

Planning Officer: Simon Davis

Planning Application Ref: AW/71/18/HH

Location: 36 Kingsway, Aldwick

Description of works: Demolition of existing ground floor extensions to front of property, construction of a single storey rear extension and reworking of existing external hard and soft landscaping. This application affects the character and appearance of the Craigweil House Conservation Area.

Comments on Application:

- The applicants have employed **The Landscape Partnership** to prepare a Tree Survey, Arboricultural Impact Assessment & Method Statement along with the following plans. Dwg.Nos 601/2 for this project. The latter of the two plans shows the position of Tree Protective Fencing and in relation to the proposed site layout.
- The Tree Survey data mostly accords with the requirements of BS5837:2012 and I agree with the retention category ratings but there is a significant omission; namely the absence of Root Protection Area (RPA) measurements from the tree survey schedule or elsewhere in the AIA. This element of tree survey data is fundamental to achieve adequate tree protection.
- Of specific interest is T5 (horse chestnut), the subject of an Order (TPO/AW/5/16) and listed as T-1 on the associated Schedule. I measured its stem diameter at 1.5m height to be 895mm and not the recorded 800mm. This may seem a small matter but recognising the ideal RPA is significant in the context of this development proposal - which I return to later in more detail.
- The AIA (para.6.3) proposes the removal of H4 Leyland cypress, a healthy and established evergreen screen to the front of the property. These are not worthy of an Order to ensure their preservation although I leave the relative merit of the proposal to be determined by the planning officer when considering the wider aesthetic considerations of the development proposal.
- The suggested re-location of T1-T3 incl. seems unnecessary to achieve adequate sightlines for any driveway access, as retained trees can be progressively 'crown lifted' (carefully selected removal of low branches) over time, as the trees gain height. They currently represent a viable long-term ornamental feature. The transplanting of T2 to a nearby location (to facilitate the new driveway access – see Recommendations) would be more appropriate, if the necessary permissions are obtained.
- The removal of T11 is acceptable in any event, being as it is of limited value and does not contribute to the character of the area – so ought not to be a complicating factor for any development proposal.
- In respect of T5, large roots can be seen tracking for considerable distance alongside the kerb-edging in both directions and there is little if any evidence of root-related heave/disruption to the adjacent concrete formed carriageway surface. There is evidence of what seems likely to have been repair/servicing of underground utility apparatus in close proximity to the tree.
- Several other large trees in the same verges of Queensway have adopted a similar rooting pattern, which reinforces my view that ground conditions beneath the road surface have impeded fine root development on this aspect of T5. It is naturally difficult to establish the precise extent of a tree's root system under such conditions, but with significant and aged trees there must be a shared tendency to afford greater protection where doubt persists and this should be reflected in the RPA.

Conclusions:

- The arboricultural survey information and associated documents/plans provided is well-intentioned and attempts to demonstrate adequate regard and respect for the tree population at and immediately around the site, but importantly fails to make an allowance for the likely impeded root development on the east aspect of T5.

- As it stands, the location of the proposed second driveway access construction is likely to impact severely on the root system of T5 with damaging consequences, such that it could decline rapidly.

