

Planning Officer: Simon Davis

Planning Application Ref: AW/28/19/PL

Location: Rear of 276 Aldwick Road, Aldwick, PO21 3QH

Description of works: Erection of 1 No. dwelling & associated works.

Comments on Application:

- The applicant has employed **Lizard Landscape Design Ltd** to prepare an Arboricultural Impact Assessment & Method Statement, ref.LLD1612-ARB-REP-001, 18th January 2019, along with a supporting Existing Tree Schedule and Tree Retention and Protection (TRP) Plan for this project.
- The Tree Survey data submitted accords with the requirements of BS5837:2012 and I am broadly in agreement with the Suitability for Retention category ratings applied.
- The relationship between ground levels at the proposed vehicle access and driveway with both adjacent areas of 'no-dig construction' has not been described in detail or shown on any cross-section drawing. The viability of this critical element of the development proposal must be revealed via civil engineering exercise, so we can be sure those trees retained will not suffer damage and that finished ground levels in a broader context will be acceptable. *Issue resolved. The provision of cross section drawings appears to demonstrate a viable scheme for no-dig construction which should be harmonious with surrounding ground levels and built structure.*
- Drainage and service-runs in and out of site have not been shown and so there remains a high probability of further root protection area incursion to satisfy those requirements. *Issue resolved. The plan drawing 'Location of Section Lines / Levels', dwg.no. LLD1612-ARB-DWG-003 shows multiple service routes outside of the root protection area of retained trees.*

Conclusions:

- The proposals as submitted should be achievable in arboricultural terms, although there is important information lacking (as described above), such that I could not lend this scheme my support as it stands.
- Furthermore, and notwithstanding a satisfactory submission of the above information, I would like to note for the record that I am uncomfortable with this level of intrusion into the nominal root protection area of established trees. The combined extent of ground protection and no-dig construction areas, as shown on the TRP plan is symptomatic of that intrusion. Whilst they propose recognised engineering solutions for working in close proximity to retained trees, it must be noted that that element is very ambitious and carries a high risk of accidental damage. It remains to be seen whether or not satisfactory ground levels can be achieved to implement the required level of tree protection. Adequate information has now been provided in support of the no-dig solution to root protection area incursion, necessary to provide vehicle access and hardstanding.
- There is also the proposed change to intensity of land-use around the new dwelling to consider if we are to appreciate the long-term as well as potential short-term impact on the ongoing health and vitality of retained trees. *Issue unresolved. There has been no reduction in building size, footprint, hardstanding area or intensity of land-use -- so the potential for harmful impact on retained trees remains the same.*
- I believe the vulnerability of trees and hedges to damage during the construction phase (however well-intentioned the scheme of tree protection) and the potential for longer-term pressures from increased ground compaction over tree root systems and a 'pressure to prune' - collectively present a risk to the enduring character of the area, in part defined by the presence of hedges and mature trees, most notable along the sites western boundary. It is difficult for me to sustain an Objection on arboricultural grounds as they have demonstrated it is achievable, although I remain uncomfortable with the potentially erosive effect it could have on the character of the area, for which it has been designated special status on account of the '*heavy, extremely attractive and mature landscaping*' (Supplementary Planning Document, Areas of Special Character – Description Review, Adopted September 2005). I must defer to the planning case officer on this issue, which has no doubt already been under consideration.

Recommendations:

- I register an **OBJECTION** to this scheme for the reasons stated above.
- I am now obliged to recommend this scheme for **APPROVAL** subject to the following conditions being applied:
- All activity at the site is to be carried out in strict accordance with: - **Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement, LLD1612-ARB-REP-001, Rev 01, Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology.**
- Before the site is occupied or any machinery is introduced to the site or demolition work or construction work or alterations to existing ground levels takes place a **PRE-COMMENCEMENT Site Meeting** is to take place between the Planning Authority's Tree Officer and the Arboricultural Expert representing the site owner(s) – at this meeting all protective fencing and ground protection measures will be inspected to verify they are 'Fit for Purpose' as required under British Standard 5837:2012 and have been erected and positioned exactly as shown on the **Tree Retention and Protection Plan, dwg.no. LLD1612-ARB-DWG-002, Rev 01, Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology.**
- A schedule of Site Monitoring/Supervision visits and Reporting Procedures prepared by an Arboricultural Expert will be required and their extent will be agreed on at the site meeting to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority's Tree Officer.
- If there is deemed to be a need for any Utility Service Route connections to bisect retained tree Root Protection Areas/Zones, then prior to their installation a Method Statement prepared by an Arboricultural Expert must be submitted that stipulates how this can be achieved without adverse impact on tree roots. Written approval and confirmation of acceptance of this Methodology must be issued before any works are commenced out on site.

Reasons: To comply with BS5837 and to ensure that retained trees are afforded due respect and appropriate levels of protection such that their ongoing health and vitality is not compromised, and they can continue to enhance the landscape and amenity of the area.

- All tree pruning considered essential to enable the agreed development must meet the requirements of BS3998:2010 Tree work – Recommendations:
- 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.

Reasons: In the interest of continued health and vitality of trees and to accord with current industry guidelines and sound arboricultural practice.

Mark Warwick

Tree Officer / Parks and Greenspace Team