

Planning Officer: Mr D J Vick

Planning Application Ref: AW/70/19/T

Location: Holly Lodge, 3 Barrack Lane, Aldwick, PO21 4BY

Description of works: Crown lift by 1m, Crown reduction by 3m & Crown thin 30% to 2No. holm oak trees. Crown reduction by 3m & Crown thin 30% to 1No. sycamore tree. Reduce split bough by 2.25m to 1No. holm oak tree

Reasons Given: To improve natural light levels into adjacent property and gardens

Comments on Application:

T1 & T3 Holm oak / <i>Quercus ilex</i>	Average height: 8m	Average spread: 3m	Age class: Early mature
T2 Sycamore / <i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	Approx. height: 10m	Average spread: 3m	Age class: Early mature

- For the purposes of reviewing this application; all three trees can be satisfactorily considered for generic comment, as follows:
- Outwardly and from a distance they appear to be healthy and stable. Despite their history of heavy and regular crown reduction they have 'grown-on well' (particularly T2) and their collective canopy makes a useful visual contribution. Canopy height, spread and overhead clearance is proportionate and not obviously problematic in relation to its surroundings.
- I did not observe a split limb/branch although my view was restricted to the eastern aspects. If such a limb presents an immediate risk of harm to person/property then it would qualify as an exception and does not require our consent prior to it being 'made safe'.

Conclusions:

- The removal of dead or imminently dangerous branches is an exception and does not require permission, although in respect of the latter those works should only be to the extent that the immediate threat to person(s) or property is abated.
- Repeat crown reduction pruning operations will be necessary throughout the remaining life-span of these trees, to achieve a reasonable degree of structural integrity appropriate for their location. The proposal to reduce overall height and spread with a view to restricting their growth is consistent with previous applications (approved by the Local Planning Authority) although I find the timing of this latest proposal to be premature in the management cycle and likely to be harmful to the trees ongoing health and vitality. There is insufficient extension of new growth since the last major pruning operations (c2015).
- Crown reduction* and *Crown thinning* work has not been justified on arboricultural grounds. In respect of the latter, such work rarely provides a benefit to the tree and often only a short-term increase in light levels. Furthermore, such considerable loss of crown volume during a one-off operation will impose undue physiological distress and may compromise their long-term position in the landscape.

Recommendations:

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

Advisory:

- I would recommend the applicant re-apply for the crown lifting and crown reduction elements of this application in 18-24months from now, at which time I would expect the subject trees to have achieved sufficient canopy renewal to sustain repeat operations.

Mark Warwick
Tree Officer / Parks and Greenspace Team