

Planning Officer: Miss Z Toppin

Planning Application Ref: **AW/332/20/T**

Location: **54 Pinehurst Park, Aldwick, Bognor Regis, PO21 3DX**

Description of works: **Reduce height and spread of 2no. poplar trees (G9) to 9m high by 2 m spread**

Reasons given: Excessive shade

Comments on Application:

T1 West - Western balsam poplar / *Populus trichocarpa* Approx. height: 11m Radial spread: 0-5m Age class: Mature

T2 East - Western balsam poplar / *Populus trichocarpa* Approx. height: 13m Radial spread: 0-5m Age class: Mature

- I have considered this application by means of a desktop review, using the information and plans submitted as well as online resources. It is essentially a re-submission of AW/153/20/T with amended work specification as advised.
- Both trees are the subject of TPO/P/1/78 (Group 9). Outwardly and from a distance they appeared to be in a fine physiological state at the time of my inspection (August 2020). They have previously been the subject of reduction pruning, involving stem truncation at around 9m height (c.2014).
- Further reduction pruning will be necessary throughout the remaining lifespan of these trees, to achieve a reasonable degree of structural integrity appropriate for their location.
- The applicant proposes crown reduction to improve light levels to properties although the majority of their crown spreads are to the north and their existing height is proportionate to their size and distance from dwellings. That said, they will be exerting considerable influence on ground conditions by virtue of their established and extensive root systems.
- The applicant has also indicated concern about the potential for these trees to fail. My own restricted ground-level visual assessment did not reveal any obvious signs of pathogen activity, structural defect or root-plate displacement to suggest either could be wholly structurally unsound and/or present an unacceptable level of risk for its location.

Conclusions:

- The proposal to reduce their overall height and spread with a view to restricting growth is in principle justified and consistent with previous works approved by the Local Planning Authority.
- While a temporary loss of aesthetic value is inevitable, satisfactory canopy renewal and recovery should occur if the work is undertaken to a high standard and at an appropriate time of year.

Recommendation:

- I recommend **CONSENT** for this application, 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.
- Part c) 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.

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

Advisory:

- The long-term vitality of these trees is best respected when significant pruning work such as proposed, is undertaken during the mid-winter (late-December to early-February) period. The work should only be undertaken during this period.
- Although not obviously a subject of dispute or contention, the applicant states that these trees may be under shared ownership by virtue of their having grown to be either side of a boundary line. In such cases, it is usually determined that where the majority of stem base exists on whatever side, pertains to ownership. If considered to be so, we are obliged to advise the applicant that any consent granted by the Local Planning Authority does not by association give authority to undertake the proposed work from/or cut back material to beyond the property boundary, without first seeking permission from the tree owner.

Mark Warwick
Tree Officer / Parks and Greenspace Team

Figure 2 Positions of final cuts

