

Planning Officer: Lynnyrd Wolfe

Planning Application Ref: BN/47/20/T

Location: The Lodge & Clarendon House, Church Lane, Eastergate, Chichester, PO20 3UT

Description of works: Reduce crown of 2no. ash trees to height 8m and spread 6m (A1) and height 10m and spread 8m (A2)

Reasons given: Health and safety

Comments on Application:

2x Ash / *Fraxinus excelsior* Height: 15-20m Spread: 5-10m Age class: Mature

- Outwardly and from a distance both trees appear generally stable and in fair physiological condition, presenting attractive crown profiles. They are both prominent, visible from surrounding properties and the public highway. Both can be said to have high amenity value and contribute to the verdant character of the area.
- A1 (ash) – Closer inspection reveals; significant compression at the main stem union (approx. 1.5m ht.) and historic large tear-out wound. Although we have no detailed report of the tree's condition, it would seem prudent from ground-level and non-invasive assessment alone to undertake some crown reduction pruning to reduce the risk of failure.
- A2 (ash) – Historic crown reduction pruning appears to have been undertaken, suggested by several abrupt changes in taper rate and angle of growth within the limb/branch framework. Such work introduces weak points in the crown structure and decay pockets may develop from the pruning wounds. Once initiated, it is often necessary to repeat the operation on a regular cycle. Where lapsed over many years, as appears to be the case here – a light crown reduction is usually appropriate and sufficient to reduce the risk of failure to an acceptable level.
- The frequent discarding of small dead branches is typical of such aged examples of this tree type and may not be associated with an underlying health condition.
- The removal of dead branches is an exception and does not require planning permission from or notification to the local planning authority.

Conclusions:

- These trees require careful management that respects their age and vulnerability to environmental changes and disease progression.
- The proposal to reduce both the height and lateral spread on all aspects (the normal interpretation of *crown reduction*) to those dimensions does not comply with 'British Standard (BS3998:2010) Tree work – Recommendations' and would be likely to result in harm to the health and vitality of the trees with large pruning wounds being formed as well as undermining their visual amenity value and impact in the landscape.

Recommendations:

- As it stands, I recommend **REFUSAL** for this application.

Advisory:

- I would like to see the applicant submit a revised work specification as suggested below, which would seem to address their concerns whilst preventing a diminution of the tree's landscape and public amenity value. **The applicant or their arborist (Tree Surgeon) will need to provide revised measurements (x):**

A1 (ash)

- Reduce overall height and radial spread by no more than 2metres on all aspects to leave a remaining height of (x) and spread of (x).

A2 (ash)

- Reduce overall height and radial spread by no more than 2metres on all aspects to leave a remaining height of (x) and spread of (x).

- Reduce/remove small branches (pruning wounds must not exceed 50mm diameter) as necessary, to achieve no more than 30cm clearance of overhead (BT) cables routed through the crown.

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- If the applicant is prepared to re-submit in line with this advice, then I would be able to recommend APPROVAL subject to the following condition:

Condition to Be Applied to Approved Work: -

- Part a) Where whole branches are to be removed and final cuts made close to the trunk or branch union they are to be made as shown in Figure 2 of BS3998:2010
- Part b) Where branches are to be shortened back the final cuts are to be made at the correct angle shown in BS3998:2010 and adjacent to a live bud or lateral.

Reasons: In the interests of the trees continued health and vitality and to accord with current industry guidelines and sound arboricultural practice.

- *See also the standard pruning guidance notes issued with the consent letter*

Advisory:

- The long-term vitality of these trees is best respected when significant pruning work such as proposed, is undertaken during the late spring to summer period (May to August). The work proposed should only be undertaken during this period.

Mark Warwick
Tree Officer / Parks and Greenspace Team