

CONSULTEE RESPONSE (Council's Arboriculturist)

Date of report: 24 June 2022

Reference: **AL/31/22/PL**

Proposal: Demolition of existing building and erection of 4 no. houses with associated access, landscaping, parking and associated works. This site falls within Strategic Site SD5, CIL Zone 1 (zero rated).

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

Case Officer: Jessica Riches

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 & Protection Plan for this project.

Previous applications for this site have proposed direct impact on the most valuable tree (mature oak – T15), a subject of Tree Preservation Order. This most recent application appears to propose neither construction within the root protection area (RPA) or substantive crown pruning.

The removal of established multi-stem sycamore trees (retention category C – low value) at the NW corner to facilitate pavement construction and at SE of T15 to avoid special engineering measures to facilitate driveway/parking area; is a reasonable and necessary trade-off to achieve residential development of the site whilst successfully accommodating T15 into a scheme.

This more sympathetic block plan/design layout is broadly supportable in arboricultural terms, although there are two potential off-site impacts which require clarification before we can be confident that T15 could be successfully retained.

Firstly, I am concerned that by implementing the (WSCC Highway Authority – suggested condition 2) required vehicle sightlines of 2 x 23metres looking east from shared access to plots 3 & 4; it may not be possible to retain T15 (see screenshot below with approximate sightline shown as red line).

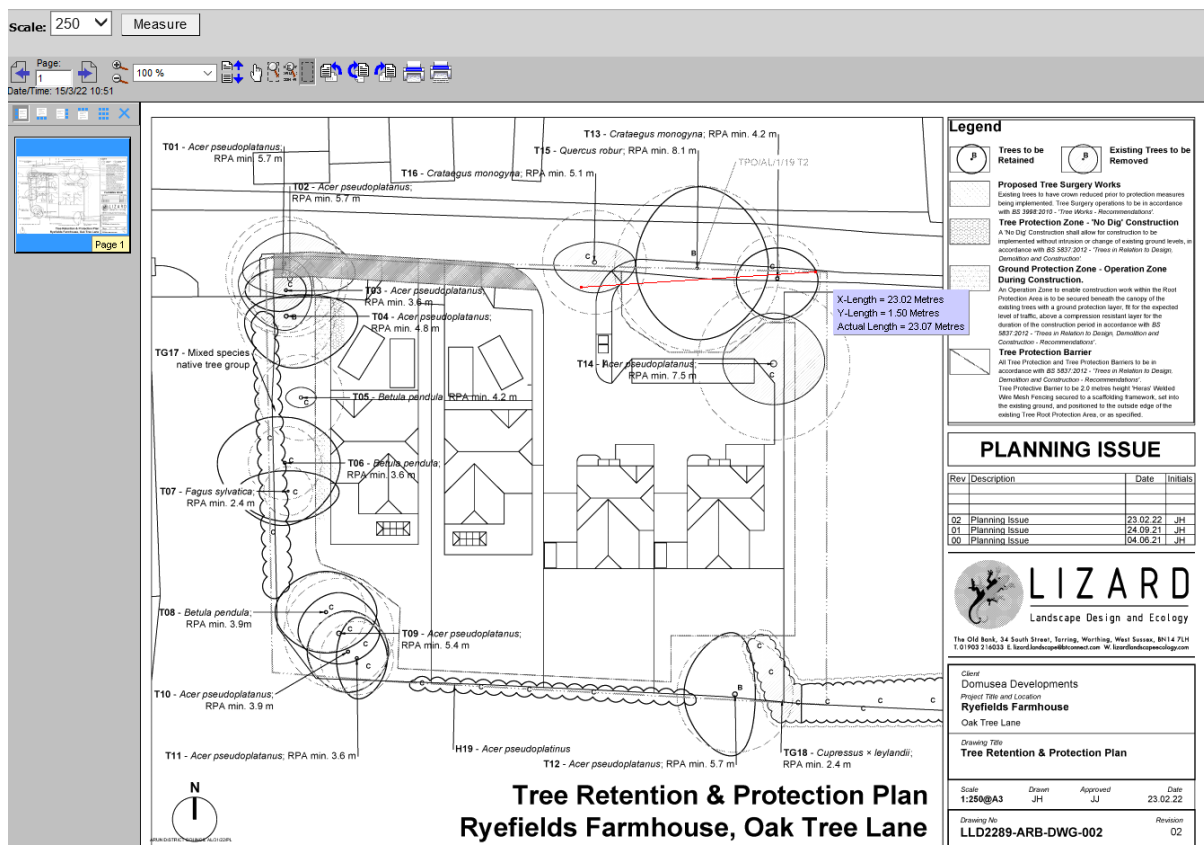


Figure 1. Screenshot of proposed Tree Retention & Protection Plan with vehicle sightline.

Secondly, there is no explicit mention of track enhancement so we might assume that no RPA interference of T15 will occur, however, any upgrade in construction and/or track-widening could inflict serious damage if not controlled by planning condition.

I have considered the proposed routes for surface and foul water drainage. It appears that attenuation tank and associated apparatus will be located within the RPA of Category B sycamore (T12). If RPA intrusion is significant and likely to be damaging then a revision should be encouraged to prevent further loss of maturing tree canopy from the site and account for its high growth potential. Importantly we await approval from our Drainage Engineer on the proposed strategy. 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.

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.

Conclusions:

T15 is a tree of such importance (high amenity/landscape value, potential heritage tree) and sensitivity (mature, growing in increasingly hostile surroundings) that it should represent a major constraint to development.

The proposals as submitted could be supported in arboricultural terms, although first it is necessary to secure written confirmation that any off-site highway requirement/improvement will not occur within the RPA or crown spread of T15.

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

Recommendation:

If you are to approve the application, I recommend the following conditions be applied:

Condition 1

Before the site is occupied or any machinery is introduced to the site or demolition work or construction work or alterations to existing ground levels takes place a **PRE-COMMENCEMENT Site Meeting** is to take place between the Planning Authority's Tree Officer and the Arboricultural Expert representing the site owner(s) – at this meeting all protective fencing and ground protection measures will be inspected to verify they are 'Fit for Purpose' as required under British Standard 5837:2012 and have been erected and positioned exactly as shown on the **Tree Retention & Protection Plan, LLD2289-ARB-DWG-002, Rev 02**.

Reasons: To comply with BS5837:2012 and ensure the retention and maintenance of trees and vegetation which are an important feature of the area, in accordance with Policy D DM1 of the Arun Local Plan. It is considered necessary for this to be a pre-commencement condition as the protection and retention of trees goes to the heart of the planning permission.

Condition 2

Part a)

All activity at the site is to be carried out in strict accordance with: - **Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement, ref. LLD2289-ARB-REP-001, Rev 03**.

Part b)

If there is deemed to be a need for any Utility Service Route connections to bisect retained tree Root Protection Areas/Zones, then prior to their installation a Method Statement prepared by an Arboricultural Expert must be submitted that stipulates how this can be achieved without adverse impact on tree roots. Written approval and confirmation of acceptance of this Methodology must be issued before any works are commenced out on site.

Reasons: To comply with BS5837:2012 and to ensure that retained trees are afforded due respect and appropriate levels of protection such that their ongoing health and vitality is not compromised, and they can continue to enhance the landscape and amenity of the area.

Mark Warwick

Tree Officer / Neighbourhood Services