

Planning Officer: Zac Denton
Planning Application Ref: FP/76/18/T
Location: 1 Westmorland Drive, Felpham
Description of works: Fell 1No. English Oak
Reasons Given: Health and Safety Issues
Comments on Application:

Pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* Height: Approx. 15m Average Spread: 8m Age: Mature

- This is a large spreading tree that has an imposing presence within the property and highly visible to the public at the junction of main residential roads.
- It is one of several mature oak and field maple locally that form part of a historic boundary line of trees.
- I saw no evidence of an obvious lighting strike (although cannot rule out the possibility) but share concern for the large areas of bark death and associated tarry exudate on the main stem. Although no obvious pathogen was apparent the symptoms are characteristic of Bulgaria canker infection and this could be explored as a possible cause of the crown dieback.
- There seems to be a close correlation between the region of bark death and crown dieback, suggesting xylem/phloem dysfunction. The remainder of the crown appears full and healthy, albeit with moderate shoot extension and crown density.

Conclusions:

- While undoubtedly under some physiological distress, the precise cause of it has not been evidenced at this time and so stabilisation/recovery of vitality potentially remains an outcome.
- The immediate hazard presented by large items of deadwood in the crown should be addressed by the applicant as a matter of priority. Such work does not require consent from the Local Planning Authority.
- This is an important tree by virtue of its landscape value and assumed life expectancy. No evidence has been provided to suggest it does not remain viable for medium to long-term retention.
- There is no Arboricultural reason for the tree to be felled and its felling would detract from the amenities of the locality.

Recommendations:

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

Mark Warwick

Tree Officer / Parks and Greenspace Team