

Planning Officer: Mr F Gardner
Planning Application Ref: **AW/176/20/T**
Location: **15 Acorn End, Aldwick, PO21 4JA**
Description of works: **Crown reduction of 1No. sycamore T1 - to height 9m and spread 8m**
Reasons given: Health and safety

Comments on Application:

Sycamore / *Acer pseudoplatanus* Approx. height: 13m Average spread: 6m Age class: Mature

- The applicant has employed Elmcroft Tree Services Ltd to assess the tree and provide a brief report on its condition. The report draws attention to excessive decay in main stem, ongoing concern of the applicant and surrounding residents then recommends crown reduction to address the risk of failure.
- Outwardly and from a distance this tree appeared to be in a fine physiological state. It has a full and balanced crown, no doubt visually attractive when in leaf – having ‘grown on’ well since last subject to reduction pruning. This pruning involved the reduction of height and spread on all aspects, sometime around 2008 (average 3m growth from past pruning points) and possibly at the suggestion of the local planning authority’s arboriculturist; although I see no formal application for that work in our records.
- During my own assessment (April 2020) I observed a deep and open cavity at around 1.5 – 3.0m ht. on the main stem, probably arising from the historic tear-out of a large limb/branch. This is long-established and there has formed healthy woundwood in response. No obvious sign of pathogen activity to suggest decay is aggressive and/or ongoing nor evidence to suggest (or provided to confirm) it is to a problematic extent.
- A higher open cavity on the opposite side of the tree is strongly associated with a targeted pruning wound.
- It grows at the front of the property and while discreetly situated within a relatively recent residential development, it presents an attractive upper crown profile which can be seen from several surrounding properties and from public highway. As such, it has public amenity value.
- The extent of crown reduction proposed should not extend beyond past pruning points.
- Repeat operations such as now being asked for by the applicant will be necessary throughout the remaining life-span of this tree, to achieve a reasonable degree of structural integrity appropriate for its location.

Conclusions:

- The work proposed is necessary to mitigate risk of structural failure and so justified on arboricultural grounds.
- While a temporary loss of aesthetic value is inevitable, satisfactory canopy renewal and recovery should occur if the work is undertaken to a high standard and at an appropriate time of year.

Recommendation:

- I recommend **CONSENT** for this application, 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.

Part c) The removal of crown material which has developed since the last operation must be done sympathetically and with respect to established 'knuckles' so as not to extend beyond the point of origin.

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:

- The long-term vitality of this tree is best respected when significant pruning work such as proposed, is undertaken during either the summer (June to August) or mid-winter (late-December to early-February) periods. The work should only be undertaken during these periods.

Mark Warwick
Tree Officer / Parks and Greenspace Team

Figure 2 Positions of final cuts

