

Planning Officer: Mr F Gardner

Planning Application Ref: BR/150/19/T

Location: Homecroft House, Sylvan Way, Bognor Regis, PO21 2NG

Description of works: Remove 2 lowest branches back to main stem of 1no. oak tree that directly overhang roof of building

Reasons Given: Nuisance arising from excessive plant material being deposited onto roof and gutter of adjacent dwelling

Comments on Application:

Pedunculate oak / *Quercus robur* Approx. height: 20m Average spread: 9m Age class: Mature

- Outwardly and from a distance this tree appears to be in a fine physiological state. It has been the past subject of extensive low branch removal to accommodate adjacent development (residential property); despite that, it has an attractive crown profile and represents a significant visual amenity.
- It is a large landmark tree with a full and spreading crown, both highly visible from numerous properties and to users of the public highway (footway and carriageway).
- The seasonal and occasionally heavy shedding of leaves, fruit and small dead twigs/branches is typical of such aged examples of its type and not obviously associated with an underlying health condition. Such nuisance is to be tolerated if we are to have mature trees of high quality such as this in an urban setting.
- I find the work specification proposed to be 'open to interpretation' and as such, were we to grant consent could potentially lead to the removal of major limbs or branches which would create large wounds on the main stem.
- Building clearance appears to be adequate but I accept may be problematic during some episodes of inclement weather.

Conclusions:

- This tree requires careful management that respects its age and vulnerability to environmental changes and disease progression.
- The proposed removal of low branches back to the main stem would be in excess of that which is required to provide adequate clearance of the adjacent built structure and create large wounds on the main stem with potentially serious implications for the tree's long-term health and vitality. I am therefore unable to concur with the reasons stated as being sufficient to justify the extent of work now proposed.
- The tree is a significant feature in the local landscape and appears to be in adequately sound and healthy condition. The tree surgery proposed in the application would result in excessive reduction of the tree's landscape impact and undue detriment to the visual amenities of the locality.

Recommendations:

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

Advisory:

- I would like to see the applicant submit a revised work specification such as detailed below, which would seem to address their concerns whilst preventing a diminution of the tree's landscape and public amenity value:

- Reduce/remove small branches (defined in this instance as being <75mm diameter) as necessary to achieve a maximum of 2metres building clearance.

- 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 conditions:

Conditions to Be Applied to Approved Work: -

- 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
- 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 applicant is aware of 3rd party ownership of this tree, nevertheless we are obliged to advise that any consent granted by the Local Planning Authority does not by association give authority to the applicant to access the tree or undertake any work from beyond the boundary of their own property without first seeking permission from the tree owner.

Mark Warwick
Tree Officer / Parks and Greenspace Team

Figure 2 Positions of final cuts

