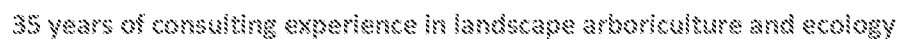


A black and white photograph of a single-story bungalow. The house features a dark, textured tiled roof and light-colored walls. It has a large front garden with a curved path leading to the front door. To the right of the main house is a detached garage with a similar tiled roof. The property is surrounded by trees and shrubs, and a trash bin is visible in the foreground.



Instruction:

Report Prepared by David Meagher Environment Consultants
for private client - Mr. David Cheney. 13 June 2019

Site location

6 Little Babbsham is located within the Aldwick Fields Estate which was constructed in the early 1980s two miles west of Bognor Regis in the parish of Aldwick. This is a single-story dwelling fronted by open lawn with a linear rectangle garden to the rear. The rear boundary is composed of an outgrown beech hedge, the subject of this brief report to extend permissions for maintenance work in a tree preservation area.

Reason and scope of the report:

Report submitted in conjunction with client's application to carry out remedial work to grown out beech hedge.

Planning Context

Aldwick Fields was constructed in the 1980's. 6 Little Babbsham is part of the Aldwick Fields estate, who, with the neighbouring properties share 90 metres of beech hedge to the rear boundary. The adjoining properties maintain their hedges which are close clipped (see images). 6 Babbsham requires work to restore the remaining individuals as they are overgrown; as many have been removed over the years, see historical applications where permissions to remove had been approved (appendix). The property is located within the Aldwick Fields Tree Preservation Order.

Background

The property is occupied by [REDACTED] in recent years, left the beech hedge, bounding the rear of her property, unmanaged. From an early inspection it appears that the hedge had not been maintained for quite a number of years. The continuous line and age of the hedge along the rear boundaries of the three neighbouring properties implies that the hedge had been planted at the same time as the construction of the bungalows. It is unlikely that the hedge represents a former field boundary because of the original regular spacings of the beech, whereas a former field boundary would normally consist of mature stands consisting generally of more than one species.

The boundary between 6 Babbsham and the adjoining property to the rear is separated by a panel fence behind which is planted a leylandii hedge, which has had the effect of suppressing the beech resulting in side growth growing towards the client's bungalow and into the client's lawn by an average of over four metres.

The hedge spans three properties and is highly likely have been installed when the properties were built in 1983:



The 6 Little Babbsham hedge is outlined in yellow and spans 28 metres in length, made up of 14 trees.

History

The neighbouring property, 5 Little Babbsham has submitted and had approved several applications to carry out work to the beech trees from 1990-2014. Five in total to trim sides or lop or crown reduce, with up to 34 individuals at the rear of their garden. All applications have been successfully approved.

6 Little Babbsham has also successfully applied for permissions to carry out work, In 1991 to 'Lop and top 25 beech trees on southwest boundary to a height of 14 feet and remove ivy' and in 1997 'Lop and top 25 Beech trees on south west boundary to a height of 4.2m (14ft) and remove ivy'. In 2005 to the 'Felling of 8 no. Beech trees, topping and lopping of remaining trees. All approved successfully. The earliest application was in 1986 'Lopping and topping of boundary hedge'.

Inspection and condition of the hedge in question.

This a mature hedge which made up of a of sparse line of 14 individual trees. (See plan).

The hedge has lost many individuals over the course of the years, probably due to the competition from the leylandii hedge, planted very close to the adjoining panel fence. The beech trees have been weakened by the aggressive competition causing shade and lack of nutrients. Climate change may also have been a factor.

The neighbouring property's hedge has not suffered in the same way as the trees have not been subjected to the same competition from the suppression of the Leylandii and therefore retained more specimens. It is evident from lateral growth that the beech had grown to an average of around two metres when kept as a manageable hedge for some time before the conifers were planted.

There are large gaps between individuals with evidence of rotted out basal ground level stumps in three places, as evidence of the formal hedge due to spacings, but also that trees had been removed. Fourteen individuals remain. Due to the elderly nature of the residents the trees seem to have once again been neglected until work was carried out to reduce the remaining individuals to approximately 3.5 metres. The results have led to a crowded pollard of one-sided crowns.

Since this work there has been stem dieback allowing cavities to form, the ingress of water and decay. The Tree located in the extreme Eastern corner has an open visible cavity from a lost stem. Other trees exhibit scar tissue calluses and bark burrs. Where hedge individuals have lost its neighbour, the canopy has grown to fill the space. Most growth has been in the form of laterals with a northerly spread reaching over 4 metres into the garden (lawn) area. The upper laterals have grown vertically to replace leaders as a response to the earlier treatment of lopping and topping, together with the lack of maintenance the hedge has grown to an average of 8 metres in height.

