

Planning Officer: Harry Chalk

Planning Application Ref: R/263/21/T

Location: Various locations throughout Sea Estate Rustington

Description of works: Various works to various trees

Reasons given: 1. General maintenance 2. Hazard abatement (nos. 11A & 12A)

Comments on Application:

- There are many trees included in this proposal. The document 'Proposed TPO Work' (TABLE A) and associated Plan were simultaneously considered during my site assessment. The information contained therein appears accurate and descriptions of work are comprehensive.
- Where crown reduction pruning has occurred previously (nos. 1A, 2A) it is often necessary to repeat that operation on a cyclical basis, to prevent heavy and weakly attached limbs developing.
- Where crown reduction pruning is to be initiated, there must be sound reasons to justify a loss of visual amenity that usually arises from modifying the tree's form.

Conclusions:

- The vast majority of proposed work is justified on arboricultural grounds. Most are high-profile specimen trees of significant public amenity and to be carefully pruned to maintain adequate clearance of residential property and safety for highway users.
- I am not satisfied that there is justification for whole crown reduction pruning to nos. 11A and 12A. They are exposed trees with correspondingly compact yet highly attractive crown profiles. They are of late-mature age class and outwardly appear to be free from significant structural defect and in fine physiological condition. They require careful management that respects their age and vulnerability to environmental changes and disease progression.
- Whilst known for their tolerance of coastal conditions they are prone to small branch breakage during inclement weather and over-extended limbs may also develop longitudinal splits. The latter is often a progressive event and usually identified during routine inspection long before they become unduly hazardous. They are also known for being wind firm at the root-plate and free from pests and disease, the notable exception being a slow but progressive fungal infection which causes scattered dieback of distal branches. Surprisingly for trees of this age, they appear largely free of such disease and so are especially fine examples of their type.
- *Crown reduction* may reduce the frequency of small branch breakage in the short term but suddenly exposing the crown interior in such an exposed location may set in train a loss of vitality and structural integrity which could not be recovered.

Recommendations:

- As it stands, I would recommend refusal for this application. **I would like the applicant to be invited to agree to a revised proposal for lesser works** (by removing the crown reduction proposal for nos. 11A & 12A) as part of the current application so as not to incur further delay.

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- If the applicant is prepared to re-submit in line with this advice, then I would be able to recommend APPROVAL subject to the following condition:

Condition to Be Applied to All Approved Works:

Part a) 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

Part b) 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.

Part c) Where pollarding or crown reduction pruning has occurred previously (nos. 1A & 2A), then 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.

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*

Advisory:

- The long-term vitality of tree nos. 1A & 2A is best respected when significant pruning work such as proposed, is undertaken during the late spring to summer period (May to August).

Mark Warwick
Tree Officer / Parks and Greenspace Team

Figure 2 Positions of final cuts

