

Planning Officer: Mr F Gardner

Planning Application Ref: **AW/38/20/TC**

Location: **68 The Drive, Aldwick, PJ02 14D**

Description of works: **Crown reduction to 1no. oak tree to height and spread 8 - 8.5m within the Craigweil House, Aldwick Conservation Area**

Reasons Given: 1. Excessive shade 2. Incompatible with size of garden

Comments on Application:

Pedunculate oak / *Quercus robur* Approx. height: 11m Average spread: 6m Age class: Mature

- **The above tree is the subject of a preservation Order (Bognor No.2)** as well as being in a Conservation Area. The TPO should be the primary consideration and it is important that we make that distinction clear to the applicant (although from their application form ((sect.5)) it seems they may already be aware), as significant implications around permitted actions will apply.
- It appears to be under significant physiological distress evidenced by; weak upper-crown shoot extension, epicormic growth response across limb and branch framework, dieback from several truncated scaffold limb ends and of small branches. This is symptomatic of root dysfunction, which may be related to recent (<5yrs) hard landscaping/construction work within its primary rooting area.
- It has previously been the subject of crown reduction work from which it has only been able to respond erratically; some pruning points have failed to develop any sustainable extension growth while others have attained 3metres. I suspect some of that will be associated with exposure to prevailing wind direction. Despite all that and in the absence of any obvious pathogen(s), being an oak, it is hanging-on tenaciously and still presents a suitably attractive crown profile.
- It grows at the front of the property and is highly visible from surrounding properties and to traffic (vehicular and pedestrian) accessing/exiting this part of the estate. It remains viable for safe, long-term retention despite its recent travails. As such, it has high public amenity value and certainly makes a positive contribution to the character of the area.
- Repeat operations such as now being asked for (albeit to a lesser extent and certainly not beyond the established knuckles) by the applicant will be necessary throughout the remaining lifespan of this tree, to achieve a reasonable degree of structural integrity appropriate for its location. That said, given its present condition I cannot envisage this being necessary for at least two years hence. In any event, the success of future applications for substantive pruning will be largely determined by the extent of new growth throughout the crown and associated improvements in vitality.
- The removal of dead branches is an exception and does not require permission.
- Overhead and lateral clearance of branches above garden and from built structures is adequate. The tree appears to be in proportion and harmony with the dwellings either side.

Conclusions:

- This tree requires careful management that respects its age and vulnerability to environmental changes and disease progression. The tree work proposed in the application has not been justified on arboricultural grounds.
- The proposal to reduce its height and lateral spread to the stated dimensions does not comply with 'British Standard (BS3998:2010) Tree work – Recommendations' and would be likely to result in harm to the health and vitality of the tree with large pruning wounds being formed as well as undermining its visual amenity value and impact in the landscape.

Recommendations:

- I recommend **REFUSAL** for this application.

Mark Warwick
Tree Officer / Parks and Greenspace Team