

Planning Officer: Miss Z Toppin

Planning Application Ref: BN/59/21/T

Location: 4 Appletree Drive, Barnham, PO22 0LJ

Description of works: Reduce height of 1no. oak (T1) by 6m and crown spread by 3m to leave a finished height of approximately 14m and a crown spread of approximately 6m

Reasons given: Cavity in stem base

Comments on Application:

Turkey oak / *Quercus cerris* Height: 15-20m Radial spread: 5-10m Age class: Mature

- Outwardly and from distance (roadside) this tree appears to be in a fine physiological state. It is a large, imposing tree, having come to dominate the rear garden of this property. As such, it is highly visible from surrounding properties and to users of the public highway (footway and carriageway).
- Unfortunately, I was unable to obtain access to the rear garden and assess the tree for myself.
- The applicant proposes a potential 6metre reduction of top height and 3m of lateral spread. Based on their measurements of existing height and spread and assuming 4metres above ground clearance; if applied this would represent approximately 70% of crown volume loss and far exceed the recommendations in British Standard 3998:2010 – Tree Work. If the applicant wishes to progress an application for such work, it will need to be re-submitted with a detailed report from a Tree Specialist, having undertaken non-invasive assessment of the stem, perhaps utilising diagnostic tools associated with decay evaluation (resistograph micro-drill, sonic/electrical impedance tomography), for our further consideration.

Conclusions:

- This is a tree of high visual amenity and landscape value. It dominates the rear of the applicant's property to such an extent that regardless of its condition, a degree of containment pruning is an entirely reasonable proposal and hard to resist.
- The agent has identified a deep cavity in the stem base, but neither they or I have determined the extent of this and how much of the stem may be compromised by decay. It is important for a tree of this size and setting that a comprehensive understanding of any structural defect is reached. For a tree of such apparent high value, there is a burden on the applicant/agent to provide us with enough evidence to support such a visually drastic and stress-imposing operation.
- The work proposed may be necessary to mitigate risk of structural failure and so justified on arboricultural grounds, but we are yet to have sufficient evidence in support of the proposal.

Recommendations:

- As it stands, I recommend **REFUSAL** for this application.
- **I would like the applicant invited to consider a revised proposal for lesser works** (such as described below) as part of the current application, should they not wish to incur further delay. Such

work would go some way to addressing their concerns whilst preventing a diminution of the tree's landscape and public amenity value:

- Crown reduction (height and spread on all aspects) by no more than 2metres, to leave height at 18 metres and lateral spread at North X metres, East X metres, South X metres, West X metres (measurements to be provided).

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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 tree's 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 this tree 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

Figure 2 Positions of final cuts

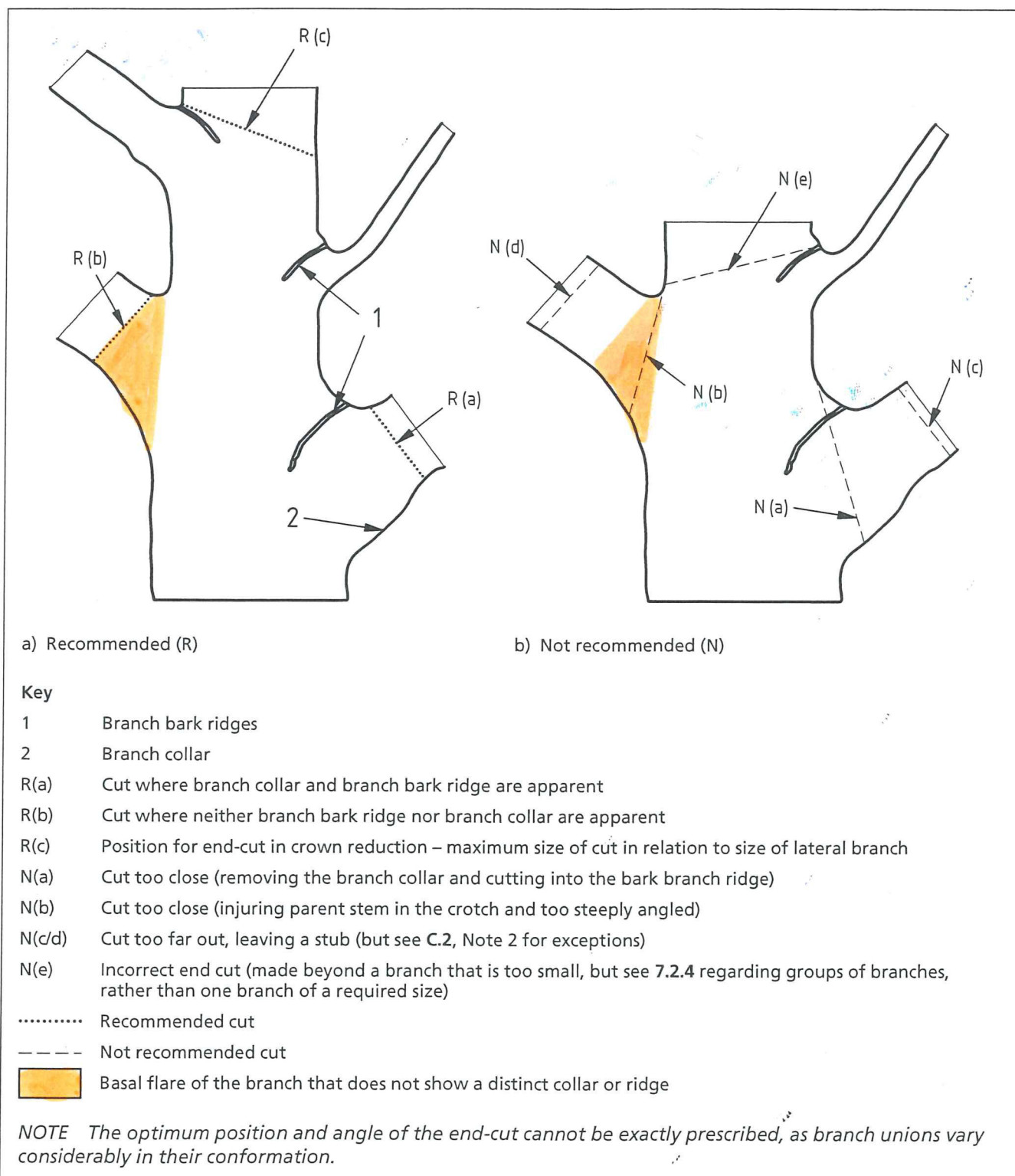


Figure 4 Diagrammatic illustration of crown reduction

