

Planning Officer: Mrs A Gardner

Planning Application Ref: LU/214/20/PL

Location: Empty Supermarket Premises, Avon Road, Littlehampton, BN17 6AT

Description of works: Demolition of existing buildings & redevelopment comprising 37 No. residential units (Class C3) & flexible commercial floorspace (Class A1, A2, A3 and/or D1) together with the provision of car & cycle parking, landscaping & associated works (resubmission following LU/3/19/PL). This application affects the setting of listed buildings & may affect the character & appearance of the East Street, Littlehampton Conservation Area. This application is in CIL Zone 4 (Zero Rated) as 'flats & other development'

Comments on Application:

- It has been stated (application form, sect. 10. Trees and Hedges) that there are no trees or hedges on the proposed development site, nor on land adjacent to the proposed development site that could influence the development or might be important as part of the local landscape character. Both those statements are incorrect; which I substantiate in this report.
 - There are significant trees off-site which could be adversely affected by these proposals, yet there is no supporting arboricultural information submitted with the application - a requirement of BS5837:2012. As such, were this application to now proceed, we will not have sufficient information to guarantee such trees would be adequately respected and protected.
 - There are few trees/shrubs wholly within the site, therefore in the absence of interior constraints from vegetation it should be possible to design a layout for the site which avoids any above or below ground conflict with retained vegetation. The vast majority of established trees are in the rear gardens of private residential property although the most significant from a public amenity perspective are roadside and growing from grass verge within the publicly maintainable highway (Franciscan Way).
 - Those latter trees include early mature examples of lime, cherry and whitebeam; which should be given adequate room as part of any proposal and account for their potential to increase in height and spread, such that no future 'pressure to prune' arises from the position of any residential dwelling. These trees provide high level screening and are a valuable visual amenity, especially when viewed from the north and south. The uninterrupted view of those trees from Avon Road should be recognised and be preserved (at least in part) for the benefit of residents in the wider community.
 - The existing hard ground surface (tarmac) will act as temporary 'ground protection' for those tree root systems which overlap the site - while it remains in situ. How that hard surface is eventually broken-up, removed and replaced will need to be described in detail so that we can be satisfied their methodology fully respects those trees. This should be included in their Arboricultural Method Statement, usually provided as part of the Arboricultural Impact Assessment and accompanied by a Tree Protection Plan.
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- The applicants have employed SJA trees|Arboricultural Planning Consultants to prepare an Arboricultural Method Statement inclusive of Tree Schedule and Tree Protection Plan for this project. The Tree Survey data is comprehensive and accords with the requirements of BS5837:2012.
 - Proposed layout has been revised to give adequate room to off-site trees overlapping at the NW corner of the site. The loss of visual amenity following obscuration by new dwellings will be mitigated by tree planting elsewhere and across the development.

Conclusions:

- It should be possible to develop the site, broadly in line with the current proposals and without adverse effect on retained off-site trees.
- **Proposed Site Plan, dwg. no. LH1-USY-RO-MP-DR-A-0002, Rev 3** - There is one obvious and notable area of tree/development conflict that needs to be addressed. The size and orientation of units at the northwest corner of the site should be amended to fully accommodate and be harmonious with the anticipated long-term presence of roadside trees (root and crown development). **RESOLVED following submission of Proposed Site Plan, dwg. no. LH1-USY-RO-MP-DR-A-0002, Rev 5**
- The applicant has not yet provided sufficient information for us to be able to determine the impact of this proposal and in the absence of any expert arboricultural input there is a high risk of significant damage occurring to 3rd party trees overlapping the site and subsequent loss of public amenity. **RESOLVED following submission of Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan.**
- The principle of development as described is achievable without undue detriment to retained off-site trees, provided there is adequate site supervision at key stages by the project arboriculturist.

Recommendations:

- The applicants will need to employ the services of an Arboricultural Consultant to carry out a tree survey exercise and then prepare an Arboricultural Implications Assessment (AIA) which must be inclusive of; a 'Tree Survey Schedule', a 'Root Protection Area (RPA) Schedule' and a 'Tree Constraints Plan' – with the trees accurately plotted on same.
- In the event that a RPA of any tree which is proposed for retention overlaps the development then BS5837:2012 requires that the Detailed Planning Application is accompanied by an Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) and also most importantly a Tree Protection Plan – to both describe and illustrate the mitigation measures which are to be employed to ensure that the trees survive without detriment to their vigour and vitality and are given adequate protection both above and below ground.
- In the absence of the above reports and satisfactory layout being provided I must register an OBJECTION to these proposals. **No longer sustained.**

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- I recommend the above scheme for **APPROVAL**, subject to the following conditions being applied:
 1. Before the site is occupied or any machinery is introduced to the site or demolition work or construction work or alterations to existing ground levels takes place a **PRE-COMMENCEMENT Site Meeting** is to take place between the Planning Authority's Tree Officer and the Arboricultural Expert representing the site owner(s) – at this meeting all protective fencing and ground protection measures will be inspected to verify they are 'Fit for Purpose' as required under British Standard 5837:2012 and have been erected and positioned exactly as shown on the **Tree Protection Plan – dwg. no. SJA TPP 20578-041, Rev A**
 - A schedule of Site Monitoring/Supervision visits and Reporting Procedures prepared by an Arboricultural Expert will be required and their extent will be agreed on at the site meeting to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority's Tree Officer.

Reasons: To comply with BS5837 and to ensure that retained trees are afforded due respect and appropriate levels of protection such that their ongoing health and vitality is not compromised, and they can continue to enhance the landscape and amenity of the area.

2. All activity at the site is to be carried out in strict accordance with: - **Arboricultural Method Statement, SJA Trees, ref. SJA ams 20587-01a, December 2020**
 - If there is deemed to be a need for any Utility Service Route connections to bisect retained tree Root Protection Areas/Zones, then prior to their installation a Method Statement prepared by an Arboricultural Expert must be submitted that stipulates how this can be achieved without adverse impact on tree roots. Written approval and confirmation of acceptance of this Methodology must be issued before any works are commenced out on site.

Reasons: To comply with BS5837 and to ensure that retained trees are afforded due respect and appropriate levels of protection such that their ongoing health and vitality is not compromised, and they can continue to enhance the landscape and amenity of the area.

Mark Warwick
Tree Officer / Parks and Greenspace Team