

CONSULTEE RESPONSE (Council's Arboriculturist)

Date of report: 14 July 2022

Reference: BN/68/22/PL

Proposal: Erection of 4 x 4-bedroom houses. This application is a Departure from the Development Plan and is in CIL Zone 3 and is CIL Liable as new dwellings

Location: Land adjacent to Wayside, Eastergate Lane, Eastergate, PO20 3SJ

Case Officer: Mr S Davis

Comments on application:

The applicants have employed Lizard Landscape Design Ltd. to prepare an Arboricultural Impact Assessment & Method Statement along with a Tree Retention and Protection Plan for this project.

The Tree Survey data is comprehensive and accords with the requirements of BS5837:2012. I agree with the retention category ratings for on and (off-site?) trees.

The site is dominated by the presence of mature, high value oak trees along part of the east boundary and orchard apple trees distributed across the west half.

The former are rightly classified as Category A trees, being also of high landscape value and previously made individual subjects of Tree Preservation Order (-/BN/1/20). They will cast considerable morning shade across gardens and dwellings (units 3 & 4). The introduction of main garden areas beneath the canopy of these large, mature trees is ill-conceived. In addition to heavy shade bearing, nuisance from persistent deposits of catkins, leaves and fruit for three seasons of the year will likely result in applications coming forward for substantial pruning back of their crowns on west aspect.

The latter are interesting as a historic group feature (established orchard) and mostly in a fine physiological condition, although offer little if any public amenity. I suspect there will be some inherent ecological value and so a loss of biodiversity will occur from the site once removed, yet it is hard to challenge the retention category rating (C – low value) in planning context. They ought not to be a constraint to an otherwise quality development proposal.

The high number of trees proposed for removal and recognised loss of biodiversity should be mitigated, by securing an ambitious suite of ecological enhancements and detailed soft landscape plan.

I am not satisfied any overriding justification exists for construction within the nominal root protection area (RPA) of these oak trees, especially that (T08) which has been capped at 15metres. We require an effective buffer zone (usually a minimum of 2metres) beyond the RPA for such high value trees, as promoted and detailed within our Supplementary Planning Documents. Those give instruction for avoiding Root Protection Area (RPA) incursion and providing further insurance with the use of buffer zones. **Arun District Public Open Space, Playing Pitches and Built Facilities** (Appendix 9) and **Arun Design Guide** (E.02 Landscape Structures & Trees, p48) - [Supplementary Planning Documents \(SPDs\) and other guidance | Arun District Council](#).

Oak trees (T06-T08 incl.) are strategically important for the accrual of ecological and environmental benefits for this site and its environs so ought to represent a major constraint to development. They are arguably of emerging veteran status and should be afforded enough room to prevent a need arising for 'hazard mitigation pruning' that would diminish their status in the landscape.

Conclusions:

The general 'principle of development' as described is achievable without undue detriment to retained trees but it requires a more sympathetic and less intrusive layout with an emphasis on keeping construction and any increase in frequency of land use (gardens) away from high value (Category A/TPO) trees.

Trees of lesser quality and landscape value are (and will inevitably have) to be sacrificed to provide access onto the plot. This is reasonable and of itself would not incur undue detriment to the visual amenity of surrounding area.

Recommendation:

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

Mark Warwick

Tree Officer

Environment and Climate Change