

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. **This was accepted in principle by all parties concerned and informs the revised AIA & AMS.**

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. The greater measurement of 895mm has now been recognised and informs the revised RPA (polygon). The agreed RPA broadly follows the indicative plan below but rejects the irregular element over carriageway in Kingsway and compensates with a comparable area of extension to the south – which I am able to support. The mutually agreeable RPA is detailed on the **AIA/AMS drawing no.602 – Rev B**.
- 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. All parties have agreed that ground level changes necessary to accommodate the proposed ‘No-dig’ solution within the curtilage of the property are achievable and tolerable. As such the original proposed location of the new driveway access is acceptable. I accept the specification as detailed in **Cellweb Section – Tree Root Protection drawing no. GS-CW-BP-75** is adequate for its intended use.
- I attach an indicative plan showing the desired RPA outcome for T5 to be adopted in a revised 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. Site meeting with Arboricultural Consultant, Architect and Residents held on 3rd July 2018.
- I have two minor outstanding concerns which ought to be easily overcome, but nonetheless should be reflected in a revised AIA/AMS:
 - I request confirmation that the area of ‘No-dig’ is undisturbed and adequately protected (it lies within the RPA) at the outset and immediately prior to installation of the cellweb construction layer. The ground protection measures necessary to achieve this should be determined by the project arboriculturist, with reference to the recommendations made in BS5837:2012, section 6.2.3.
 - Paragraph 8.1 of the AIA report should be amended so that it does not support the stripping of soil within the ‘No-dig’ area and explicitly states such practice is confined only to the verge outside the curtilage of the property.

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- I am able to remove my objection and recommend **APPROVAL** for this scheme, subject to the above concerns being addressed to my satisfaction and the following conditions being applied:

All construction works are to be carried out in strict accordance with:-

Tree Survey, Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Arboricultural Method Statement Report, prepared by the Landscape Partnership, March 2018 (revised July 2018), including Tree Protection Plan dwg.no. **AIA/AMS drawing no.602 – Rev B**. and **Cellweb Section – Tree Root Protection dwg no. GS-CW-BP-75**.

Prior to any construction works taking place or the introduction of any machinery and plant to the site, the following issues must be resolved to our satisfaction:-

- 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 and have been erected and positioned exactly as shown on the **Tree Protection Plan ref: AIA/AMS drawing no.602 – Rev B**
 - 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 site meeting to the satisfaction of the Arun DC Tree Officer.
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I had not initially considered the methodology/materials to be employed during the proposed construction of white rendered pillars either side of the (new) east driveway entrance.

This feature is referred to in the Design and Access Statement and best illustrated in plan drawing C0019-P215G. It is not referred to in any version of the main Arboricultural Impact Assessment document. Presumably omitted initially, as excavation was not deemed to reside within the RPA of T5.

Following revision of the RPA, as agreed between all parties – excavation to facilitate construction of the eastern pillar will occur within the new RPA. As such, there will need to be some reference to methodology and inclusion of soil/root protection measure to limit the effects on tree health.

If the application as it stands is granted consent, then the general principles stated within the AIA relating to tree root pruning can be deemed adequate. There remains a high risk of harmful soil contamination if as expected concrete is used to form an adequate footing for the pillar. I recommend we seek the following addition to their AMS:

- ***The excavation for and construction of; footings for the eastern pillar (driveway access) within the RPA of T5, will be undertaken with care so as to avoid unnecessary damage to tree roots. Only hand-digging is permitted, and of sufficient depth and width so far as is necessary. Leachate from curing concrete can be toxic to tree roots therefore all pits are to be lined with impervious membrane before pouring concrete.***

Mark Warwick

Tree Officer / Parks and Greenspace Team

36 Kingsway, Aldwick

