

Planning Officer: Mr S Davis

Planning Application Ref: AL/64/20/PL

Location: Springfield, Hook Lane, Aldingbourne, PO20 3TE

Description of works: Demolition of the existing dwelling & construction of 2 no. 2-bed. 3 no. 3-bed, 4 no. 4-bed houses including access, landscaping & associated works (resubmission following AL/27/20/PL).

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.
- The applicants have employed **Lizard Landscape Design Ltd** to prepare a Tree Retention and Protection Plan for this project, but without a supporting Arboricultural Impact Assessment & Method Statement - a requirement of BS5837:2012. As such, were this application to now proceed, we will not have sufficient information to guarantee such trees would be adequately respected and protected.
- The high canopy Monterey cypress, old native maple trees and other established trees (albeit of low quality) along the north boundary add a mature outlook and provide visual amenity to the surrounding area. They will no doubt be of considerable value to those occupying new dwellings to the north (Barratt Homes development) and beyond. It is fitting that they are given adequate room to flourish during and post-construction.
- In broad terms, the proposal as it stands can be implemented by retaining the majority of large evergreen trees, that are of obvious landscape value. A number of these have also been identified as Category B trees, a rating I can comfortably support. It is therefore disappointing there is no attempt to retain T24 & T29 Cypress when they could be in harmony with the dwelling (plot 9) and access road, by selective branch shortening and if a 'No-dig' construction method was employed. That said, neither is suitable for a Tree Preservation Order and so we cannot prevent their removal, although I would expect to see adequate mitigation.
- In respect of any soft-landscape proposals, I defer to our Leisure and Landscape Officer. I would expect all tree removals to be adequately mitigated for by way of an ambitious replacement planting programme and within a detailed landscape plan. In addition to the use of any ornamental plantings within the development, I encourage the selection of native tree species of potential stature (>15m ht.) and longevity wherever adequate space exists, such that they will grow to complement and enhance the local landscape.
- The Engineering Details Drainage Strategy for the site as illustrated (dwg. no. 602-01, Rev C) is broadly respectful of retained trees and their growth potential, with the obvious exception being chosen route of surface water discharge to the north boundary watercourse and construction of headwall – both within the RPA of retained (off-site?) mature Cypress T21. Directional drilling technique is proposed '*if required*'. I say it is necessary unless exploratory excavation findings permit standard trenching. All that to be set out in the required Arboricultural (Impact Assessment &) Method Statement. Might it not be easier to take a more northerly route from manhole S8 and avoid significant tree's (T18 & T21) RPA altogether, subject to suitable ground levels (gravity connection)?

Conclusions:

- The proposed removal of T24 & T29 is unfortunate. The important tree line along the north boundary is suitably accommodated and with far less intrusion into likely rooting zones.
- We need to see a detailed landscape plan inclusive of tree planting proposals to ensure adequate mitigation for the loss of so much high canopy.
- Drainage Strategy needs to be re-considered in part and must be approved in association with the overall layout, to ensure adequate safeguarding of retained trees.

- We must have an Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement specific to this set of proposals, which in terms of layout differs substantially from recent applications.

Recommendation:

- As it stands, I feel unable to lend my support to this scheme and so must register an **OBJECTION**, although expect that to be easily overcome with submission of further information and minor refinements.

Mark Warwick
Tree Officer / Parks and Greenspace Team