

## CONSULTEE RESPONSE (Arun District Council - Arboriculturist)

Date of report: 28<sup>th</sup> May 2025

Reference: AL/143/24/RES

Proposal: Approval of reserved matters following outline consent AL/129/21/OUT for 93 No. residential dwellings with associated parking, landscaping, open space (including play areas), infrastructure and works. This application is in CIL Zone 3 and is CIL Liable as new dwellings.

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

Case Officer: Mr S Davis

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### BACKGROUND

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 provide further insight to the proposal.

The aforementioned outline application was given permission on 22-08-2022.

Access was approved with the following plans under condition 3:

Dwg 36 Rev F Proposed Access Arrangements Sheet 1 of 3;

Dwg 36 Rev F Proposed Access Arrangements Sheet 2 of 3;

Dwg 36 Rev F Proposed Access Arrangements Sheet 3 of 3;

Dwg 38 Rev A Plan showing Proposed Access Arrangements overlain with highway boundary.

Condition 8 of the same decision notice requires the following:

The landscape and layout details to be submitted pursuant to condition 1 shall include the following items: (1) Details of all existing trees and hedgerows on the land indicating which are to be retained and which are to be removed. These required details are to include a 'Tree Survey Schedule', a 'Root Protection Area (RPA) Schedule', a 'Tree Constraints Plan', and in the event that a root protection area of any tree which is proposed for retention overlaps the development, then an 'Arboricultural Method Statement' and a 'Tree Protection Plan'. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. No hedge or tree shall be felled, uprooted or otherwise removed before, during or after the construction period except where removal is indicated on a plan approved by the local planning authority.

## TREE SURVEY INFORMATION

The applicants have employed Barrell Tree Consultancy to prepare an Arboricultural Impact Appraisal and Method Statement (the report) 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 agree with the retention category ratings for on and off-site trees.

## LOCAL TREE POPULATION AFFECTED BY PROPOSAL - SUMMARY

A number of established roadside trees were felled pre-application in 2021, in the area of the subsequently approved new access. Online resources suggest with a high degree of confidence that the majority were native oak (some ash present) of early mature age class and in fine physiological condition (2019).

The site is arable farmland with trees and hedgerow largely confined to field boundaries. Low quality shelterbelt cypress are the majority of trees to be removed under this proposal.

Retained trees of note are native oak and one ash (now reportedly declining), dispersed across the west and east boundaries to the north of the site. Several large specimens are prominent on the east boundary. The majority are subjects of a Tree Preservation Order (TPO/AL/1/22).

Established oak trees on and around the site are already important constituents of the local landscape and could provide visual amenity and mature outlook to any scheme, so must be afforded sufficient room to allow future growth (above and below ground level) without constraint if they are to flourish post-development.

A change of land use around the crown spread of trees, especially where inviting pedestrian traffic; imposes a duty on the owner or their agent to undertake regular risk assessment which can lead to mitigating works that diminish those trees' amenity, ecological and heritage potential.

The established hedgerows form important wildlife corridors and provide opportunities for green infrastructure connectivity through enhancement.

## SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENTS

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 buffer zones (a minimum of 2metres to be effective). **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](#).

#### PROPOSED LAYOUT: SUMMARY OF RELATIONSHIP WITH RETAINED TREES

Suitable landscape buffer (dark wide corridor) on west boundary, an ecological direction, also provides adequate but not ideal (see SPD requirement) accommodation of 3x TPO tree RPAs.

Other TPO trees (x5) are subject to RPA incursions by design. With the exception of one tree, those are not seemingly justified.

The successful long-term retention of higher value trees along the front (roadside) of the site takes on greater significance when one considers the historic tree loss from around the new access and open nature of land parcel to the south.

2x TPO trees and companion groups to the west of southern land parcel are given adequate room to flourish within public open space.

#### PROPOSED LAYOUT: CONFLICT BETWEEN TREES AND DEVELOPMENT

The applicant's design team should revisit the following specific areas:

##### **1. Plots 59 - 62 - T67 Category A oak (TPO) and T66 Cat. B willow**

The nominal RPAs do not account for hostile conditions beneath existing carriageway (potentially obstructive to root growth), due east. Historically there appears to have been much more favourable open ground to the west, so is reasonable to assume that a large majority of feeder roots are present in that area. As such, a polygon of commensurate area should reflect this, to better inform layout. Plot 59 as shown is already intrusive and therefore unacceptable. It should (if at all) be located outside of the to-be-revised RPA. Additionally, a minimum 2m+ buffer should be illustrated on the revised TPP and remain inviolate. This to prevent harmful change of land use (private gardens) within anticipated rooting zone. See S278 HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT WORKS for further potential impacts.