Whilst most of the fourteen specimens are in decline and will respond to remedial and restorative pruning work the specimen last in line located in the North West Corner is the worst example (see

image). Under the classification by BS 5837 trees in relation to construction this tree would be a call 'U'. Most of the trees in this stand would be classified between U-C. Although this document does not advocate their removal due to their continued value as a screen and for wildlife.

Treatment

The trees pruned back as a hedge have considerable wildlife value, offering nesting and a food source despite some dieback of some stems or open cavities where branches have been lost.

All the trees require the laterals pruned and reduction to the replacement leaders. Reduction should be aimed to return to the original level of 3.5 metres and removal of side growth to 300mm. This could be achieved over the course of two visits during the dormant season prior to the nesting period in late autumn or winter over two years. The first visit reducing leaders by 2 metres, then a further metre in the second year. Shortening laterals by three metres in the first year, and on the second visit trimming the remaining metre of lateral or side growth. The hedge at present qualifies as a high hedge but as a deciduous beech does not fall into the category of trees where this work is a legal requirement.

The work should be carried out using scaffold towers using base plates and sole boards to spread the load and to provide stability using hand tools including long reach hedge trimmers. All arisings to be chipped and mulched on site. Spreading the load also minimises compaction.

Ongoing work on work

Where the hedge is to be annually trimmed to ensure there is no damage or destruction of the nest of any wild bird whilst the nest is in use (Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981) this should be done outside the breeding season.

Suggested action.

Once the trees have been restored to a manageable size gapping up would provide a hedge of a different age structure and is recommended course of action both for the future and for ecological purposes. The hedge could be gapped up using a mix of native species, or with beech to continue the uniformity of the neighbouring hedge although there is little amenity value of this as there is no public view from footpaths or roads. These should be planted bare root in the dormant season.

Stabilise fence and re-affix detached panel to prevent leaning and fallen panels interfering and damage to beech and garden plants.

Approval conditions:

Along with the normal approval:

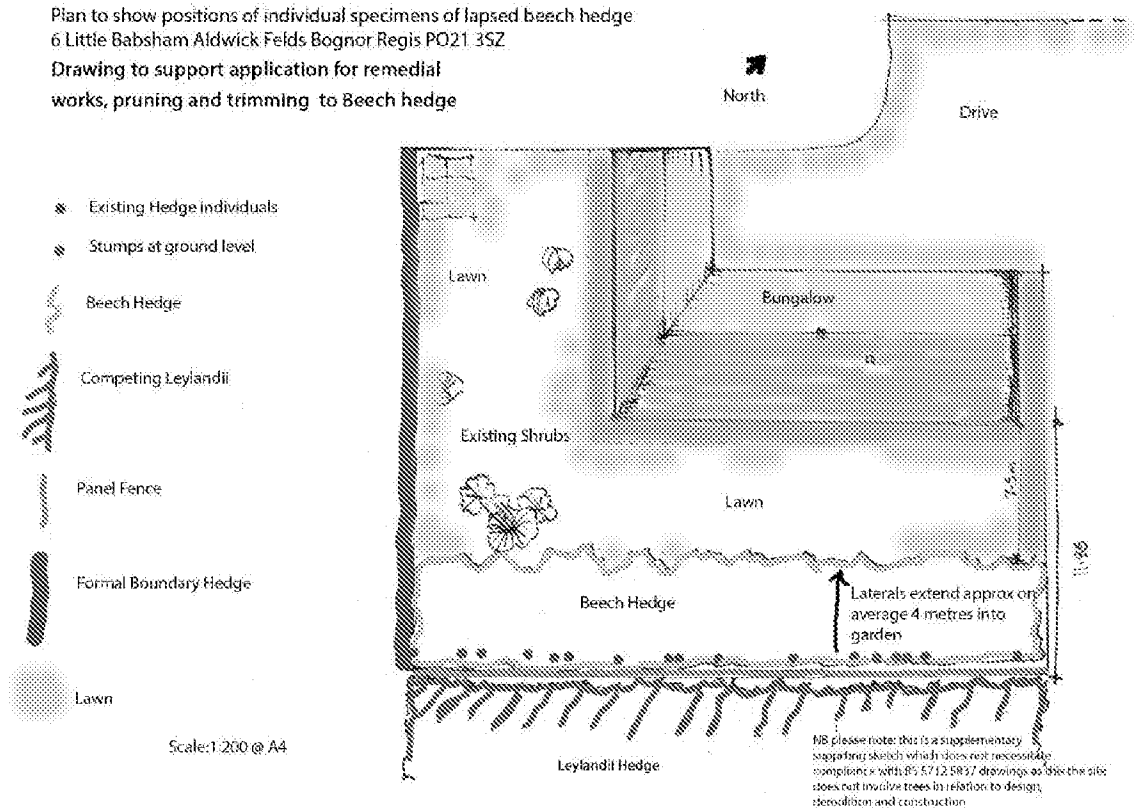
It is requested that annual or biennial maintenance of the hedge maintenance of the hedge for future work only require informing the council that work is to take place, as long as the type of work and when the work is scheduled is notified to the council. Some councils have adopted this approach where the onus is for householders to inform the council through email, so avoiding the need to provide an expensive report each time some maintenance work needs to be carried out or fill in time consuming paperwork. The council can then decide if an inspection is necessary or when a site visit when the work is to commence

