

Planning Officer: Miss Z Toppin

Planning Application Ref: **AW/347/20/T**

Location: **4 Lucerne Court, Aldwick, PO21 4XL**

Description of works: **1no. ash tree (T1) - Crown lift to 2.5m-3m and reduce crown to height 13m and lateral spreads 8-9m**

Reasons given: i) Dominating garden ii) Prevent neighbouring gardens being excessively affected

Comments on Application:

Ash / *Fraxinus excelsior* Approx. height: 14m Radial spread: 7m Age class: Mature

- Outwardly this tree appears to be in a fine physiological state with a relatively unmodified and attractive upper crown profile. It is the dominant feature of the rear garden and creates a woodland effect; the ash's characteristically open crown allowing partial shade-loving plants to flourish.
- Although Chalara ash dieback is a confirmed threat locally, this tree does not exhibit any obvious symptoms nor have any been reported. It may be benefiting from its isolated position and/or some inherent resistance to disease.
- Neighbouring properties will be affected by this long-established tree's presence. There are many benefits associated with trees in such urban settings and I did not observe any excessive negative effect or actionable nuisance.
- Any problematic lower branches can be sympathetically pruned to provide adequate overhead clearance and distance from understorey vegetation, garden boundary fences/walls and outbuildings – without recourse to stress-imposing whole crown reduction work.

Conclusions:

- This tree requires careful management that respects its age and vulnerability to environmental changes and disease progression.
- The removal of low branches (*crown lifting*) to achieve a maximum of 2.5m clearance above ground level is reasonable and will not harm the health of the tree.
- There is no obvious arboricultural justification for the *crown reduction* work proposed. Such pruning would irrevocably spoil its natural looking form and may initiate vigorous regrowth throughout the crown interior.
- It may be appropriate in the future to allow a degree of 'containment pruning' should it attain substantially greater dimensions; for now, this tree appears to be a fine specimen of high public amenity value that can be satisfactorily managed without recourse to whole crown reduction work at this time.

Recommendations:

- As it stands, I recommend **REFUSAL** for this application.
- **I would like the applicant to be invited to agree to a revised proposal for lesser works** (such as described below) 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 a diminution of the tree's landscape and public amenity value:
 - *Crown lift to achieve a maximum of 2.5metres overhead clearance on all aspects, by carefully and selectively reducing/removing small diameter (<25mm) branches.*
 - *Reduce/remove selected small diameter branches to achieve a maximum of 1m clearance from understorey small trees, shrubs, boundary fences and other established structures.*

- 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 All Approved Works: -

- 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

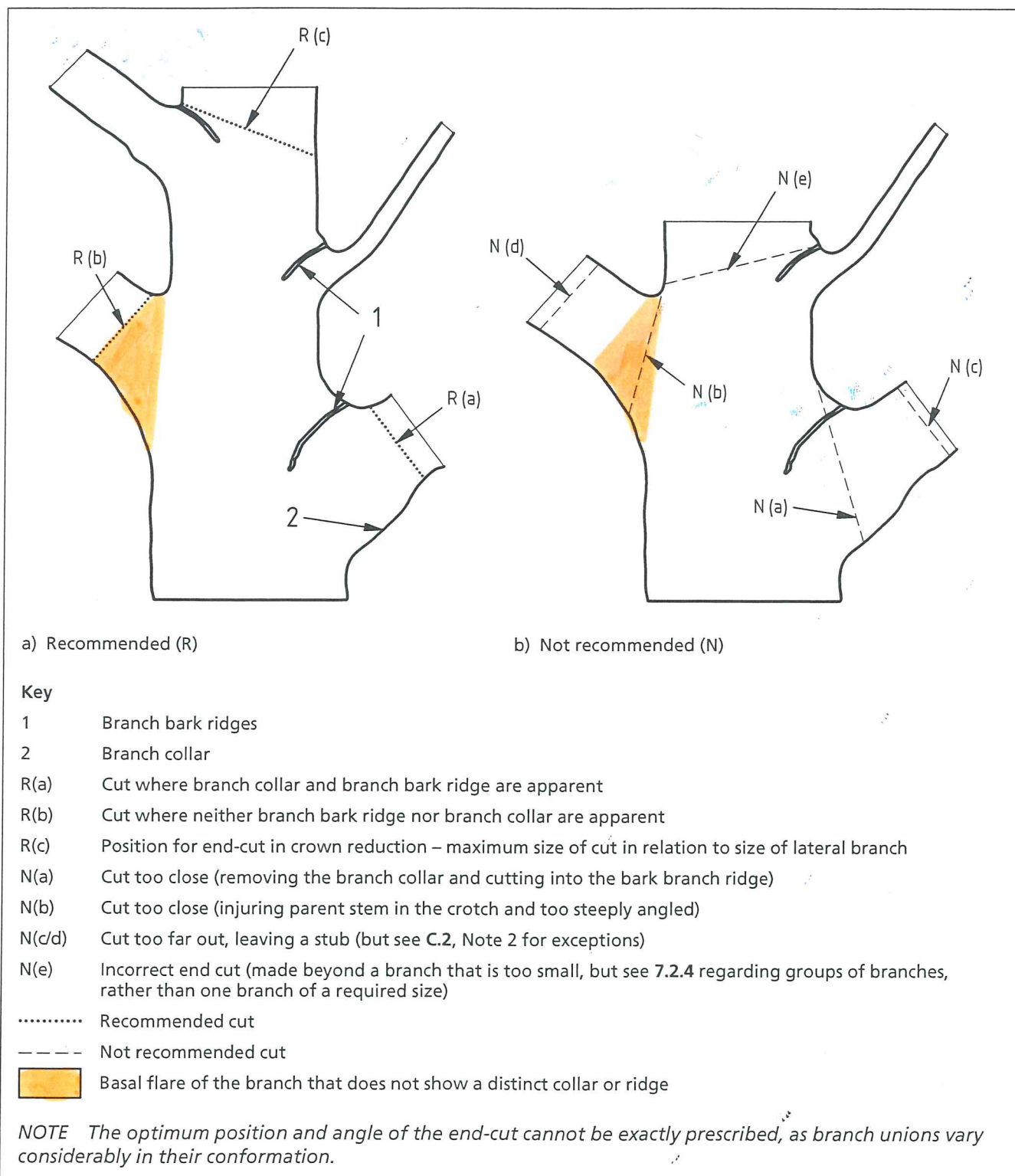


Figure 3 Crown lifting

