

CONSULTEE RESPONSE (Arun District Council - Arboriculturist)

Date of report: 27th April 2026

Reference: AW/42/26/PL

Proposal: Refurbishment of the existing community facility and a new single storey extension along the length of the existing courtyard space to provide specialist rooms with 16 No. solar panels on roof. This application is in CIL Zone 4 (Zero Rated) as other development.

Location: Rowland Rank Centre, Aldwick Road, Aldwick, PO21 3QQ

Case Officer: Miss K Welch

I have considered this application by means of a desktop review, using the information and plans submitted as well as online resources.

The applicants have employed Beechdown Tree Consultancy to prepare an Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) along with a Tree Protection Plan for this project.

The scheme involves the removal of a prominent tree (their ref. T2), subject of preservation order – TPO/AW/25/10. Justification provided; limited life expectancy and developing conflict with adjacent flint wall. The applicant's arboricultural consultant has noted the potential for tree retention in harmony with the development, although it would require an engineered foundation within the likely rooting zone.

In such circumstances, it is important to weigh the harms and benefits of the proposal and whether employing technical solutions to accommodate the tree is a reasonable demand.

There is limited scope for replanting with a tree of stature, given much of the property frontage is dedicated parking for users of the facility and likely to remain so out of necessity, particularly as capacity would increase. A new hedgerow of mixed native species along the west boundary, to replace H1, is a welcome enhancement although provides little amenity and cannot be preserved by a TPO.

Aldwick Woodland immediately north of the site is public space under the management of Arun District Council. The woodland is within area preservation order Bognor No.2, made in 1958. Trees overlapping the development from within the woodland are unaffected by this proposal.

The existing hard surface provides adequate ground protection for the construction phase and the AMS provides additional guidance should any excavation/enhancement be desired post-development.

Conclusions

The proposed loss of a healthy protected tree is significant and therefore harm will occur. The tree has limited useful life expectancy by virtue of its age and insufficient to justify the foreseeable risk of damage to an important built feature of the property.

The premature loss of such a tree would ordinarily demand a suitably prominent replacement to ultimately compensate for the loss of visual amenity. Here there is no obvious opportunity to do so and therefore if the planning balance tilts in favour of approval for the scheme, we must accept the harm incurred. Despite this unfortunate outcome, were we to receive a stand-alone application to fell the birch tree on grounds it is likely to cause damage, the reasonable position in my view would be to grant consent.

A purpose-built tree pit within the existing hard surface frontage, to accommodate one selected standard of the types proposed in the tree report, would be problematic and invite considerable nuisance at near-maturity, if indeed it was able to tolerate such harsh surroundings (non-porous hard surface).

Recommendation

I see no reason to object to this proposal on arboricultural grounds. If approving the application, please include the following condition:

Condition 1

Part a)

All activity at the site is to be carried out in strict accordance with: - Tree Survey & Report, Beechdown Tree Consultancy, ref. B/0645/26, 23rd March 2026

Part b)

If there is deemed to be a need for any Utility Service Route connections to bisect retained tree Root Protection Areas/Zones, then prior to their installation a Method Statement prepared by an Arboricultural Expert must be submitted that stipulates how this can be achieved without adverse impact on tree roots. Written approval and confirmation of acceptance of this Methodology must be issued before any works are commenced out on site.

Reasons: To comply with BS5837:2012 and to ensure that retained trees are afforded due respect and appropriate levels of protection such that their ongoing health and vitality is not compromised, and they can continue to enhance the landscape and amenity of the area.

Mark Warwick

Tree Officer

Environment and Climate Change



PL- Consultation- Tree Officers response



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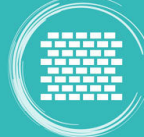
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From: Mark Warwick <Mark.Warwick@arun.gov.uk>
Sent: 27 April 2026 15:30
To: Planning.Responses <Planning.Responses@arun.gov.uk>
Cc: Kathryn Welch <Kathryn.Welch@arun.gov.uk>
Subject: AW/42/26/PL

Please find attached my report for your consideration.

Regards,

Mark Warwick
Tree Officer, Environment and Climate Change

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