

CONSULTEE RESPONSE (Council's arboriculturist)

Date of report: 14th April 2022

Reference: BE/16/22/PL

Proposal: External alterations to the existing building associated with the change of use from Class E Restaurant to Sui Generis (consisting of a coffee shop / restaurant selling food and drink for consumption on and off the premises), alterations to car park (including the creation of a drive-through lane, reconfiguration of cycle parking, new pedestrian crossings, and the increase in number of car parking spaces), relocation of footpath, removal of 4 x TPO trees (to be replaced), landscaping and associated works. This site is in CIL Zone 4 (Zero Rated) as other development

Location: Arun Retail Park, Shripney Road, Bognor Regis, PO22 9NF

Case Officer: Ms M Tomalova

Comments on application:

I undertook my site inspection on 7th April 2022.

The applicants have employed Aspect Arboriculture Ltd. to prepare an Arboricultural Impact Assessment inclusive of Tree Constraints Plan and a Tree Protection Plan (TPP) for this project, although no supporting Method Statement (AMS) for the latter. It is usual practice to submit an AMS alongside the TPP and I see no obvious reason for them not having done so, nonetheless for this site (were the development proposal to be granted consent) it could be secured by pre-commencement condition.

The Tree Survey data is comprehensive and accords with the requirements of BS5837:2012. I agree with the retention category ratings.

Whilst I concur with the majority of tree assessment within the body of the report (AIA) I disagree with their view that items T6 & T7 are readily replaceable. These established trees are harmonious with surroundings and possess high growth potential. Furthermore, and as recognised in part, they are the dominant verdant features of note wholly within the site and already provide a much needed and significant visual contribution.

I disagree also with their conclusion that the proposals do not conflict with our Arun Local Plan Policy D DM1. It is clear their proposal would not permit retention of T6 & T7 (category B trees) and so fails to incorporate existing trees as an integral part of development proposals.

While the scheme may have much to commend it, in arboricultural terms the impact is relatively high and so I would like to understand if there is an alternative pedestrian facility that could be provided whilst permitting retention of those trees, or indeed if enhancement of that existing facility is necessary at all.

Conclusions:

The underlying principle of development as described may be achievable without incurring the loss of higher value trees across the site, although this does not appear to have been an aspiration which is disappointing. If not possible to do so, then there would need to be an overriding benefit to the local community to justify that loss.

Trees of lesser quality are (and will inevitably have) to be sacrificed to permit the most logical drive-thru route around and facilitate alterations to, the premises. This is reasonable and of itself would not incur undue long-term detriment to the visual amenity of surrounding area where compensated for with an ambitious soft landscape plan. The choice of replacement tree species and planting size is acceptable for this element of the scheme.

As it stands, I am unable to lend this scheme my full support and so register an **OBJECTION**.

Mark Warwick
Tree Officer / Neighbourhood Services