

Planning Officer: Mr F Gardner

Planning Application Ref: **AW/209/19/T**

Location: **6 Little Babsham, Aldwick, PO21 3SZ**

Description of works: **Reduce height by 5m and main branches by 1.5m to 13no. beech trees**

Reasons Given: Overgrown - occluding light, dominating garden and suppressing plant borders

Comments on Application:

13x beech / *Fagus sylvatica* Approx. height: 8m Average spread: 2m Age class: Mature

- The applicant has employed *David Meagher, Environment Consultant* to assess the trees and provide a report on their condition. This is comprehensive and I fully concur with his findings. The report recommends a balanced set of work proposals to manage the trees in an appropriate state for their location.
- Being of even age and growing in a formal linear group (lapsed hedgerow) - individual trees are not worthy of specific comment for the purposes of reviewing this application; all can be satisfactorily considered for generic comment, as follows.
- They appear to be generally stable, free from obvious structural defect and in fair physiological condition at this time.
- Due to a lack of recent maintenance, they have been able to emerge to a height which makes them visible from public highway, although they are of limited visual amenity value. They do represent an interesting and ecologically valuable feature and are no doubt of value to adjacent residential properties but require regular trimming to maintain them in proportion to the size of plots.

Conclusions:

- If the work is undertaken to a good standard and at the right time; then it is unlikely to have an adverse effect on the tree's long-term vitality. There will be no loss of public amenity on completion of the proposed works.
- The proposal to reduce overall height and spread with a view to maintaining formal appearance is justified and consistent with previous works approved by the Local Planning Authority.
- Ongoing maintenance (annual trimming) will be necessary to keep them in an appropriate state.

Recommendations:

- I recommend **CONSENT** for this application, subject to the following conditions:

Conditions To Be Applied to Approved Work: -

- 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
- 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.
- 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.
- Once the beech trees (hedge) have been effectively 'restored' on completion of these works, it will become necessary to undertake an annual trimming of the hedgerow to maintain a formal hedgerow (box type structure) appearance. This trimming would only involve the removal of young shoots that have grown-on from the established knuckles. No further reduction in the overall height and spread of the main stem and established limb/branch framework would be permitted.

This specific operation is likely to be required throughout the tree's remaining lifespan and would not be detrimental to their ongoing health and vitality. Future applications for the trimming work as described above will not be necessary, subject to the applicant providing adequate notice to this authority and whilst undertaking such work must meet the requirements of the aforementioned conditions.

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*

Mark Warwick
Tree Officer / Parks and Greenspace Team

Figure 2 Positions of final cuts

