

Planning Officer: Lynnyrd Wolfe

Planning Application Ref: AW/142/20/T

Location: 23 Coventry Close, Aldwick, PO21 3RT

Description of works: Reduce South East aspect overhanging Coventry Drive to 12m and Crown lift South/South East aspect by 3m to 1No. English oak tree (T1).

Reasons given: None

Comments on Application:

Pedunculate oak / *Quercus robur* Height: 15-20m Radial spread: 5-10m Age class: Mature

- Outwardly and from a distance this tree appears to be in a fair physiological state. The upper crown exhibits widespread tip dieback, symptomatic of environmental stress and/or root dysfunction. The lower crown exhibits good crown density and shoot extension.
- The crown is complex and erratic, having undergone heavy reduction pruning in part, much of which I assume to accommodate development of the plot (c2000?). This has left it with a strongly asymmetric crown profile but is nonetheless visually impressive from publicly accessible land with 10-15metres of radial spread along its SW-NE axis.
- The crown extends in a southerly direction by approx. 7metres to the southern boundary of the plot. Any reduction pruning on this aspect will greatly exaggerate crown asymmetry.
- It is visible from adjacent property and prominent alongside the main road (Hewarts Lane). It is an important constituent of a historic line of mature oak trees that have significant landscape value and help to define the character of the area.
- The removal of deadwood is an exception and does not require consent from the local planning authority.

Conclusions:

- This tree requires careful management that respects its age and vulnerability to environmental changes and disease progression.
- This is a long-established tree given adequate room during relatively recent development at this end of Coventry Close, so as to be purposefully retained in harmony with its surroundings. While dominant over the end of a long garden, it has limited impact on any dwelling. The work proposed has not been wholly justified on arboricultural grounds.
- It is individually (and part of) a significant feature in the local landscape. It is under considerable stress and unlikely to respond well to any hard pruning at this time. Such work could accelerate a reduction of its landscape impact and cause undue detriment to the visual amenities of the locality.

Recommendations:

- As it stands, I recommend **REFUSAL** for this application.

Advisory:

- I would like to see the applicant agree to a revision of their work proposal such as detailed below, which would address some of their concerns whilst limiting the stress otherwise imposed by the creation of larger pruning wounds and loss of greater crown volume:

- Remove branches with a diameter at their collar no greater than 75mm, as necessary to achieve a maximum of 3metres overhead clearance on all available aspects.

- If the applicant is prepared to re-submit in line with this advice, then I would be able to recommend APPROVAL subject to the following conditions:

Condition to Be Applied to Approved Work: -

- Part a) 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
- Part b) 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 interests of the trees continued health and vitality and to accord with current industry guidelines and sound arboricultural practice.

- See also the standard pruning guidance notes issued with the consent letter

Advisory:

- We are obliged to advise that where trees are situated on land not owned by the applicant the granting of consent by this authority does not by association give permission to undertake such works that require access onto/from that land. Nor does it permit any work to take place beyond the boundary of the applicant's property. Additional permission must first be obtained from the land/tree owner.

Mark Warwick
Tree Officer / Parks and Greenspace Team