

Case Officer: Mr S Davis

Reference: AL/129/21/OUT

Location: Land adjacent to Woodgate Nurseries, Lidsey Road, Aldingbourne, PO20 3SU

Proposal: Outline planning application with all matters reserved (except access) for residential development with up to 95no. dwellings (Use Class C3), informal and formal public open space, landscaping, drainage and other 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 Barrell Tree Consultancy to prepare an Arboricultural Assessment & Method Statement along with a Tree Protection Plan (TPP) for this project.
- Although we are only considering access and the principle of development, it is also useful at this stage to have an Illustrative Masterplan and broadly complementary TPP from which to identify any obvious areas for improvement.
- Sites of this size and generally open nature but with established landscape features (trees and hedgerow), should be subject to the higher-level development principles, as promoted in our Supplementary Planning Documents. Those give instruction for avoiding Root Protection Area (RPA) incursion and providing further insurance with the use of 2metre buffer zones. **Arun District Public Open Space, Playing Pitches and Built Facilities** (Appendix 9) and **Arun Design Guide** (E.02 Landscape Structures & Trees, p48) - [Supplementary Planning Documents \(SPDs\) and other guidance | Arun District Council](#).
- There must be overriding justification for RPA incursion, not a presumption 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. A layout that does not follow these principles should be resisted.
- Established oak trees on and around the site are already important constituents of the local landscape and can also provide visual amenity and mature outlook to any scheme. They must be afforded sufficient room to allow future growth (above and below ground level) without constraint if they are to flourish post-development.
- A considerable number of long-established roadside trees had been felled prior to any planning application, to create a new gap for the preferred point of access.
- Extensive lower value tree groups are to be removed – G63, G65, G74 & G75. While this might create an opportunity for landscape and biodiversity improvements, a notable loss of visual screening (G65) and wildlife corridor connectivity will be incurred.

Specific areas to improve as layout design evolves:

- **T62 Category A oak (TPO).** RPA +2m buffer zone should remain inviolate, to prevent harmful change of land use (private garden) and construction within anticipated rooting zone.
- **T64 Category B oak (TPO).** RPA +2m buffer zone should remain inviolate, to prevent harmful change of land use (multiple gardens and LAP) within anticipated rooting zone.
- **T67 Category A oak (TPO).** RPA +2m buffer zone should remain inviolate, to prevent harmful change of land use (private gardens) within anticipated rooting zone. RPA ought to be presented as

polygon rather than circle, to reflect the physical features on ground to the east. It is likely that roots will extend further west than illustrated on the TPP. As such, building footprint abutting the circular representation is more problematic than first appears. A large portion of the rear gardens serving plots 38-41 could be in shade for much of the day, especially during winter months.

- **T73 Category A oak (TPO).** RPA +2m buffer zone should remain inviolate (with exception of access bell-mouth incursion) to prevent excessive harmful construction within anticipated rooting zone. RPA ought to be presented as polygon rather than circle, to reflect the physical features on ground to the east. It is likely that roots will extend further west than illustrated on the TPP. As such, proximity of construction abutting W side of circular representation is more problematic than first appears.
- **G76 2x Category B oak (TPO).** RPA +2m buffer zone should remain inviolate (with exception of access bell-mouth incursion) to prevent harmful construction within anticipated rooting zone. An alternative route for any essential footway should be explored. Overriding justification has not been made in favour of construction within the RPA (W side).
- Note: While it is recognised that a transition from existing arable farmland can bring some advantages for tree health and vitality it is most likely at this site any are outweighed by the potential harm from permitted development and day-to-day activities associated with residential property.

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- In respect of any future landscape scheme I defer to our Leisure and Landscape Officer. For this site I would strongly recommend the use of native tree species of potential stature (>10m ht.) and longevity, in abundance, such that they will grow to enhance the local landscape and ultimately compensate for substantial recent and planned removal of trees from across the site.
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- There is no approved surface water drainage strategy for the site. This fundamental element of the design can be addressed to our satisfaction in association with layout proposals. It is important that the design team carefully consider the location of SUDS features in relation to trees and effective provision of public open space.
- 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 features (e.g., attenuation pond, swale) 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.
- Any improvements to existing or creation of new watercourses within 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.

Conclusions:

- I see no additional negative (arboricultural) impact arising from construction of the main access and provision of vehicle sightlines.
- The preparatory clearance of established roadside trees and likely removals from across the site are significant but ultimately their loss can be adequately compensated for within an ambitious landscape scheme to be approved at Reserved Matters stage.
- A sympathetic and high-quality development of this site is certainly achievable without undue detriment to retained on and off-site trees, so it is disappointing that the illustrative masterplan is unsatisfactory in arboricultural terms.

- The above listed areas for improvement should be 'designed out' within a revised layout that upholds the higher-level development principles promoted within our Supplementary Planning Documents: Arun Design Guide (emerging) and Arun District Public Open Space, Playing Pitches and Built Facilities.

Recommendation:

- I recommend we approve the application as I see no reason to object on arboricultural grounds for the matters being determined.

Mark Warwick
Tree Officer / Greenspace