

Planning Officer: Miss Z Toppin

Planning Application Ref: AW/208/21/T

Location: 47 Fish Lane, Aldwick, Bognor, PO21 3AB

Description of works: Crown Thin 1no. (T1) oak tree by 25% and remove dead wood

Reasons given: None provided

Comments on Application:

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

- Outwardly and from a distance (roadside) this tree appears to be in a fair physiological state and assumed to be so in the absence of any evidence provided to the contrary. Moderate crown density is assumed to be associated with an exposed near coastal setting and pronounced following an early-season wind scorch event.
- Despite crown reduction pruning it remains visually impressive; seen from surrounding properties and to users of the public highway (footway and carriageway).
- It is proposed to remove a quarter of crown volume by thinning out crossing branches, removal of epicormic growth and deadwood. I saw no obvious evidence of problematic crossing branches and epicormic growth is a likely response to the aforementioned leaf and shoot damage or perhaps a discreet physiological condition. The emergence of new growth from dormant buds is a valuable mechanism of oak as it attempts to recover crown volume and maintain vitality.
- The removal of crossing/rubbing branches is considered good practice where it seeks to prevent/limit the presence of abrasion wounds that might facilitate ingress of harmful decay fungi. Some crossing branches may provide valuable 'natural bracing'. A future application would need to clearly identify those intended for removal.
- The removal of dead branches is an exception and does not require permission from the local planning authority.

Conclusions:

- This tree requires careful management that respects its age and vulnerability to environmental changes and disease progression.
- *Crown thinning* work has not been justified on arboricultural grounds. Such work rarely provides a benefit to the tree and often only a short-term increase in light levels. It can drastically alter tree dynamics and natural defences against wind pressure. The sudden exposure of central crown areas to such winds can result in significant damage.

Recommendation:

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

Mark Warwick
Tree Officer / Parks and Greenspace Team