

Planning Officer: Lynnyrd Wolfe

Planning Application Ref: **AW/273/19/T**

Location: **Verge in front of 18-23 Coventry Close, Aldwick**

Description of works: **Crown reduction by 2m on south west aspect 3 no. oak trees**

Reason(s) given: **1. Excessive boundary overhang 2. Debris dropping onto driveway and vehicles**

Comments on Application:

T1 Pedunculate oak	<i>Quercus robur</i>	Height: Approx. 16m	Average Spread: 8m	Age: Mature
T2 Pedunculate oak	<i>Quercus robur</i>	Height: Approx. 14m	Average Spread: 6m	Age: Mature
T3 Pedunculate oak	<i>Quercus robur</i>	Height: Approx. 16m	Average Spread: 8m	Age: Mature

- All trees were assessed from the front of properties 18 and 23 Coventry Close. The view of those trees was restricted by 2m high close-boarded boundary fences. All trees appear to be in a fine physiological state with good form. Crown profiles are attractive having avoided any significant modification other than the gradual removal of low branches to accommodate public highway traffic and residential development.
- They are visible from adjacent property and prominent alongside the main road (Hewarts Lane), being important constituents of a historic line of mature oak trees. They have significant landscape value and help to define the character of the area.
- The application seeks pruning on the south west aspect of those trees, although this could only realistically apply to T3. The majority of branches overhanging property extend south east from those trees. For clarity, I have considered boundary overhang and its influence on adjacent property regardless of aspect.
- The applicant proposes partial crown reduction in an attempt to reduce seasonal influence over adjacent residential property. The majority of their crown spreads are to the north of this property and so there is unlikely to be any significant light occlusion. Overhead and lateral clearance of branches above and from the property is mostly adequate although low branches from T1 may now be considered unwelcome encroachment over driveway and could be removed/reduced without detriment to the tree's ongoing health and vitality.

Conclusions:

- These are long-established trees given adequate room during relatively recent development at this end of Coventry Close, so as to be purposefully retained in harmony with surroundings. The vast majority of work proposed has not been justified on arboricultural grounds.
- They are individually (and part of) a significant feature in the local landscape and appear to be in adequately sound and healthy condition. The tree surgery proposed in the application would result in reduction of their landscape impact and undue detriment to the visual amenities of the locality. Furthermore, any approval for this work may set a precedent whereby similar trees of value nearby will be diminished.

Recommendations:

- As it stands, I recommend **REFUSAL** for this application.
- I would like to see the applicant submit a revised work proposal for T1 only, such as detailed below, which would seem to address a small but not insignificant element of their concerns whilst preventing a diminution of the tree's landscape and public amenity value:

- T1 (side of 18). *Crown lift (reduce/remove low branches) to achieve a maximum of 5metres overhead clearance above driveway and up to but not beyond the boundary fence line, where appropriate to do so. In any event, final pruning cuts must not exceed 75mm diameter and be appropriately positioned.*

- If the applicant is prepared to re-submit in line with this advice, then I would be able to recommend APPROVAL 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.

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

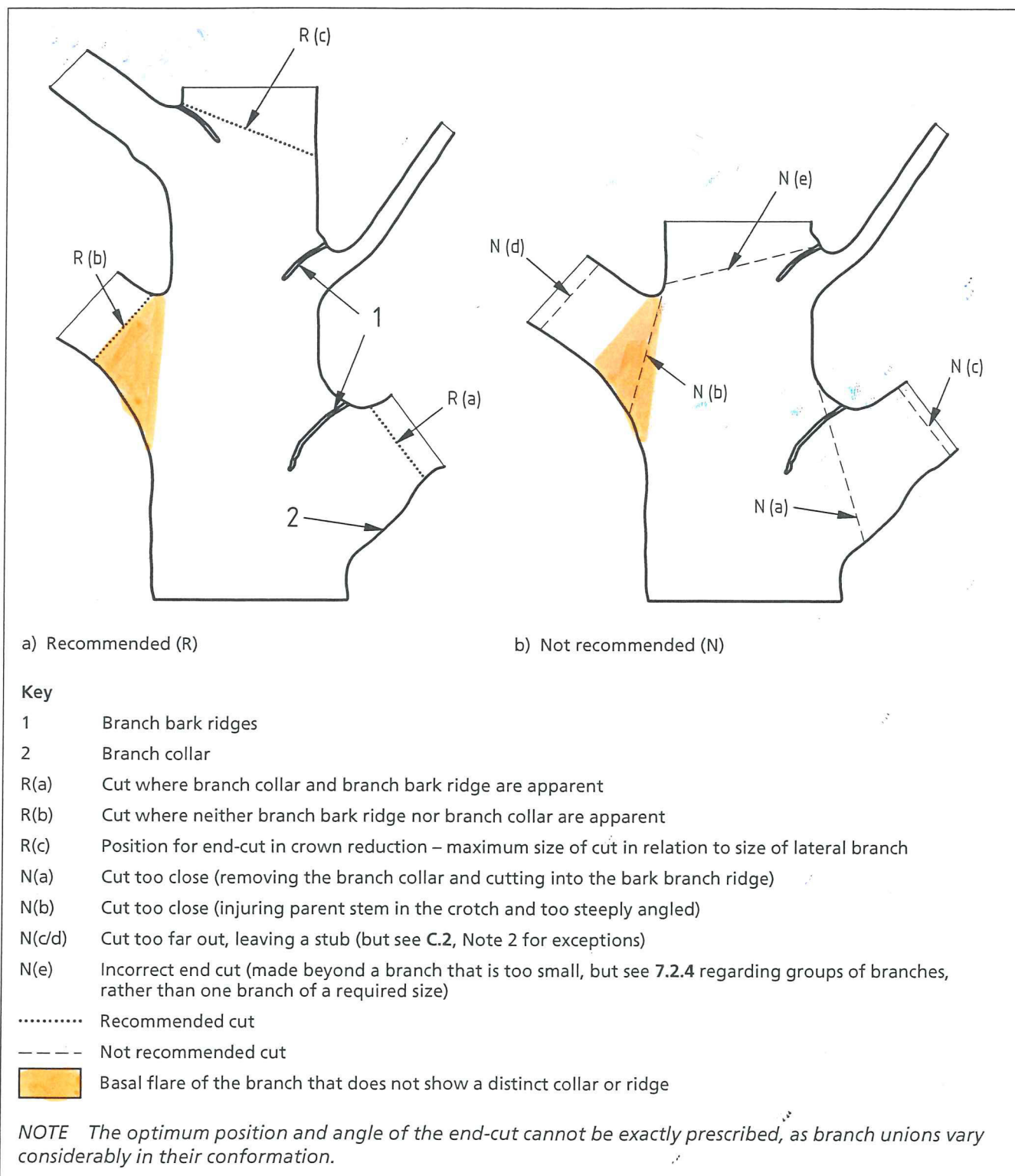


Figure 3 Crown lifting

