

Planning Officer: Simon Davis

Planning Application Ref: AW/43/18/OUT

Location: 261 Aldwick Road, Aldwick

Description of works: Outline application with some matters reserved for the demolition of existing dwelling and erection of two pairs of semi-detached houses and associated works

Comments on Application:

- I refer to your request for comment, following receipt of further information submitted, as requested - in respect of the impact of this proposed development on trees both on and off the site. The applicant has employed **Lizard Landscape Design Ltd** to prepare an Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) & Method Statement (AMS) along with a supporting Tree Schedule and 'Tree Retention and Tree Protection Plan' (TPP) for this project.
- The Tree Survey data so far as submitted accords with the requirements of BS5837:2012, although there are two notable omissions; namely two maturing sweet chestnut trees in the front garden of 259a Aldwick Road, the subject of a Tree Preservation Order (TPO/1/98/AW) and listed on the corresponding schedule as T1 and T2. [Resolved](#).
- T1 and T4 as shown on the **TPP dwg.no. LLD-ARB-DWG-002** are also the subject of an Order – TPO/AW/152/10, T-493 and TPO/AW/41/10, T-492 respectively. T4 has been incorrectly identified as a white poplar (*Populus alba*). A small matter; but for the record, it is a hybrid black poplar (*Populus x canadensis*).
- This development were it to proceed has the 'potential' to cause significant harm and irreversible damage to large trees of high amenity value. It is reassuring to see that they have been afforded adequate respect during the design stage and noted for retention - as they can undoubtedly add value to the development whilst preserving the mature high tree cover characteristic of this area.
- Crown reduction proposed for T04 (a fine and large example of oak) is simultaneously described as 'overall' and 'to the eastern edge of the tree canopy by 1.00 metres'. While the logical assumption is that only branches extending laterally to the east are proposed for pruning, the terminology used here leaves some room for misinterpretation and result in inappropriate work being undertaken. A reduction in top tree height usually occurs during 'overall crown reduction' – this is neither necessary nor desirable and would irrevocably diminish the tree's visual amenity.

Conclusions:

- Ongoing supervision by a consultant arboriculturist throughout the duration of works is going to be **essential** if the necessary levels of protection are to be achieved. I am not presently satisfied that this has been demonstrated.
- This is generally a well-intentioned plan with suitable methods of construction, although some important elements need clarification for me to be confident that the scheme will effectively protect trees of high amenity value. I list those in the recommendations below. If satisfied with the response to those, I could lend this scheme my support.

Recommendations:

- I look forward to receiving a complete on/off site tree survey so that it fully accords with the requirements of BS5837:2012 and details mitigation measures where any RPA incursion is proposed (re: 259a Aldwick Road). [Resolved](#).
- Clarification/provision of the following items:
 - A site layout/construction plan must be provided to clearly define where delivery and storage of materials will occur and plant and compounds are to be located, throughout all phases of the development. [UNRESOLVED but can be resolved at conditional pre-commencement site meeting](#).
 - A schedule of planned visits by the site owner's appointed arboricultural consultant at all key stages of development be submitted (e.g. vegetation clearance, tree pruning, site setting-up/compound, installation of all construction exclusion zones and ground protection measures, ground clearance to facilitate/and installation of 'No-dig' cellular confinement system, removal of existing hard-surfacing, removal/temporary alteration of tree protection measures at any time) with

adequate opportunity for joint inspection by the Local Planning Authority Tree Officer. **UNRESOLVED but can be conditioned.**

- Removal of the word 'overall' from all report/plan references to tree work specification (re: crown reduction), so as to provide absolute clarity for any tree-work contractor (arborist). **Resolved.**
- As it stands, I must register an **OBJECTION** as there is insufficient detail/provision of information to ensure significant trees will be adequately protected during the demolition and construction phases.

Ensuring adequate protection for retained trees at this site is an ambitious undertaking and while achievable in theory, it presents a level of risk for tree damage that I am not entirely comfortable with. These are important trees locally and of high amenity value so should be afforded special consideration.

I am especially concerned with the 'No-dig' Construction methodology as described in the AIA/AMS, 21/June/18, Rev 01 (p13, para. 4.29) which states that existing soft ground layers within Root Protection Areas are to be removed so as to provide the necessary construction depth and to meet with existing hard surface levels. This is not a 'No-dig' Construction.

The extent and depth of proposed ground level alteration has not been provided in detail or shown on any cross-section drawing, so we cannot be sure these trees will not suffer significant damage. RPA incursion for this scheme is substantial and mitigation measures need to be explicit and provide confidence that important trees will be adequately protected.

If they can resolve the above concern to our satisfaction, by way of demonstrating how a true 'No-dig' Construction can be achieved across the site at those three areas identified on their Tree Retention and Protection Plan, dwg.no.LLD-ARB-DWG-002, Rev00, 21.06.18 and clearly write this into their AIA/AMS and to correspond with the TPP; then I would be able to remove my objection and recommend approval subject to the following conditions being applied:

- All activity at the site is to be carried out in strict accordance with: - **Arboricultural Impact Assessment Report and Method Statement, Ref: LLD1425-ARB-REP-001, Rev 02 yet to be submitted (Lizard Landscape Design Ltd).**
- Before the site is occupied or any machinery is introduced to the site or demolition work or construction work or alterations to existing ground levels takes place a **PRE-COMMENCEMENT Site Meeting** is to take place between the Arun DC Tree Officer and the Arboricultural Expert representing the site owners – at this meeting all protective fencing will be inspected along with ground protection measures – they will be assessed to verify that they are 'Fit for Purpose' as required under British Standard 5837:2012 and have been erected and positioned exactly as shown on the **Tree Retention and Protection Plan ref: LLD-ARB-DWG-002, Rev00, 21.06.18.**
- A schedule of Site Monitoring/Supervision visits and Reporting Procedures prepared by an Arboricultural Expert will be required and their extent will be agreed on at the above site meeting to the satisfaction of the Arun DC Tree Officer.
- 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 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.

- 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
- 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.

Mark Warwick
Tree Officer / Parks and Greenspace Team