

Planning Officer: Ms Myer

Planning Application Ref: BE/148/20/OUT

Location: Nursery Fields Land to the North of Chalcraft Lane, West Bersted, PO21 5TS

Description of works: Outline application for all matters reserved, with the exception of site access, to provide up to 225 residential units with associated infrastructure, open space and vehicular and pedestrian access. This application affects a Public Right of Way

Comments on Application:

- I have considered this application by means of a desktop review, using the information and plans submitted as well as online resources. Previous consideration from site (June 2020) and familiarity with surrounding areas provides further insight to the proposal.
- The applicants have employed A.T. Coombes Associates Ltd. to prepare a Preliminary Arboricultural Impact Assessment inclusive of Tree Constraints Plans, for this project. The Tree Survey data is comprehensive and accords with the requirements of BS5837:2012. I am broadly in agreement with the retention category ratings for on and off-site trees.
- The above report was prepared following field survey work undertaken 29/May/2020. Recommendation was made to carry out safety-related tree pruning and clearance. I am unsure if this has been carried out, and while exempt from any existing Statutory Protection (Tree Preservation Order) I draw attention to a recently authorised TPO which the applicant and their project arboriculturist should be made aware of for future reference.
- In respect of site layout as indicated on the Illustrative Landscape Masterplan, BER_S1_005.1, October 2020, I make the following specific comments:
 - I defer to our Landscape and Leisure Officer in respect of how the site relates to the wider strategic housing allocation (Land W of Bersted) and ensuring green/blue infrastructure connectivity, enhancement of wildlife corridors and subsequent planting proposals – although am encouraged by the landscape/buffer zones around the site and their relationship to higher value trees and hedgerow.
 - The position of new access routes in/out of the site must be sympathetically positioned to protect higher value trees and hedgerow, with appropriate compensatory planting introduced nearby. Any planned enhancement of existing Public Rights of Way should be discouraged where it seeks to compact or raise existing ground levels. Where necessary, application to seek re-alignment of any PROW to avoid disturbance of root protection areas (RPAs) and increased footfall beneath the canopy of emerging veteran trees which inevitably leads to damaging hazard abatement pruning work or felling, must be initiated at the earliest opportunity.
 - I see no obvious problem with the proposed location of the main access to site.
- General principles of design layout to be considered
 - Careful consideration should be given to the intended land use beneath existing canopy of established trees and the potential for further tree growth (root and crown extension). With such a large and open site to work with I would expect evolving layout proposals to place great emphasis on eliminating future 'pressure to prune' of retained trees. Furthermore, there would need to be a compelling argument in favour of any Root Protection Area incursion as this site clearly lends itself to a harmonious design that avoids any direct interference with established trees of current and future landscape value. This is especially relevant where there are trees of high amenity, landscape and potential heritage value (which qualify for statutory protection), as is the case here.
 - Trees that provide high visual amenity should be made focal points both within any development and from beyond, not obscured by built form; in addition to allocating sufficient area of undisturbed ground around their ultimate root and crown spreads.
 - I draw attention to the nominal root protection areas (RPA) of retained trees and their growth potential as obvious constraints to the siting of any SUDS (e.g. attenuation pond) or introduction of subterranean utility apparatus.
 - Any improvements to existing or creation of new watercourses within or adjacent the RPA of preserved trees to be fully considered, details provided in advance and to our satisfaction. Where there is a significant risk of damage to those trees arising from such operations, then an alternative strategy should be proposed.

Conclusions:

- The principle of development as described is certainly achievable without undue detriment to retained on and off-site trees. The Illustrative Masterplan is encouraging from an arboricultural perspective, no doubt informed by the quality submission from the project arboriculturist. As proposals around layout evolve, we should expect the design team to uphold the higher-level development principles promoted within our Supplementary Planning Documents: Arun Design Guide (emerging) and Arun District Public Open Space, Playing Pitches and Built Facilities.
- I see no reason to object to these outline proposals on arboricultural grounds.

Recommendation:

- If this comes back in as a full and detailed application it will need to be supported by an **Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement Report** inclusive of a **Tree Protection Plan** defining which trees are to be retained and which trees are to be removed and how they would propose to protect the retained trees and if necessary mitigate any adverse impact on the root systems of these trees – thus complying with the recommendations of BS5837:2012 – Trees In Relation to Construction.

Mark Warwick

Tree Officer / Parks and Greenspace Team