

CONSULTEE RESPONSE (Council's Arboriculturist)

Date inspected: 14th March 2024

Case Officer: Hebe Smith

Reference: AW/62/24/T

Location: 2 Craigweil Lane, Aldwick, PO21 4AN

Proposal: Fell 1no. beech (T-369) and fell 2no. sycamores (T-364 and T-370).

Reason: To remove risk of tree root interference with culvert.

Comments on Application:

T364 Sycamore / <i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	Height: 10-15m	Radial spread: 5-10m	Age class: Mature
T369 Beech / <i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	Height: 15-20m	Radial spread: 5-10m	Age class: Mature
T370 Sycamore / <i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	Height: 10-15m	Radial spread: 5-10m	Age class: Mature

T364 appears to be in a fair physiological state, showing some localised branch tip dieback in upper crown but otherwise of good form. It is prominent in the street scene, visible in its entirety from the public highway and numerous properties. A tree with high public amenity value.

T369 appears to be in a fine physiological state and of good form, although clearly a woodland fringe tree. Its attractive upper crown is visible in part from the highway and numerous properties. A tree with moderate public amenity value.

T370 appears to be in a fine physiological state and of good form. It is visible in large part from the main public highway and contributes to the verdant character of Dark Lane and surrounding area. A tree with moderate-high public amenity value.

All possess moderate to high growth potential and their root systems will be extensive across the applicant's property. T369 is assumed to sit directly over the culvert. Both sycamores are approximately 5metres from the culvert.

Building contractors on site and our own drainage engineers believe the existing culvert to have been built in the Victorian era, recent photographs show a rudimentary brick arch and lime mortar construction. The culvert is considered to be an important asset for the dispersal of surface water locally. Responsibility for its maintenance and ongoing functionality rest with the landowner(s).

Conclusions:

All three trees are outwardly healthy, free from obvious significant structural defect and of good form. They are to varying extent all visible from the public domain and numerous residential properties.

Both sycamores are unlikely to directly affect structural integrity of the culvert. Whilst fine root ingress is a distinct possibility, this may not necessarily be problematic given the depth and breadth of the channel.

T369 could directly affect structural integrity of the culvert from main stem and buttress root expansion, as it is likely growing atop the same and has high growth potential. The risk of damage is present and foreseeable.

Our principal drainage engineer is of the view that it would be impractical to sleeve the culvert and undesirable to reduce its capacity by installing a smaller diameter pipe as has occurred upstream. This leaves the installation of a root barrier (likely to involve the severance of multiple roots) as the only viable option for reducing/eliminating influence of trees on the culvert, although often these can be defeated by future root growth. The success of such schemes is determined by the barrier being of appropriate depth for the surrounding soil profile/structure.

The removal of either sycamore is not demonstrated to be necessary or foreseeably so, at this time.

There is a large population of established trees nearby such that the removal of T369 would not be unduly harmful to the visual amenities of the locality. Together with the need to maintain adequate clearance from the culvert, precludes the requirement for a replacement tree to be planted.

Recommendation:

As it stands, I am unable to support this application. I **would like the applicant to be invited to agree to a revised proposal for lesser works by removing T364 and T370. This as part of the current application so as not to incur further delay.** The removal of T369 only, would go some way to addressing the applicant's concerns whilst ensuring no undue loss of amenity.

If the applicant agrees to the above revision, then I would be able to recommend APPROVAL.

Mark Warwick
Tree Officer
Environment and Climate Change