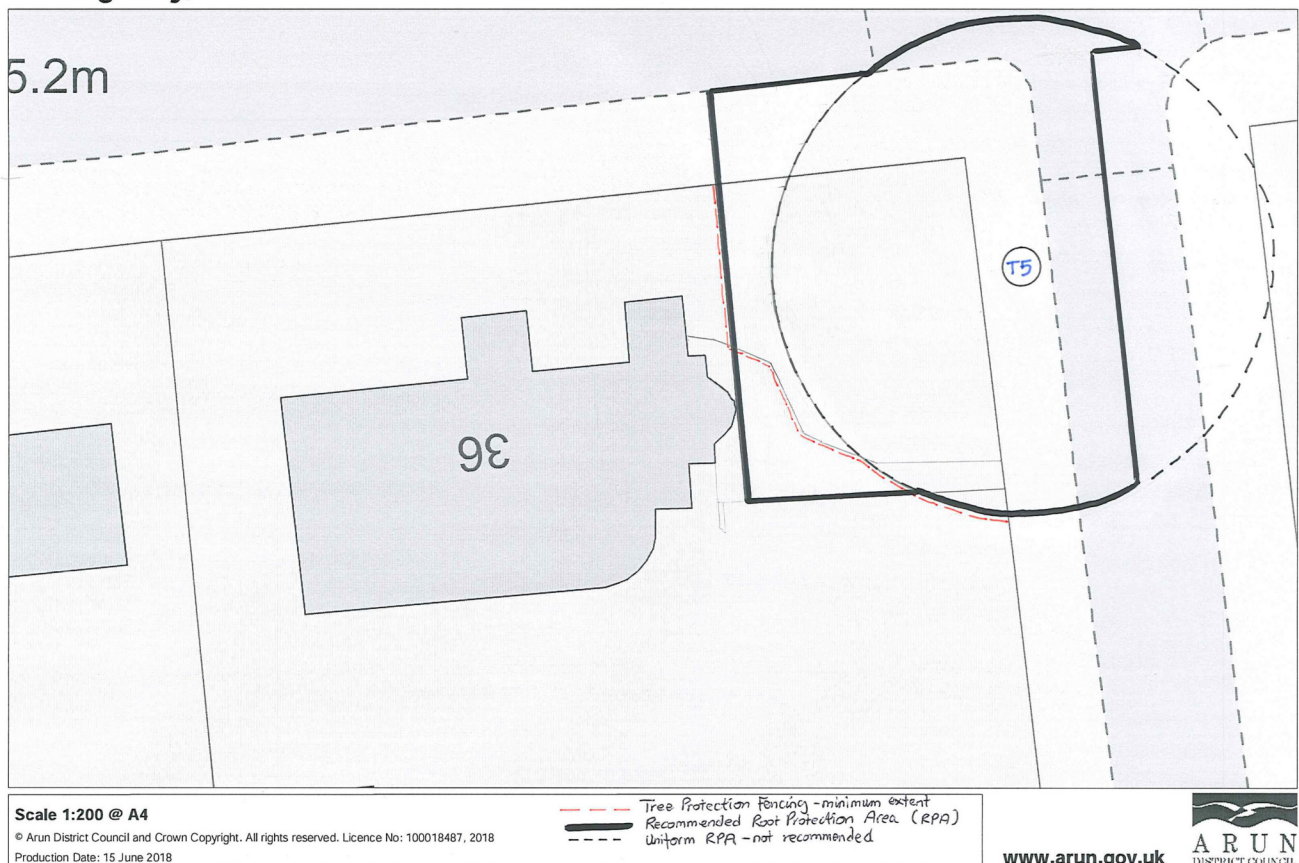
Recommendations:

- As it stands, I must raise an **OBJECTION** to this application in its current form.
- RPA measurements (radial spread and area) must be added to the tree survey schedule to inform the process.
- I would need to see a revised and asymmetric RPA for T5 that adequately compensates for the impediment to root growth as described earlier, before I could consider lending this scheme my full approval. This will require the re-positioning of the second driveway access further west; an alternative 'No-dig' method of construction in the proposed position would demand ground level changes that are unlikely to be acceptable to the applicant.
- I attach an indicative plan showing the desired RPA outcome for T5 to be adopted in a revised tree protection plan drawing, which can better inform a design. If necessary, I would be happy to meet the applicant's agent to discuss the methodology and measurements that support this plan.

