

Planning Officer: Ms Myer

Planning Application Ref: P/116/19/OUT

Location: Land adjacent to Sefter School House, Sefter Road, Bognor Regis, PO21 3EE

Description of works: Outline application with all matters reserved, except for access, for the erection of 4 No. semi-detached 3-bedroom houses & 2 No. detached 4-bedroom houses with associated access, parking & gardens. This application is a Departure from the Development Plan

Comments on Application:

- I have considered this application by means of a desktop review, using the information and plans submitted as well as online resources.
- The applicants have instructed their agent to prepare a Tree and Hedgerow Report & Method Statement_January 2020 for this project.
- Although well-intentioned and proposing retention/protection of perimeter trees, I find the Tree Survey Data is not comprehensive and furthermore has not been collated or the report prepared by - an Arboricultural Expert. As such, it does not accord with the requirements of BS5837:2012 –‘Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction.’
- There are significant off-site trees, which could be adversely affected by development of this site. As we are only considering the principle of development here and site access, the omission of comprehensive Arboricultural reports and plans is not too problematic, although we should expect a detailed Tree Survey and Tree Constraints Plan to be provided at the Outline stage.
- With the exception of one large roadside (sycamore?), there are few trees of obvious constraint to a sympathetic development. Off-site trees to the south have high growth potential and obvious landscape/screening value. It is possible that their roots will overlap the site and so must be considered individually in any subsequent tree survey. With so much of the site free of significant vegetation, I would expect any subsequent layout proposal to avoid conflict between trees and construction of any kind. Retained trees should also be afforded sufficient room to allow future growth without constraint.
- For future reference, I draw attention to the following guiding principles of design that I would recommend the applicant is mindful of as the project evolves:
- There does not appear to be a surface water drainage (and foul water sewer) strategy for the site. This fundamental element of the design ought to be addressed to our satisfaction in association with layout proposals, so that we are not subsequently held hostage to flood mitigation measures which could then impact heavily on retained (on/off-site) trees and landscape plans.
- The nominal root protection areas (RPA) of retained trees and their growth potential may be significant constraints to the siting of any SUDS (e.g. attenuation pond) or introduction of subterranean utility apparatus.
- Any improvements to existing or creation of new watercourses within the RPA of retained trees to be fully considered, details provided in advance and to our satisfaction. Where there is a significant risk of damage to those trees arising from such operations, then an alternative strategy should be proposed.

Conclusions:

- The principle of development as described is certainly achievable without undue detriment to retained on/off-site trees, although we are yet to have sight of the necessary arboricultural report and plans to demonstrate this has been properly considered.

- In the absence of a comprehensive Tree Survey Exercise and Tree Constraints Plan prepared by an Arboricultural Expert (the minimum detailed required for us to properly assess the application) I am unable to lend this scheme my full support.

Recommendations:

1. The applicants will need to employ the services of an **Arboricultural Consultant** to carry out a tree survey exercise and then prepare an **Arboricultural Impact 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.

Advisory:

- If this comes back in as a full and detailed application it will need to be supported by an Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement Report inclusive of a Tree Protection Plan defining which trees are to be retained and which trees are to be removed and how they would propose to protect the retained trees and if necessary mitigate any adverse impact on the root systems of these trees – thus complying with the recommendations of BS5837:2012.

Mark Warwick

Tree Officer / Parks and Greenspace Team