

Planning Officer: Miss Z Toppin

Planning Application Ref: **AW/107/21/T**

Location: **49 Chawkmare Coppice, Aldwick, PO21 3SP**

Description of works: **Mature Monterey pine (T1) - Canopy reduction of up to 15% to remove dying branches**

Reasons given: Health and safety

Comments on Application:

Monterey pine / *Pinus radiata* Height: 20-25m Radial spread: 5-10m Age class: Mature

- Outwardly and from distance (roadside) this tree appears to be in a fair physiological state (and assumed to be so in the absence of any information/evidence provided to the contrary). It is a large and prominent tree, of obvious public amenity and landscape value.
- The applicant employed Arun Tree Company Ltd to assess the tree and they have not reported any obvious structural defect or disease, other than the presence of dying branches throughout the crown. The presence of deadwood and declining branches may be characteristic of perfectly healthy trees of this type or associated with a pathogen and/or environmental factor.
- Whilst an understanding of the work proposal has been reached, following correspondence between planning department and applicant; for the benefit of all interested parties, it should be acknowledged that the 'Description of works' is open to interpretation. The intention is clearly to undertake a canopy thin (maximum 15% of current volume removed) rather than a canopy reduction (where typically the height and spread of the tree are reduced). The latter operation being entirely inappropriate.
- The removal of dead or imminently dangerous branches is an exception and does not require permission, although in respect of the latter those undertaking are required to notify this authority at the earliest opportunity and works should only be to the extent that the immediate threat to person(s) or property is abated.

Conclusions:

- This tree requires careful management that respects its age and vulnerability to environmental changes and disease progression.
- The principle of the work proposal is sound and for many trees in similar locations would be supportable. It would be intensely onerous and perhaps impractical to comprehensively specify, consequently we have only a statement of intent. Should we approve such an application, we would cede control over the operation (extent and location of crown material removed) to the applicant and their appointed contractor. That is not a satisfactory position for the local planning authority to be in, where the tree is of such high value.

Recommendation:

- I recommend **REFUSAL** for this application.

Mark Warwick
Tree Officer / Parks and Greenspace Team