

Planning Officer: Raymond Cole

Planning Application Ref: BN/57/19/RES

Location: Land East of Fontwell Avenue, Fontwell Avenue, Fontwell, BN18 0SB

Description of works: Approval of reserved matters for 3785sqm of light industrial floorspace (Class B1 (b)/(c)) following the grant of WA/22/15/OUT

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.
- The applicants have employed Beechdown Arboriculture Limited to prepare an Arboricultural Report (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.
- There are significant on and off-site trees, some of which enjoy statutory protection (Tree Preservation Order).
- The retention of perimeter vegetation where the bulk of trees exist is critical to an acceptable development of this site. It is pleasing to note many of those are given adequate room so as not to diminish their growth potential, although quite a few areas of conflict are noted that will need to be attended to and which I discuss in more detail below.
- With so few trees across the site interior, there is ample opportunity to avoid conflict between those worthy of retention (and which can add immediate value to any development) and construction activity. They should be afforded sufficient room to both flourish during development of the site and allow future growth without constraint.

Conflict areas requiring resolution

The British Standard 5837:2012 Trees in relation to Demolition, Design and Construction states that **the default position should be that structures are located outside the RPAs of trees to be retained**. Only where there is overriding justification for construction within the RPA might technical solutions be available that prevent damage to the tree(s).

- **Unit B. Proximity to tree group (T1-T6)** precipitates the removal of all but one tree – T3 Oak, the most valuable tree wholly within the site, which would be partly obscured and subject to root and crown interference. Furthermore, it will not have enough room to flourish and achieve full growth potential. I have no strong objection to removal of the other five trees, but the trade-off must be to fully respect and promote the oak.
- **SW corner of site (T8 & T9)** appears to involve RPA intrusion by way of footway construction. If the broken line denotes such a feature, then there appears to be ample room to locate it beyond a revised RPA (polygon) which abandons the inclusion of carriageway/footway and captures enough of the existing verge and field to be contingent with the area of a pre-calculated circular RPA.
- **W boundary of site (T11)**. Unjustified intrusion into RPA of significant tree with high growth potential.
- **W boundary of site (T13-21)**. Potential conflict with 10m easement required around SUDS feature. Trees of high growth potential.
- **NW corner of site (T26-T31 and T40-T46)**. Unjustified removal of native trees with high growth potential and creating a gap in the established tree-line.
- **Main access**. Can this not be located elsewhere on the northern boundary, such as the existing route into the field or where the risk of damage to higher value trees is considerably less? If not, then a 'No-dig' construction specification must be employed within tree RPAs.
- **NE corner of site (T67)**. I would not support any development beneath the canopy of a mature Monterey pine, least of all a late-mature example of such size and condition. The risk of damage from falling cones and branches is unacceptable in my view. I also consider there to be unjustified intrusion into the nominal circular RPA and suggest that row of parking bays at least, is abandoned and left to unmade ground.

- In respect of any soft-landscape proposals, I defer to Sue Howell, our Leisure and Landscape Officer. **I would like to draw attention to the relatively high number of Category B trees proposed for removal, which if permitted ought to ensure an ambitious tree planting programme in part as mitigation for those losses.** Subject to both Southern Water and our consultant Drainage Engineer being satisfied with the location of new tree planting, I would encourage the selection of native tree species of potential stature (>20m ht.) and longevity such that they will grow to reflect and enhance the local landscape (e.g. *Quercus robur*, *Tilia cordata*, *Acer campestre*, *Prunus avium*, *Crataegus monogyna*).
- There does not appear to be an approved surface water drainage (and foul water sewer) 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 and landscape plans.
- **I draw attention to** the nominal root protection areas (RPA) of retained trees and their growth potential as obvious constraints to both the siting of any SUDS (e.g. attenuation pond) and their easement, also to the introduction of subterranean utility apparatus.
- The relationship between existing ground levels and any adjacent 'no-dig' construction must be described in detail or shown on a cross-section drawing. **The viability of this critical element of the development proposal must be revealed via civil engineering exercise**, so we can be sure those trees retained will not suffer damage and that finished ground levels in a broader context will be acceptable.
- Boundary materials such as hoarding and any other installation of hard landscaping features (e.g. fencing, brick walls, hardstanding), bicycle racks/sheds, etc.) within the RPA of retained trees must be undertaken by following an approved methodology such as described in NJUG Volume 4 where root exposure or pruning is anticipated. Impermeable membranes must be used to line excavations prior to filling with concrete. **I would like to see both methods made explicit in the main body of the Arboricultural Report.**

Conclusion:

- The principle of development as described is certainly achievable without undue detriment to retained on and off-site trees, although a number of refinements to the layout and assurances over siting of SUDS features need to be secured before I could lend the scheme my support.

Recommendations:

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

Mark Warwick
Tree Officer / Parks and Greenspace Team