Arun District Council

Date inspected: 15th January 2021

Planning Officer: Miss Z Toppin

Planning Application Ref: **AW/350/20/T**

Location: **2 Heghbrok Way, Aldwick, PO21 2RF**

Description of works: **Reduce crown of 1no. oak tree (T1) to height 10m and spread 8-9m. Fell 1no. horse chestnut tree (T2).**

Reasons given: T2 Inhibiting uniform growth of T1. Encroaching over path and driveway

Comments on Application:

T1 Pedunculate oak / *Quercus robur*	Height: 10-15m	Radial spread: 5-10m	Age class: Early mature
T2 Horse chestnut / *Aesculus hippocastanum*	Height: 10-15m	Radial spread: 0-5m	Age class: Semi mature

- Both trees are prominent on the corner of the estate road and so visible to numerous properties and traffic, as well as users of the adjacent public open space (West Park).

- T1 – Has an attractive crown profile having only sustained low branch removal. Sadly, this tree is currently in a poor physiological state, although remains viable for safe retention subject to deadwood removal (exempt work). I saw no obvious cause of disease, characterised by a high percentage of dead branches and localised tip dieback/low upper crown density.

- T2 – Appears to be in a fine physiological state although has poor form and unlikely to be a satisfactory long-term prospect. Asymmetric crown profile due to domineering companion tree (T1). Two separate trees (one of which is twin stemmed) growing so close as to appear multi-stemmed.

- The removal of dead branches is an exception and does not require consent from the local planning authority.

- Branch clearance of adjacent highway surfaces and residential property is not obviously problematic and certainly not excessive. Should they become a problem in the future then an application can be made to sympathetically reduce selected branches so as to respect natural form.

Conclusions:

- It is unfortunate that neither tree is currently displaying long-term potential, although T1 is the best candidate for retention and so ought to be given all reasonable chance to recover.

- **T2** is a specimen of low value, that cannot be satisfactorily remediated by pruning to improve its amenity prospect and its removal could benefit the oak. **I can support this element of the application.**

- **T1** requires careful management that respects its vulnerability to environmental changes and disease progression. The proposal to reduce both the height and lateral spread on all aspects to such an extent exceeds the requirements of 'British Standard (BS3998:2010) Tree work – Recommendations' and would be likely to result in harm to the health and vitality of the tree. **I cannot support this element of the application.**

- There would be only a slight and temporary loss of visual amenity following the removal of T2. A replacement tree need not be sought on this occasion, as the removal of competition may assist the oak (T1) with its recovery. Should the oak deteriorate significantly or die, then the local planning authority can insist on a replacement oak following its removal (approved at application) to ensure no long-term landscape deficit.

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** (by removing the work proposal for T1) as part of the current application so as not to incur further delay.

- 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