

Planning Officer: Michael Eastham

Planning Application Ref: BE/27/20/PL

Location: Land at Salt Box, West of Shripney Road, Bersted

Description of works: Creation of temporary soil storage bund & haulage route associated with development of adjoining site at Saltbox (resubmission following BE/38/19/PL). This application may affect the character & appearance of the Shripney Conservation Area & is a Departure from the Development Plan

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. It was necessary for me to visit the site and see for myself the potential impact from this proposal on surrounding green infrastructure, which I undertook during the last week of April 2020.
- There are significant trees and hedgerow, some of which enjoy statutory protection under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997. They could be adversely affected by these proposals. There is no supporting arboricultural information submitted with the application - a requirement of BS5837:2012. As such, were this application to now proceed, we may not have sufficient information to guarantee such trees and hedgerow would be adequately respected and protected.
- The applicant has employed aspect landscape planning to produce a Landscape and Visual Technical Briefing Note (LVTBN), 5920.BN.002, April 2020. This is a comprehensive and broadly helpful report, although on the important issues of exclusion zones, hedgerow retention and heavy plant across the site – I have the following concerns:
 - Use of the existing farm tracks is acceptable, although I doubt they have carried the quantity and weight of plant now proposed. As such, there is a risk of new levels of soil compaction with potentially harmful effects on tree growth. I have no issue with the use of such tracks until we enter the field where the soil is to be stockpiled. The LVTBN (para.3.2) describes *'the topsoil stockpile will be set back from the adjacent field boundary and ditch existing by a minimum of 8metres.'* This is illustrated later in Appendix 2 (p9, inset drawing Detail B) along with text describing access for plant/machinery within 8metres from the hedge boundary. The largest hedgerow tree in proximity to the stockpile is a maturing ash with a stem diameter at 1.5m approximately 600mm. This translates ordinarily to a nominal circular root protection area of 7.2metres radial spread. **There is ample room to avoid travel into the 8m zone, which I would prefer described as an exclusion zone so that all activity associated with this development is prohibited in that zone. The extension of this exclusion zone south by approx. 40metres and to protect the entire hedgerow length to be shown on the aforementioned drawing.**
 - Much of the hedgerows have important landscape and ecological value and are protected by the Hedgerow Regulations 1997. **We do not have sufficient detail around the proposed removal of the same, to widen field access. This needs to be provided so we can be assured how much of the existing hedgerow will be retained. It should be possible to provide this information with carefully annotated photographs in support.**

Conclusions:

- Given the available space across the plot and surrounding the development, it should be possible to waive the normal requirement for the applicant to appoint an Arboricultural Consultant for this project, subject to provision of a satisfactory Construction Management Plan or in this case, a revised Landscape and Visual Technical Briefing Note.
- The ditch/tree and hedgerow buffer zones are not extensive enough nor adequately described and there exists potential for movement of heavy plant over soft ground within those zones (and potentially within nominal root protection areas of trees and hedgerow). More information and greater clarity within the LVTBN please, required as **highlighted above.**
- The precise extent of hedgerow removal to accommodate heavy plant access through the site has not been specified in detail. This should be described in detail (metreage and any treatment of stumps) and illustrated on a scale map, much as would be required for an application or notice under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997.

Recommendations:

1. The applicant should provide us with a revised Landscape and Visual Technical Briefing Note that confirms; the route of heavy plant across the site and around the stockpile, full extent of extended 8metre exclusion zone, extent of hedgerow removal at field access points; so that we can be confident retained on/off-site trees and hedgerow will not be negatively impacted throughout development. On receipt of a suitably revised LVTBN, it will need to be included in a condition forming part of any APPROVAL.
2. As it stands, I am unable to lend this scheme my support and so register an **OBJECTION**, although expect that to be easily overcome with a suitably revised LVTBN.

Mark Warwick

Tree Officer / Parks and Greenspace Team