

Planning Officer: Miss K Welch

Planning Application Ref: FG/150/21/T

Location: 1 Sea Lane Close, Ferring, BN12 5DT

Description of works: Fell 1no. Monterey cypress tree (T1) and fell 1no. Austrian pine tree (T2)

Reasons given: Implicated in damage to building (dwelling)

Comments on Application:

T1 Monterey cypress / *Cupressus macrocarpa* Height: 20-25m, Spread: 5-10m, Age class: Late mature

T2 Black pine / *Pinus nigra* Height: 15-20m, Spread: 5-10m, Age class: Mature

- Outwardly and from a distance (roadside) these trees appear to be in a fair physiological state and assumed to be so in the absence of any evidence provided to the contrary. They are long-established and highly visible to the public; T1 especially so, being very large and prominent adjacent busy highway. T2 is mildly suppressed and concealed by its dominant neighbour.
- The applicant has submitted a report from Environment Services (Arboricultural Consultancy) acting on behalf of their client (6 Sea Lane Close). The report states that property has sustained subsidence damage with vegetation a factor in that event.
- It seems likely from the information provided to us that T2 has been identified as an influence on soil conditions within the solitary borehole/trial pit adjacent the structural damage. Nonetheless, it is disappointing that technical information or data to describe the seasonal/persistent nature and extent of the damage has not been made available, nor any detailed description of the soil profile (including plasticity index and soil porosity).

Conclusions:

- The mitigation measures (vegetation removal) proposed will impact significantly on public amenity and the local landscape. It is therefore incumbent on the applicant to make a strong case for the removal of both T1 and T2. I am not satisfied they have done so.
- T2 is the lesser amenity tree and its removal unlikely to be keenly felt by local residents and visitors. It has been implicated as an influence over ground conditions around and below foundation depth in proximity of building damage. On balance, the removal of T2 can be justified on arboricultural grounds if not wholly for the reason given.
- The removal of T1 has not been justified on arboricultural grounds. It is accepted that roots are likely to be within curtilage of 6 Sea Lane Close and influencing ground conditions to some extent, but there is no established relationship between T1 and any damage event. Root morphology can be complex, and trees of high public amenity should not be discarded in the absence of thorough site investigation. The current proposal for T1 seems contrary to the statement made in additional comments at sect.4 of the report '*Engineers should consider focusing investigations to strengthen factual evidence for disclosure to third party tree owners*'.
- I believe a proportionate response at this stage of investigations, would be to permit the removal of T2. That supported by ongoing monitoring as proposed in sect.5 of the report (and following treatment of other on/off-site vegetation as described) to understand the efficacy of this work in recovering stability.
- I recommend we forego the requirement for a replacement tree following removal of T2. When the time comes for T1 to be removed, a suitable replacement tree can be located toward the north end of the garden where it can provide significant value to the surrounding area.

Recommendations:

- As it stands, I recommend **REFUSAL** for this application.
 - **I would like the applicant to be invited to agree to a revised proposal for lesser works** (by excluding the proposal to remove T1) as part of the current application so as not to incur further delay. Such work would go some way to addressing their concerns whilst preventing undue diminution of local landscape and public amenity value.
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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

Mark Warwick
Tree Officer / Parks and Greenspace Team