##### **2. Plots 67 & 68 - T64 Category B oak (TPO)**

Off-site garden oak tree will be constrained by development from all on-site aspects.

Carriageway construction to abut western aspects of its RPA will inevitably intrude and

introduce hostile growing conditions in that direction. The small areas of functional garden space allocated to both plots will be heavily influenced by crown and root spread of this important tree. Soft landscaping, lawn treatments and certain permitted development all have potential to cause harm to the tree's ongoing health and vitality.

### **3. South of main entrance – G76 2x Category B oak (TPO)**

Remaining exposed pair of trees at southern end of clearing. Proposed development within shared RPA includes footway and street lighting. See S278 HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT WORKS for further potential impacts.

#### S278 HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT WORKS

These yet to be determined, have potential to impact negatively on the landscape at front of site. Higher value trees / TPO identified for retention, and which provide important visual amenity, screening, character and ecology, - may be damaged or removed to facilitate essential works. The highway authority (WSCC) should be provided with all relevant documents and plans (including planning application references) to support their full and proper consideration of the applicant's proposal.

The proposal includes a 3metre wide footway/cycleway which effectively covers the existing open ground (exploited by tree roots) between top of the ditch and edge of carriageway. A no-dig solution is not proposed, presumably due to that being unadoptable by the highway authority, so further impacting T67 and T66.

The long-established ditch is to be re-aligned, it is not clear why. Presumably this will involve deep excavation in the rooting zone of those trees. In any event, this seems likely to be harmful and therefore unacceptable.

The proposal includes construction of a concrete headwall within the RPA of G76. The likelihood that this occurs off-site means no arboricultural supervision is likely during this work and harmful impact will be incurred.

#### DRAINAGE

Whilst I have not identified any obvious tree conflict with proposed infrastructure, the surface water drainage (and foul water sewer) strategy for the site does not appear to have been approved by our engineers. This fundamental element of the design ought to 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/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 feature, soakaway or introduction of subterranean utility apparatus.

It is important that the strategy demonstrate how any such features will be maintained. RPA incursion is unacceptable due to potential for heavy plant movement or deposition of materials resulting in compaction/contamination of soil structure. It may be necessary to secure a buffer zone of minimum 3metres between the edge of any feature and the projected rooting zone of nearby trees.

### **Conclusions:**

We should uphold the higher-level development principles promoted within our Supplementary Planning Documents: Arun Design Guide and Arun District Public Open Space, Playing Pitches and Built Facilities. Development of this site is achievable without undue detriment or risk of same to retained trees, but it requires a more sympathetic and less intrusive layout. I suggest the applicant be encouraged to design out those areas of conflict (RPA incursion) I have described in detail on pages 3 & 4 under heading PROPOSED LAYOUT: CONFLICT BETWEEN TREES AND DEVELOPMENT.

The combined extent of ground protection, precautionary areas (works under arboricultural supervision) and no-dig construction areas, as shown on the TPP, is symptomatic of that intrusion. Those elements of the plan are ambitious and present an avoidable risk of harm to high value trees. Whilst recognised engineering solutions for working near retained trees, there should be overriding justification for such; which I do not see.

The preparatory clearance of established higher value trees from the front of the site has been significant. Further high volume of established tree removal is proposed, albeit of much lesser quality. Taken as a whole, this is a substantial loss of tree cover and should be adequately compensated for with an ambitious scheme of tree planting as part of the detailed soft landscape offer.

Proposed s278 highway improvements have potential to cause additional off-site harmful impacts upon higher value trees.

### **Recommendation:**

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

If the application is to be approved despite my objection, please advise accordingly and I will forward a set of conditions to be included in the decision notice.

Mark Warwick  
Tree Officer  
Environment and Climate Change

Arun District Council, Civic Centre, Maltravers Rd  
Littlehampton, West Sussex, BN17 5LF

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#### Our priorities...



**From:** Mark Warwick [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 03 June 2025 17:55  
**To:** Planning Responses <[Planning.Responses@arun.gov.uk](mailto:Planning.Responses@arun.gov.uk)>  
**Cc:** Simon Davis <[Simon.Davis@arun.gov.uk](mailto:Simon.Davis@arun.gov.uk)>  
**Subject:** AL/143/24/RES

Please find attached my report for your consideration.

Regards,

**Mark Warwick**  
Tree Officer, Environment and Climate Change

Arun District Council, Civic Centre, Maltravers Rd

Littlehampton, West Sussex, BN17 5LF

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