

Planning Officer: Michael Eastham

Planning Application Ref: AL/75/19/PL

Location: Land at Bridge Cottage & The Old Cottage, Lidsey Road, Lidsey, PO22 9PH

Description of works: Construction of 8no. dwellings, alterations to access and associated works

Comments on Application:

- The applicant has employed **Lizard Landscape Design Ltd** to prepare an Arboricultural Impact Assessment & Method Statement, ref.LLD1349-ARB-REP-01, 24th July 2019, along with a supporting Existing Tree Schedule and Tree Retention and Protection Plan for this project.
- The extent and presentation of Tree Survey data submitted accords with the requirements of BS5837:2012 although I must register my disappointment with their Suitability for Retention category ratings applied, which I believe underestimate many of the tree's quality and potential life expectancy. As such, I consider there to be a number of Category A and B trees on the site which have been unfairly downgraded.
- Although only of limited view at present, there are a number of trees within the site that have great potential to complement any development and sit comfortably within the semi-rural environs. T07 maidenhair, T29 oak and T44 beech are the subject of an Order (TPO/AL/2/18) and quite rightly inform the layout. The former is an especially fine example of its type with great ornamental value and well-situated within the plot; the latter two are native trees of excellent form and apparent good health. I regard all as Category A trees (high quality) and I am pleased to see that they are to be adequately accommodated within this development proposal.
- Within the site, approximately 45% of trees surveyed as Category B (moderate quality) and 60% of Category C (low quality) trees; are listed for removal. Approximately 60% of all existing tree features (individual and group) within the site are listed for removal.
- The number and position of dwellings proposed for this parcel of land is proportionate with the setting but will involve removal of an unusually high percentage of the existing tree population. A slim majority of the high-moderate quality trees are to be retained which is far from ideal. Were this application to progress then such a collective loss of tree cover should be adequately mitigated with the provision of a detailed and ambitious soft landscape scheme - which we are yet to have sight of.

Conclusions:

- The proposal seeks to fully exploit the available space and dramatically erode the number of existing trees and hedges of high/moderate quality. A considerable number of the low-quality trees around the site perimeter nonetheless provide landscape and ecological value; I expect their loss will be keenly felt. The overall quantity of tree and hedge removal is significant and will negatively impact the character of the area.
- The extent of proposed tree loss at this site and its direct relation to any positive benefits that may arise from the development is clearly a matter for your consideration - I see no obvious reason to object purely on arboricultural grounds.
- Detailed landscape proposals should be submitted for our consideration and ultimate endorsement prior to any approval, so that we can be confident adequate mitigation for such tree loss is in place.

Recommendations:

- If you are of a mind to approve this scheme, 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, LLD1349-ARB-DWG-002 Rev02**.

- 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 & Method Statement, ref. LLD1349-ARB-REP-01, 24th July 2019**.

- 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 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.

3. Any tree pruning considered essential to enable the agreed development must meet the requirements of BS3998:2010 Tree work – Recommendations:

- Where whole branches are to be removed and final cuts made close to the trunk or branch union they are to be made as shown in Figure 2 of BS3998:2010
- Where branches are to be shortened back the final cuts are to be made at the correct angle shown in BS3998:2010 and adjacent to a live bud or lateral.

Reasons: In the interest of continued health and vitality of trees and to accord with current industry guidelines and sound arboricultural practice.

Mark Warwick

Tree Officer / Parks and Greenspace Team