

Planning Officer: Mr F Gardner

Planning Application Ref: LY/9/19/T

Location: Lyminster Court, Lyminster Road, Lyminster, Littlehampton, BN17 7QF

Description of works: Fell 1no. holm oak tree (T4) and re-pollard by approx. 7-8m 3no. holm oak trees (T1 - T3).

Reasons Given: Health and Safety (structural defects)

Comments on Application:

- 4x holm oak (T1, T2, T3, T4) / *Quercus ilex* Average height: 15-20m Average spread: 5-10m Age class: Mature
- The applicant has employed ACS (Arboricultural Consultants) to assess the trees and provide a report on their condition. This is comprehensive and recommends a balanced set of work proposals to manage the trees in an appropriate state for their location.
 - They appear outwardly and from a distance to be in a fine physiological state. Close inspection reveals a number of structural defects and some associated decay events, which are detailed in the ACS report.
 - These four trees have previously been the subject of pollarding or severe crown reduction work. They have grown-on well and developed heavy crowns above those reduction points. Their form is asymmetric and 'drawn up', a natural consequence of their close spacing. In isolation this could be problematic but here there is strong group cohesion and mutual protection.
 - They are a landscape feature by virtue of their height and group canopy spread, although visible only in part from the public highway.
 - There is a risk associated with crown restoration work to this extent, especially on such aged trees; an important consideration to be balanced against the safety and public amenity implications of lesser works or removal.

Conclusions:

- T1 – T3 have developed heavy and congested limb/branch framework with significant structural defects apparent, such that if allowed to grow unchecked individual limb/large branch failures would undoubtedly occur.
- T4 presents an unacceptable level of risk for its location which cannot be resolved by pruning measures alone.
- The work proposed to all trees is proportionate and necessary to mitigate a risk of structural failure and so justified on arboricultural grounds.
- While a temporary loss of aesthetic value is inevitable, satisfactory canopy renewal and recovery should occur if the work is undertaken to a high standard and at an appropriate time of year.
- The proximity of T4 to a high boundary wall of conservation value and built structures discourages me from conditioning a replacement tree of potentially similar stature. The planting of a specimen tree elsewhere in the expansive grounds to compensate for the loss of high-tree canopy is encouraged.

Recommendations:

- I recommend **CONSENT** for this application, subject to the following conditions:
- **Conditions To Be Applied to Approved Work:** -
- The removal of crown material which has developed since the last operation must be done sympathetically and with respect to established 'knuckles' so as not to extend beyond the point of origin.

- 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
- 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.
- The long-term vitality of trees T1-T3 incl. is best respected when significant pruning work such as proposed, is undertaken during the mid to late-winter period (January to February). The work proposed must only be undertaken during this period. The felling of T4 can be undertaken at any time.

Reasons: In the interests of the trees 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

Figure 2 Positions of final cuts

