

Planning Officer: Charlotte Easton
Planning Application Ref: AW/62/19/T
Location: 12 Alexander Close, Aldwick, Bognor Regis, PO21 4PS
Description of works: Crown reduction 2.5m to 1 No. beech tree
Reasons Given: Close proximity to dwelling

Comments on Application:

Beech / *Fagus sylvatica* Approx. height: 16m Average spread: 8m Age class: Mature

- This tree appears to be outwardly healthy and stable. It is unfortunate that scaffold limbs growing low on its southern aspect have been so crudely truncated – it is otherwise of fine form.
- The upper limb and branch framework has achieved good symmetry and presents an attractive crown profile, albeit on an imperfect but nonetheless strong main stem.
- It has significant influence over neighbouring gardens to the rear of both 12 and 10 Alexander Close but not so as to be excessive or intolerable. It is a large tree with a full and spreading crown; visible from numerous properties and to users of the public highway (footway and carriageway), as such it has public amenity value.
- The applicant proposes crown reduction principally to achieve adequate clearance of built property, although this will have the effect also of restricting its growth potential and reducing seasonal ‘nuisance’ from leaf fall.

Conclusions:

- This tree requires careful management that respects its age and vulnerability to environmental changes and disease progression.
- The applicant proposes a potential 2.5metre reduction of top height and lateral spread. If the full extent of meterage is applied on all aspects this would exceed the recommendations in British Standard 3998:2010 – Tree Work and represent a damaging loss of crown volume.
- I acknowledge that it may not be reasonable to allow this tree to achieve its full growth potential and a degree of ‘containment pruning’ could therefore be appropriate; it is a tree of public amenity value that can be satisfactorily managed without recourse to such extensive crown reduction work at this time.
- I am unable to concur with the reasons stated as being sufficient to justify the work now proposed. .
- The tree is a significant feature in the local landscape and appears to be in adequately sound and healthy condition. The tree surgery proposed in the application would result in excessive reduction of the tree's landscape impact and undue detriment to the visual amenities of the locality.

Recommendations:

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

Advisory:

- I would like to see the applicant submit a revised work specification such as detailed below, which would seem to address their concerns whilst preventing a diminution of the tree’s landscape and public amenity value:
 - Crown lift by removing no larger than secondary branches (maximum diameter of 50mm) to achieve a maximum of 6metres overhead clearance on all aspects.

- Reduce back branches on west aspect of tree only, to achieve a maximum of 4metres clearance from built 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 conditions:

Conditions To Be Applied to Approved Work: -

- 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.

- *See also the standard pruning guidance notes issued with the consent letter*

Mark Warwick
Tree Officer / Parks and Greenspace Team

Figure 3 Crown lifting

