I find this latest proposal to be a slight improvement on its predecessor, although the potential impact on higher value TPO trees and local character remain unjustified in my view.
- A development that respects and accommodates the higher quality trees and those of long-established landscape value is achievable, were access and parking provision focused along the west and southern boundaries. A reduction of units may need to be accepted to achieve such an outcome.

Recommendation:

- As it stands, I am unable to lend this scheme my support and so register an **OBJECTION**.

Mark Warwick
Tree Officer / Parks and Greenspace Team