

Planning Officer: Mr S Davis

Planning Application Ref: AL/20/21/PL

Location: Land at Wings Nursery, Lidsey Road, Woodgate, PO20 3SU

Description of works: Demolition of Wings House & erection of 71 No. replacement dwellings (70 net new dwellings), access arrangements, sustainable drainage measures, public open space, landscaping & all other associated works (resubmission following AL/46/20/PL). 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 Beechdown Arboriculture Ltd to prepare an Arboricultural Report, inclusive of Impact Assessment & Method Statement along with a Tree Protection Plan for this project. The Tree Survey data is comprehensive and accords with the requirements of BS5837:2012. The report is of high-quality and supports the design team's layout proposal.
- There are significant on and off-site trees, a minority of which enjoy statutory protection (TPO/AL/1/18) and which ought to inform layout. Those are predominantly long-established oak. They could be adversely affected by these proposals, despite the suite of protection measures proposed by the project arboriculturist.
- 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](#).
- In order to properly consider the impact of the current layout on existing trees, we must look at both the Development Proposal Plan (Appendix 6) and Tree Protection Plan (Appendix 7). Those show the extent of RPA.

Important: The above plans embedded within the report are based on Proposed block plan 19-121 0003 Rev.1 provided by MH Architects. Those have been superseded by later revisions dated 13/05/2021, although the latter is incorrectly titled as development proposal plan.

- There does not appear to be an approved surface water drainage (and foul water sewer) strategy for the site. These fundamental elements 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 (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.

- Much of the roadside tree population is to be removed, presumably to facilitate drainage work. This loss of visual amenity and ecological benefit should be adequately compensated for within a detailed landscape plan.

Conclusions:

- I believe the current application if approved, risks damaging trees of significant landscape value where a more sympathetic design can satisfactorily accommodate them without substantial loss of housing potential. There are five category A oak (TPO) trees on the site, all of which would be subject to avoidable risk of damage.
- Trees that provide high visual amenity should be made focal points both within any development and from beyond, not obscured by built form; in addition to allocating sufficient area of undisturbed ground around their ultimate root and crown spreads.
- There has to 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.
- With the vast majority of retained trees confined to the site's perimeter, there ought to be negligible conflict between them and any construction. **I find the following impact on higher value trees unacceptable and must see an appropriately revised layout before I can lend the scheme my support:**
- Written assurance required stating that no RPA incursion will occur during works to install/enhance surface water drainage features or foul water apparatus in relation to T1 currently and any other retained TPO tree.
- Re-align footway to take it outside of T15 high value oak's RPA. Please also show position of diverted surface water drain on west side of tree relative to RPA. An additional 2m buffer must be shown on the plan so we can be confident those works will not impact directly on the tree.
- Create a semi-wild area that captures high value oaks T21 – T20 (and possibly T22?). The latter has veteran tree characteristics which demands a 15metre RPA. Such an area, together with removal of the footway within RPA - will prevent any deleterious hazard abatement pruning that would inevitably diminish its landscape and ecological potential, as well as improving opportunities for biodiversity gain.
- Re-align footway to take it outside of T20 & T22 high value oaks' RPA.
- T25 high value oak remains a heavily overbearing feature of the gardens (plots 44 & 45) and is to be partially obscured by built form. Reconsider plot configuration at NW corner to minimise negative impact and incorporate tree's visual amenity into development. It ought to be another focal point and not destined to be a concealed nuisance.

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