

Planning Officer : Simon Davis

Planning Application Ref: FP/89/14/T

Location : The Mead 7 Rife Way Felpham

Description of works: Fell 1 x Blue Cedar and replant with a deciduous species

Applicants Reasons Tree is dominating the front garden and has not finished growing and damage to the property is believed to be down to the tree

Comments On Application:

Blue Cedar *Cedrus atlantica 'Glauca'* Height = 15m Avge Rad Spread = 8m Age = Mature Grd Clear 4m

- This is a fine specimen of the species and contributes significantly to the amenity of this area being highly visible from a public perspective.
- Apparently Arun DC refused consent for this trees removal in 2001 and the applicants arborist quotes the fact that on Appeal the Inspectors decision stated that one of the options given was for removal – I note that the Inspector also gave an option to continue with a cycle of pruning works to control growth habit.
- The Arborist report contains 'mixed messages' which are not helpful –
 1. At 1.3 of his submitted report he states that 'Comments and advice in this report are only from an arboricultural perspective not as a building surveyor or structural engineer' which is as it should be but later on at 3.2 he states that 'I did find damage to the house in terms of cracks at the front and rear that could be attributable to tree roots causing heave of the soil, lifting foundations.' This tree is far enough from the property for direct physical upheaval by roots to be discounted and 'heave' is the result of re-wetting of a highly plastic soil and thus not attributable to the tree as seasonal water extraction would result in subsidence and not heave.
 2. I also have concerns with an arborist defining whether it is subsidence or heave.
 3. At 2.2 the arborist states that the identified 'Soil type will have limited properties in terms of shrinkage.' We have no laboratory testing and analysis of soil samples to identify soil type or its potential for shrinkage.
 4. At 3.2 the arborist states 'I did find damage to the house in terms of cracks to the front and rear..' but he is not qualified to comment further. There is a report from J.P.Tupper surveyors from back in 2001 that is out of date and basic in format – excavations at that time appear to have been to expose the underside of the footings but the surveyor then concludes that 'excavations revealed the soil conditions to be clay which are showing signs of desiccation..' This cannot be determined from a visual assessment.
 5. The surveyor and the arborist are at odds with their views in that at 3.2 the arborist says it heave damage and yet the surveyor at 3.5 is talking about subsidence damage.

Conclusions:

- I am not convinced by the arguments and evidence submitted to date that this tree is causing damage to the building.
- Without such evidence I would find no justification for the removal of the tree.

Recommendations:

- I **Object** to the removal of this tree on the grounds that there is insufficient evidence submitted to reach a conclusion that the tree is causing damage to the property and therefore its removal is the only option available to the owner.
- I recommend **REFUSAL** of this application.
- To assist I would expect any re-submission of this application to be supported by the following evidence and reports:-
 1. Trial Hole and Bore Hole excavations and section drawings showing the depth of footings and soil layering and presence of roots at various depths.
 2. Laboratory Analysis of – Soil Type; Moisture Content; Plasticity Index; Evidence of Desiccation.
 3. Laboratory analysis of – Root samples to identify tree species (to confirm that they come from the Cedar)
 4. Crack Monitoring – tell tales placed across the cracks to see how they are moving and whether this is seasonal movement linked to vegetation influence [minimum 12 months records but ideally 18 months].
 5. Levels Monitoring - recording how a given fixed level on the building is moving i.e. is it subsidence or heave and is one corner moving or is it the whole building [minimum 12 months records but ideally 18 months].

Bernie Harverson

Consultant Arboriculturist