Note to contractor:

Work to be carried out in compliance with health and safety compliance as laid out in Health and Safety Authority publication Code of Practice for Access and working scaffolds (reference supplied in appendix)). Base plates and Sole Boards must be used for stability to spread weight and minimise compaction carefully positioning in places where trees are absent.

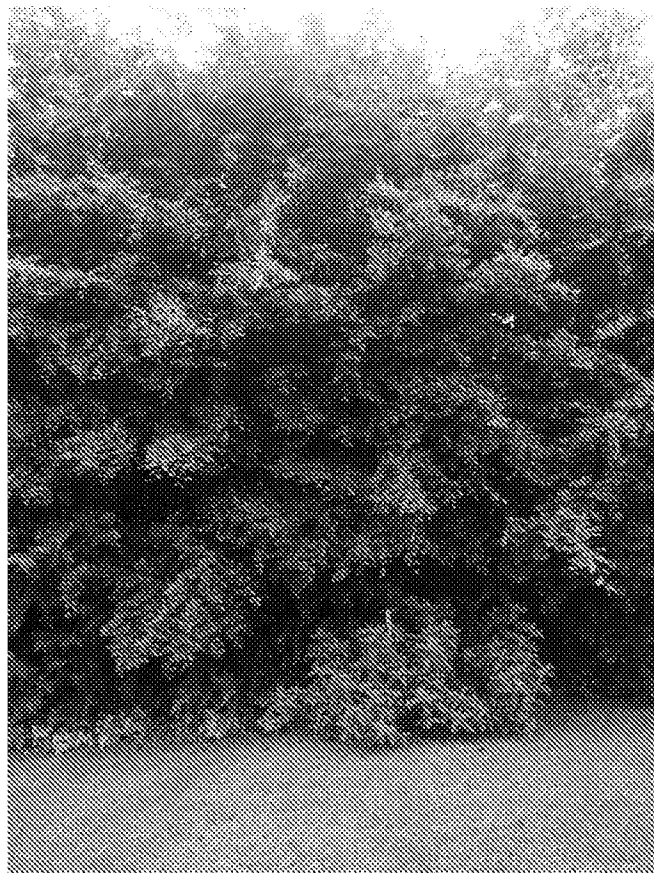
Appendix:

Plan to show positions of individual specimens of lapsed beech hedge
6 Little Babsham Aldwick Fields Bognor Regis PO21 3SZ
Drawing to support application for remedial
works, pruning and trimming to Beech hedge



Photos:







References

BS 5712 5837:2012

High Hedges Act 2004

Hedge Height and Light Loss. ODPM 2004 (HH&LL) 2005

Aldwick Parish Village Design Statement 2013

https://www.hsa.ie/eng/Publications_and_Forms/Publications/Construction/CoP_for_Access_and_Working_Scaffolds.pdf

Past approved applications:

BR/185/85/T

AW/96/91/T

AW/203/97/T

AW/200/01/T

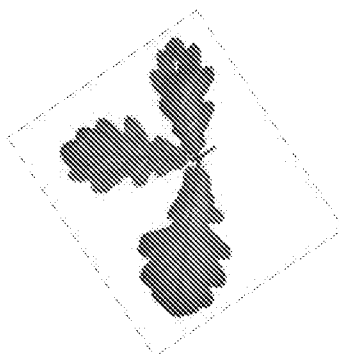
Tree measurements:

Stem Diameter of hedge specimens measured @ 1.5 metres height from ground level: from South East rear corner to South west rear corner of garden boundary (see plan) in centimetres

Tree Nos. T1 : 86 T2 : 145 T3 : 120 T4 : 176 T5 :180 T6 : 75 T7 :70 T8 :165 T9 :56 T10 :133 T11 :130

T12 :115 T13 : 175 T14 :145

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David Meagher (BA Land Arch with Ecology and Arb) is a qualified landscape architect, former head of NCH (apprentices) at Merrist Wood College of Land based Industries and former manager of parks, countryside and amenity trees for Test Valley Borough Council

35 years of consulting experience in landscape arboriculture and ecology

David Meagher Environment: Arboriculture Ecology and Landscape

Oak House 15 Glenwood Avenue PO22 8BS

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Phase 1 Habitat, Tree & Landscape Surveying, Reports, Analysis & Design

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