

Planning Officer: Lynnyrd Wolfe

Planning Application Ref: FP/41/20/T

Location: 1 Manor Close, Felpham, Bognor Regis, PO22 7PN

Description of works: Crown reduction to 1no. beech tree to height 30m and spread 20m

Reasons given: To prevent contact with building and telephone line

Comments on Application:

Beech / *Fagus sylvatica* Approx. height: 16m Average spread: 5m Age class: Mature

- This tree appears to be outwardly healthy and stable with an attractive crown profile, despite having previously undergone reduction pruning from which it has grown-on well.
- It grows at the front of the property and is prominent within the close. It is highly visible to both surrounding properties and users of the public highway (footway and carriageway). As such, it has high public amenity value.
- The proposal to reduce both the height and spread as described is not achievable, as those dimensions far exceed that of the tree in its current form. To assess the intent of the proposal and expedite a decision, I have considered an earlier description of works (application form, sect.7) – ‘*crown reduction 1-1.5metres*’. The correct interpretation of *crown reduction* as defined in ‘British Standard (BS3998:2010) Tree work – Recommendations’ typically will involve a reduction in both height and lateral spread on all aspects.
- Building and overhead cable clearance is adequate at this time but is likely to become problematic in the short-term. The tree is dominant over the front of the property and a degree of sympathetic small branch reduction would be appropriate to achieve long-term clearance of the same.

Conclusions:

- This tree requires careful management that respects its age and vulnerability to environmental changes and disease progression. Overall reduction of its crown has not been justified on arboricultural grounds.
- 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 agree to a revised work specification for lesser works, such as detailed below, which would seem to address their stated concerns and other obligations whilst preventing a diminution of the tree's landscape and public amenity value:
 - Reduce/remove small branches as necessary to achieve a maximum of 1.5m clearance from overhead telephone cables and a maximum of 2m clearance from the building (residential dwelling).
 - Crown lift (removal/reduction of low branches) to achieve a maximum of 3m overhead clearance on all aspects.
 - Crown lift (removal/reduction of low branches) to achieve a maximum of 6m overhead clearance directly above the carriageway and to 30cm behind the kerb line.

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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 being applied:

Condition to Be Applied to All Approved Works: -

- Part a) 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
- Part b) 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 the tree's 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*

Mark Warwick
Tree Officer / Parks and Greenspace Team