

Planning Officer: Amber Willard
Planning Application Ref: FP/145/19/T
Location: 21 Virginia Gardens, Felpham, PO22 6BE
Description of works: Crown reduction by 4m to 1no. oak tree
Reasons Given: Excessive shading and boundary overhang

Comments on Application:

Pedunculate oak / *Quercus robur* Height: 10-15m Spread: 5-10m Age class: Mature

- This tree appears to be outwardly healthy and stable with an attractive crown profile. It should be noted that a comprehensive assessment of the tree's condition was not possible due to the accumulation of household debris and organic material around its stem base.
- It gives the impression of being slightly stunted, a probable consequence of past pruning history and recent high-intensity development on all aspects. The construction of residential dwellings so close to such a tree has inevitably led to 'pruning pressure'.
- There has been a selective reduction of low limbs and branches on both West (towards building) and South (over car park) aspects. Although necessary, pruning cuts have been poorly targeted and not compliant with the British Standard for Tree Work.
- The tree is an important constituent of an established long line of trees which help define the character of the area and provides landscape value. Although relatively discreet when viewed from within the Virginia Gardens development, it is prominent on the skyline from within and across the adjacent school playing fields.

Conclusions:

- Given the extent of its influence over residential property, a degree of pruning is now necessary to achieve balance between the needs of this important tree and reasonable expectations of the occupier(s) of adjacent dwellings.
- The type and extent of operation proposed exceed the recommendations in British Standard 3998:2010 – Tree Work and would be likely to result in harm to the health and vitality of the tree with large pruning wounds being formed as well as undermining its visual amenity value and impact in the landscape.
- This tree requires careful management that respects its age and vulnerability to environmental changes and disease progression.

Recommendations:

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

Advisory:

- I would like to see the applicant submit a revised work specification such as detailed below, which will improve conditions close to the dwelling whilst preventing a diminution of the tree's landscape and public amenity value:

- *Reduce branches on west aspect only to achieve a maximum of 2metres from the rear elevation of adjacent residential buildings.*

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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** subject to the following conditions:

Conditions to Be Applied to All Approved Works: -

- 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:

- All ivy should be cleared from the main stem and limb/branch framework to encourage the development of new growth from dormant bud locations.
- All household debris and organic material around its stem base should be removed to discourage the presence of organisms which could be harmful to the health of the tree. Furthermore, this clearance will facilitate a comprehensive health and safety assessment by the tree owner.

Mark Warwick
Tree Officer / Parks and Greenspace Team

Figure 2 Positions of final cuts

