

Planning Officer: Mr S Davis

Planning Application Ref: BR/55/20/PL

Location: Abbots Lawn, Sylvan Way, Bognor Regis, PO21 2RS

Description of works: Proposed first and second floor extensions

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 the Sussex Tree Company to prepare an Arboricultural Method Statement (**AMS**) which includes a Tree Protection Plan (**TPP**), for this project. The supporting 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 proposed scheme of development has potential to negatively impact significant on and off-site trees; of special interest are T1 Lime (the subject of a Tree Preservation Order) and T4 Sycamore growing in the neighbouring property (Courtney Lodge). Both will have substantial root systems within the above plot and require suitable protection. Although the AMS and TPP provide detail around protection measures, it is not clear to me from the plan that there will be adequate ground protection and use of 'No-dig construction' within those tree's root protection areas. Furthermore, it has not been demonstrated that ground levels would allow for a successful installation of such raised construction – a civil engineering exercise ought to be provided in support of this important element.
- The introduction of two new parking bays on the west boundary is to my mind problematic for two reasons. Firstly, it seems there would have to be some excavation in order to tie-in with the 'No-dig' (enhanced) driveway which would undoubtedly involve the loss of root material (fibrous and potentially those of structural importance). Secondly, those cars would be parked beneath the canopy spread of two large trees with a known propensity to deposit 'honeydew' – a sticky secretion from aphids that can be damaging to car paintwork if not removed promptly.
- I am mindful of previous application BR/314/18/PL which approved a scheme with the above arboricultural information supporting it. There is an element of viability about the scheme although complicated by the obvious tree constraints; the project arboriculturist has approached it in an understanding and sympathetic way. That said, the ground protection measures and extent of 'No-dig construction' have not been clearly illustrated on the TPP.
- The relationship between proposed areas of 'No-dig construction' and adjacent ground levels has not been described in detail or shown on any cross-section drawing. The viability of this important element of the development proposal should 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.

Conclusions:

- The proposals as submitted should be achievable in arboricultural terms, although there is important information lacking (as described above), such that I could not lend this scheme my full support as it stands

Recommendations:

Option 1 – The parking bays (x2) along the west boundary are abandoned and the shrub border left intact. More detail of ground protection measures and extent of 'No-dig construction' to be clearly illustrated on the TPP. Civil engineering exercise to be provided, demonstrating viability of 'No-dig construction'.

- With a satisfactory response to all the above items, I could lend the scheme my full support.

Option 2 – If you are minded to approve this application as it stands, I recommend the following conditions being applied:

1. Before the site is occupied or any machinery is introduced to the site or demolition work or construction work or alterations to existing ground levels takes place a **PRE-COMMENCEMENT Site Meeting** is to take place between the Planning Authority's Tree Officer and the Arboricultural Expert representing the site owner(s) – at this meeting all protective fencing, stem (bark-saver) protection and ground protection measures will be inspected to verify they are 'Fit for Purpose' as required under British Standard 5837:2012 and have been erected and positioned exactly as shown on the **Tree Protection Plan, STC-TPP-V1** and described in the **Arboricultural Method Statement**.
- A schedule of Site Monitoring/Supervision visits and Reporting Procedures prepared by an Arboricultural Expert will be required and their extent will be agreed on at the site meeting to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority's Tree Officer.

Reasons: To comply with BS5837 and to ensure that retained trees are afforded due respect and appropriate levels of protection such that their ongoing health and vitality is not compromised, and they can continue to enhance the landscape and amenity of the area.

2. All activity at the site is to be carried out in strict accordance with: - **Arboricultural Method Statement, The Sussex Tree Company, September 2019.**
- If there is deemed to be a need for any Utility Service Route connections to bisect retained tree Root Protection Areas/Zones, then prior to their installation a Method Statement prepared by an Arboricultural Expert must be submitted that stipulates how this can be achieved without adverse impact on tree roots. Written approval and confirmation of acceptance of this Methodology must be issued before any works are commenced out on site.

Reasons: To comply with BS5837 and to ensure that retained trees are afforded due respect and appropriate levels of protection such that their ongoing health and vitality is not compromised, and they can continue to enhance the landscape and amenity of the area.

3. Any tree pruning considered essential to enable the agreed development must meet the requirements of BS3998:2010 Tree work – Recommendations:
- 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 interest of continued health and vitality of trees and to accord with current industry guidelines and sound arboricultural practice.

Mark Warwick
Tree Officer / Parks and Greenspace Team