

**Planning Officer:** Raymond Cole

**Planning Application Ref:** BE/103/19/RES

**Location:** Land west of New Barn Lane, Bersted, PO21 5DN

**Description of works:** Approval of reserved matters following the grant of BE/77/16/OUT and BE/40/18/PL for 50no. residential units with associated roads, drainage & other related infrastructure

**Comments on Application:**

- The applicants have employed ACD Environmental to prepare an Arboricultural Impact Assessment & Method Statement along with a Tree Protection Plan for this project.
- The Tree Survey data is comprehensive and accords with the requirements of BS5837:2012. I agree with the retention category ratings for on and off-site trees.
- There are mostly off-site trees to consider, the site being an open field bordered by trees and hedgerow on all sides. The dominant trees are crack willow of mature age class in condition varying from healthy and vigorous to early decline and partial collapse. All trees around the site appear to have been given adequate room by this layout so as to fully respect and preserve their nominal root protection areas, although some facilitation crown pruning will be necessary to achieve satisfactory clearance. None of that is problematic or unduly harmful to the character of the area.
- In respect of the proposed site layout, I make the following comments/observations:
  - There is ample opportunity to create accessible and connected open space within the site that sits comfortably with the wider landscape. That would ensure the established tree-lined perimeter and associated understorey can be sustained, adding permanent value for those within the development and screening from exterior perspectives. The approved layout at Outline stage seems to reflect this aspiration, the latter at reserved matters here does not.
  - While of undoubted landscape and ecological value, the prevalence of crack willow ought to be a primary influence on layout. Not least, as they have a propensity to shed or undergo fracture of large limbs and branches – indeed their strategy for colonisation along waterways, as here, is partly dependant on their ability to root from collapsed material. Plots 14 & 18 are in my view unfortunately located, as occupiers will understandably perceive a safety threat from uninhibited tree growth and endure seasonal nuisance from falling debris and leaves.
  - Consideration must also be given to nominal root protection areas, anticipated future growth (root and branch) and high-water demand of these willow (*Salix fragilis*), when considering the location of any new drainage features/infrastructure and the necessary easement around the same, as well as any buffer zones (see drainage engineers recommendations).
  - The absence of footway around the site is unfortunate. What was originally proposed in that regard seems highly desirable, achievable and could even be constructed using a ‘no-dig’ method to both protect underlying soil structure/roots and the construction itself – as well as elevating it slightly above existing ground which may be at risk of frequent saturation.

**Conclusions:**

- I am concerned for this much diminished plan for green infrastructure connectivity and the loss of wildlife and other ecological benefits that would inevitably flow from that.
- There appears to be absence of any approved drainage strategy for the site. This fundamental element of the design ought to be addressed to our satisfaction in association with layout proposals, so that we are not subsequently held hostage to flood mitigation measures which could then impact heavily on retained trees/landscape plans/open space provision.

- I would hope to see a revised layout which address the above shortcomings, but if you are minded to approve the scheme as it stands, then I can provide you with some bespoke conditions to help achieve compliance with their own arboricultural reports and plans.

**Recommendations:**

- The above issues around green infrastructure/open-space connectivity/drainage strategy and long-term tree constraints should be better addressed within a revised layout, that upholds the higher-level development principles such as which underpinned the earlier proposal in support of OUTLINE application.
- As it stands, I must register an **OBJECTION** to these proposals, although expect this to be easily overcome with a more satisfactory layout.

Mark Warwick  
Tree Officer / Parks and Greenspace Team