

Planning Officer: Harry Chalk

Planning Application Ref: AW/316/21/T

Location: Stratton, 9 Kingsway, Aldwick, PO21 4DQ

Description of works: Fell and remove 2no. field maple trees and 1no. oak tree

Reasons given: Health and safety

Comments on Application:

Note: Tree numbers below (eg.T1) are for the sole purpose of interpreting this application (no tree reference numbers were provided) and have no relationship (intended or otherwise) with those referred to elsewhere, such as may be recorded on the original Tree Preservation Order.

T1 & T2 Field maple / *Acer campestre* Height: 5-10m Crown spread: 0-5m Age class: Mature

T3 Pedunculate oak / *Quercus robur* Height: 10-15m Crown spread: 5-10m Age class: Mature

- All trees are located within the expansive rear garden of the property and at a distance harmonious with dwellings. They are visible from neighbouring properties (the oak particularly so) and established constituents of a long-established boundary tree line.
- T1 and T2 are both showing signs of physiological decline and becoming structurally unsound from stem decay. They are fast becoming unviable for safe retention.
- T3 is a much larger tree than the maples and occupies an off-centre position along the rear boundary, also growing out of the S edge of the ditch. It appears to be in a fine physiological state with a relatively unmodified limb framework. I saw no obvious evidence of significant disease or structural defect to justify its removal.
- The applicant holds a view to the contrary which may indeed be correct, yet no physical evidence has been submitted in support of the proposal and is therefore anecdotal. It is unfortunate that at the time of my own inspection the weather was calm and so I could not observe any atypical movement at the stem base, such as reported.

Conclusions:

- The work proposed to T1 and T2 (maple) is justified on arboricultural grounds. There is limited scope for replacement planting as any tree of potential amenity value would struggle to establish beneath canopy of remaining trees. As such, we need not pursue replacement trees at this location but can take this opportunity to remind the applicant of the ecological value in standing deadwood and stump retention, wherever safe and practical to do so.
- T3 (oak) - The applicant has indicated concern about the stability of this tree but has not provided any physical evidence in support. My own ground-level visual assessment of the tree did not reveal any obvious signs of pathogen activity, structural defect or root-plate displacement; to suggest the tree could be structurally unsound and/or present an unacceptable level of risk for its location.
- For a tree of this age, stature, and apparent good health; a proposal to fell for the reason stated must be supported with evidence (e.g., ground disturbance, pronounced lean through to upper crown, video footage clearly showing atypical movement) to demonstrate the tree is most probably hazardous. If that evidence can be provided in support of a new application, it may be appropriate to propose crown reduction pruning instead of wholesale removal.

Recommendations:

- As it stands, I recommend **REFUSAL** for this application.

- **I would like the applicant to be invited to agree to revise their work proposal** (by removing T3 oak) as part of the current application so as not to incur further delay. Such work would go some way to addressing their concerns whilst preventing undue loss to the landscape.
-

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

Mark Warwick
Tree Officer / Parks and Greenspace Team