

Planning Officer: Miss Z Toppin

Planning Application Ref: **AW/169/20/T**

Location: **Verge outside Old Place number 53-37, Aldwick, PO21 3AX**

Description of works: **Crown reduction of 1No. T2 - *Quercus robur* to height 13m and spread 10m**

Reasons given: Initiation of retrenchment pruning

Comments on Application:

Pedunculate oak / *Quercus robur* Approx. height: 15m Radial spread: N-8m, E-8m, S-10m, W-12m Age class: Mature

- This tree is visually important within the surrounding development, occupying a prominent position and uniquely with a retained low limb/branch framework. It is an important constituent of an established group of maturing oak trees which help define the character of the area and represent a significant public amenity.
- Unfortunately, it is also unique among the oak population (local to this part of Old Place) in being physiologically stressed. Dieback of small branches and twigs throughout the crown (although pronounced in the upper half) seems to be associated with some form of root dysfunction.
- The work proposal is a recognised and sympathetic response to that pattern of dieback and the risk from pruning out live material (additional stress) is necessary to abate hazard from falling branches and hopefully to stimulate the production of new foliage from dormant buds across the crown interior. There is a fine balance to be achieved and for trees of high amenity value the operation must be clearly specified.

Conclusion:

- The principle of the work proposed is justified on arboricultural grounds, although I find the specification open to interpretation and so cannot support it as it stands.

Recommendations:

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

Advisory:

- I would like to see the applicant agree to a revised pruning specification such as detailed below, which would seem to address their concerns whilst providing absolute clarity for any arboricultural contractor employed to undertake that work:
 - Reduce top-height to leave a minimum of 13m above ground level.
 - Reduce radial spread on the south and west aspects, leaving a minimum of 8m and 9m respectively.

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- 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 condition:

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 tree's 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:

The long-term vitality of this tree is best respected when significant pruning work such as proposed, is undertaken during the late-spring to summer period (May to August). The work proposed should only be undertaken during this period.

Mark Warwick
Tree Officer / Parks and Greenspace