

Planning Officer: Charlotte Easton

Planning Application Ref: BR/267/18/T

Location: 4 Pinewood Gardens, Bognor Regis

Description of works: Fell 1No. Liquidambar tree

Reasons Given: Roots have damaged two areas of driveway and boundary wall.

Comments on Application:

Sweet Gum *Liquidambar styraciflua* Height: 9m Average Spread: 4m Age: early mature

- This is a repeat application, following receipt of BR/273/17/T validated on 13th November 2017.
- Significant ornamental tree with moderate growth potential. This tree appears to have good vitality and certainly displays good form.
- Limited view from the main road at this time but a focal point for surrounding properties and local residents.
- Structurally important roots are prominent in the surrounding grass area, which suggest it is growing on largely made-up ground (construction spoil).
- No other significant trees or large shrubs in the immediate locality, although historic records reveal a mature birch tree in the rear garden (up until c2008).
- Garden boundary wall has a deep stepped vertical crack from near ground level to the top, both along pointing and through bricks. The crack is notably wider at the top (5-7mm) and so indicative of a heave event. There does not appear to have been any obvious deterioration (widening) since last inspected (18-Jan-2018).

Conclusions:

- This tree has significant amenity value and its retention is highly desirable.
- No evidence has been submitted which confirms this tree's involvement in any damage to built structure.
- All the areas of reported damage have not been properly investigated by a competent engineer/surveyor to determine the probable cause of deterioration and we would need to see a report which evidences those results before being able to consider giving consent to fell this tree.

Recommendations:

- I recommend **REFUSAL** for this application.

Advisory:

- If the applicant remains concerned about this tree's potential involvement in deterioration of their brick boundary wall, then I advise a narrow (<300mm wide) exploratory excavation be attempted parallel to the wall, to a depth sufficient to determine both the extent and condition of the footings. Any problematic root material (<25mm diameter) closely associated with the damage event could be removed at that time, under supervision and in agreement with the local planning authority's tree officer. Note: All parts (above and below ground) of the tree are similarly protected by the existing Order (TPO).

Mark Warwick
Tree Officer / Parks and Greenspace Team