

**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.
- **RESOLVED.** Agree that this can be resolved with a pre-commencement condition, subject to support from our Leisure and Landscape Officer.

- **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.
- **UNRESOLVED.** I have read the Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement, LLD1680, Rev 04. There is no confirmation or even suggestion that my concern relating to the proposed Drainage Strategy and its potential negative impact on 3<sup>rd</sup> party tree (T21) have been properly addressed.
- I was concerned to read the following statement in para. 4.6 of the above report: *'The drainage strategy has been discussed in detail with the Local Authority Tree Officer and an appropriate drainage proposal to adequately protect trees has been devised following this'*. For the record, there have been no such discussions, although I have reported my concerns along the way. Regrettably, it seems unlikely that I am going to get a satisfactory response to comments made previously on this issue (para.6 of this report).
- **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.**
- **RESOLVED.** We now have the necessary AIA/MS which supports the previously submitted Tree Protection Plan.

### 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**.
  - If you are minded to approve this application as it stands, I recommend the following conditions be applied:
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 and Protection Plan, dwg.no. LLD1680-ARB-DWG-002, Rev 08**.
  - A schedule of Site Monitoring/Supervision visits and Reporting Procedures prepared by an Arboricultural Expert will be required and their extent will be agreed on at the site meeting to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority's Tree Officer.

**Reasons:** To comply with BS5837 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.

2. All activity at the site is to be carried out in strict accordance with: - **Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement, ref. LLD1680-ARB-REP-001, Rev 04, 29 September 2020.**

**Reasons:** To comply with BS5837 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 / Parks and Greenspace Team