Mark Warwick

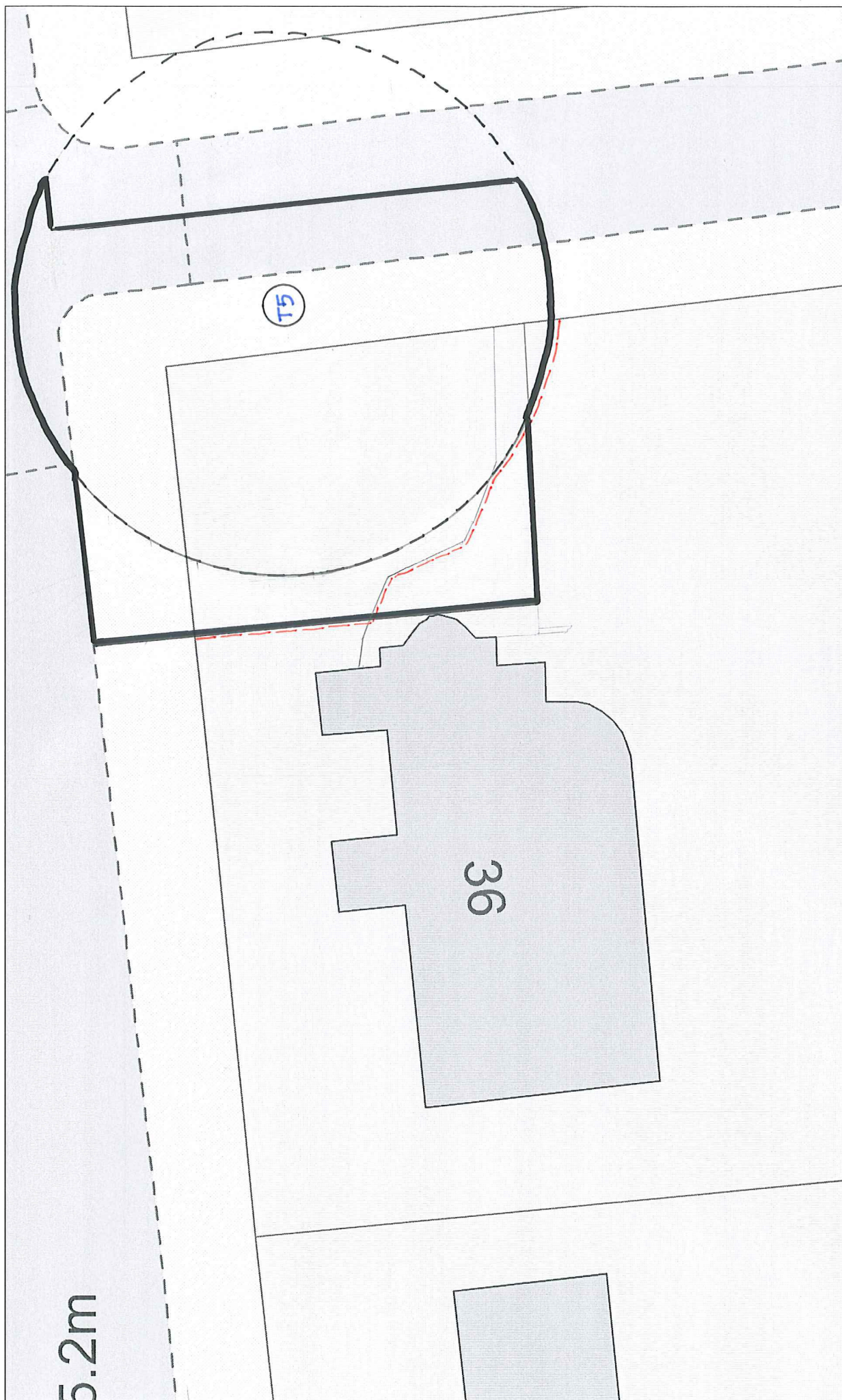
Tree Officer / Parks and Greenspace Team

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5.2m



- Tree Protection Fencing - minimum extent
- Recommended Root Protection Area (RPA)
- Uniform RPA - not recommended

Scale 1:200 @ A4

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