

Planning Officer: Anita Gardner

Planning Application Ref: LU/330/18/PL

Location: Land South Of Cornfield Close, Littlehampton, BN17 6LD

Description of works: Demolition of existing buildings & the erection of 77 residential homes with associated access, car parking, cycle parking, refuse/recycling storage, landscaping, earthworks & infrastructure

Comments on Application:

- The applicants have employed ACD Environmental to prepare both an initial Tree Report inclusive of Tree Survey and Constraint Advice and subsequent Arboricultural Impact Assessment & Method Statement along with a Tree Protection Plan for this project.
- The Tree Survey data is comprehensive and accords with the requirements of BS5837:2012.
- The vast majority of trees wholly within the site are of low value and rightly are not viewed as a constraint in the design. Their loss should be adequately compensated following implementation of a suitably ambitious and detailed soft landscape plan. The higher value trees are largely confined to the perimeter either on or off-site and provide both important screening value and obvious habitat importance. It is reassuring to see that they have been afforded adequate protection and will undoubtedly add value to the development.
- I am concerned about the proximity and position of trees along the southern boundary to plots 44 – 49 and to a lesser extent along the east boundary to plots 50 – 58. These trees will block out much of the natural sunlight to these dwellings and gardens in addition to their seasonal nuisance from seed dispersal, leaves and potential sucker growth. The soil may well be impoverished and moisture content influenced by their presence. I would expect them in short-term to come under ‘pressure to prune’ – which is especially unfortunate as the majority of individual trees now the subject of an Order (TPO) are within these areas of the site. That said, I would expect any reasonable refusal following a tree work application to be upheld on appeal.

Conclusions:

- The arboricultural survey information and associated documents/plans provided demonstrate adequate regard and respect for the tree population at and immediately around the site.
- The site layout is generally supportable although I expect a level of grievance and resentment towards southern and eastern boundary trees from some occupiers of plots 44 – 49 and 50 – 58 respectively. As such, there remains a potential for loss of amenity value arising from a ‘pressure to prune’ in respect of preserved trees - T16, T22, T30 and G1.
- I would like to see the applicant consider an alternative layout that better accommodates the retained trees, although I suspect this is going to be difficult to achieve and make appropriate use of the available space. While I feel the proposals are far from ideal, they are satisfactory and should be tolerable.

Recommendations:

- I recommend **APPROVAL** for this application subject to the following conditions being applied:
 - All activity at the site is to be carried out in strict accordance with: - **Arboricultural Implications Assessment Report Ref: THA21635aia-amsB, Rev.B:20.11.2018, dated 18/09/2018 (ACD Environmental).**
 - 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

Arun DC Tree Officer and the Arboricultural Expert representing the site owners – at this meeting all protective fencing will be inspected along with ground protection measures – they will be assessed to verify that 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. THA21635-03A, dated 11.09.2018.**

- 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