

Planning Officer: Mr F Gardner
Planning Application Ref: M/18/20/T
Location: 54 Sea Way, Middleton-On-Sea, PO22 7SA
Description of works: Crown reduction to 1no sycamore tree to height 15m and spread to 10m
Reasons given: Potential hazard/threat to persons and property

Comments on Application:

Sycamore / *Acer pseudoplatanus* Height: 15-20m Spread: 5-10m Age class: Mature

- This is a large tree with a full and spreading crown. Outwardly and from a distance it appears to be in a fine physiological state and structurally sound. It is visually impressive with an attractive profile, being a particularly fine example of its type.
- It is visible from neighbouring properties and traffic accessing/exiting this part of the estate. As such, it has public amenity value.
- Although an imposing specimen tree, overhead and lateral clearance of branches above and from adjacent dwellings is adequate. There is some scope for light pruning of lower branches to provide longer-term clearance of garden structures, although that would need to be accurately specified and applied for in a new application.
- The applicant proposes crown reduction to address potential hazard presented by this tree, following advice from two tree surgeons. We have not been made aware of any detailed investigation of this tree and no evidence or report from a suitably qualified and experienced person has been submitted in support of this application.
- My own ground-level visual assessment of the tree from its eastern aspect (restricted by ivy and other vegetation growing about the stem base/root collar) did not reveal any obvious signs of pathogen activity, significant structural defect or root-plate displacement; to suggest the tree could be structurally unsound and/or present an unacceptable level of risk for its location.

Conclusions:

- This tree requires careful management that respects its age and vulnerability to environmental changes.
- It appears to be outwardly sound and no evidence of structural instability or significant disease has been provided in support of the application. Furthermore, it appears harmonious with surrounding built form. Long-term clearance of the same could be achieved with careful pruning of selected lower branches (subject to approval from the local planning authority).
- This tree is a fine example of its type, provides significant visual amenity and has not been proven to present an unacceptable level of risk for its location, so should be retained in current form.

Recommendations:

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

Mark Warwick
Tree Officer / Parks and Greenspace Team

Figure 2 Positions of final cuts

