

Planning Officer: Zac Denton

Planning Application Ref: AL/16/18/T

Location: 16 Woodgate Road, Woodgate, Aldingbourne

Description of works: 3m Crown Reduction and 30% Crown Thinning to 1No. Hawthorn & 2No. English Oak trees

Reasons Given: To prevent damage to building and patio area, and to allow more light into property and garden

Comments on Application:

2x Pedunculate oak	<i>Quercus robur</i>	Height: Approx. 16m	Average spread: 7m	Age: Mature
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Height: Approx. 7m	Average spread: 3m	Age: Mature

- These are fine examples of their type and visible from the adjacent public highway and neighbouring properties; thereby providing a notable visual amenity.
- In respect of the oak, they have good form arising from a lack of significant crown modification and with an open field aspect permitting the establishment of low branches. Although not comprehensively assessed, they appear to be in a fine physiological state and free of significant structural defect. As old field boundary trees they possess considerable landscape value.
- The oak are closely spaced to one another with a shared crown profile. Their relatively short distance to the main building has inevitably caused an intensely shade-bearing and oppressive effect with large branches travelling across and in close proximity to the roof and east flank wall.

Conclusion:

- *Crown reduction* and *Crown thinning* work has not been justified on arboricultural grounds. In respect of the latter, such work rarely provides a benefit to the tree and often only a short-term increase in light levels. Furthermore, combining the two operations (and especially to the extent proposed) could drastically alter tree dynamics and natural defences against wind pressure. The sudden exposure of central crown areas to such winds can result in significant damage.
- These trees are a significant feature in the local landscape and appear to be in adequately sound and healthy condition. The tree surgery proposed in the application would result in excessive reduction of the tree's landscape impact and undue detriment to the visual amenities of the locality.

Recommendations:

- I recommend **REFUSAL** for this application.

Advisory:

- I would like to see the applicant re-submit with a revised work specification such as detailed below, which would address the issue of direct building interference and help improve conditions along this side of the dwelling whilst preventing a diminution of the tree's landscape and public amenity value:

2x Oak

- Reduce or remove branches as necessary to achieve a maximum of 2m building clearance.

- Reduce or remove branches as necessary to achieve a maximum of 4m overhead clearance above side of property (driveway and garden areas).

Hawthorn

- Reduce or remove branches as necessary to achieve a maximum of 3m overhead clearance above driveway.

Mark Warwick

Tree Officer / Parks and Greenspace Team