

Planning Officer: Harry Chalk
Planning Application Ref: WA/115/21/T
Location: Oak Bank, Wandleys Lane, Walberton, BN18 0QR
Description of works: Various work to 1no. oak tree (T1)
Reasons given: 1. Reduce risk of branch failure 2. Improve sightlines

Comments on Application:

T1 Pedunculate oak/*Quercus robur*, Height: 15-20m, Radial spread: 10-15m, Age class: Late-mature

- This magnificent tree (c200years old) appears outwardly to be in a fine physiological state. It has a full and relatively unmodified crown which is visually impressive from all aspects.
- The character of this semi-rural lane is defined by the presence of long-established roadside oak trees, which overhang the road and form an impressive high canopy.
- It is accepted that a risk of limb/branch failure exists although that can be mitigated with a programme of regular inspection by a competent person and so remain at a reasonable level.
- Vehicle sightlines from the applicant's driveway appear adequate although may be improved slightly by clearance of other low-level vegetation growing from the roadside verge.
- Low branches from the oak (T1) may affect broader enjoyment/use of the property in future.
- The proposal to raise the crown to provide 5metres overhead clearance on all aspects is potentially harmful to the trees ongoing vitality and exceeds British Standard (BS3998:2010) Tree work – Recommendations.
- The removal of dead branches is an exception and does not require permission from the local planning authority.

Conclusions:

- This tree requires careful management that respects its age and vulnerability to environmental changes and disease progression.
- It has not been demonstrated that whole crown reduction (height and spread) to any extent is justified on arboricultural grounds.
- The tree is a significant feature in the local landscape and appears to be in adequately sound and healthy condition. The tree surgery proposed in the application would result in excessive reduction of the tree's landscape impact and undue detriment to the visual amenities of the locality.

Recommendation:

- As it stands, I am unable to support this application. I **would like the applicant to be invited to agree to a revised proposal for lesser works** (such as described below) **and as part of the current application so as not to incur further delay**. Such work would go some way to addressing their concerns whilst preventing a diminution of the tree's landscape and public amenity value:

'Crown lift (removal/reduction of low branches) to achieve a maximum of 4metres overhead clearance on all aspects and only where pruning wound size does not exceed 75mm diameter.'

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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 Approved Work: -

Condition 1

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.

Reasons: In the interest of the tree's 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 applicant might refer to comments made by the Tree Officer in response to WA/59/21/PL, which provide information on exceptions for the pruning of branches which obstruct safe passage for highway users.

Mark Warwick
Tree Officer / Greenspace

Figure 3 Crown lifting

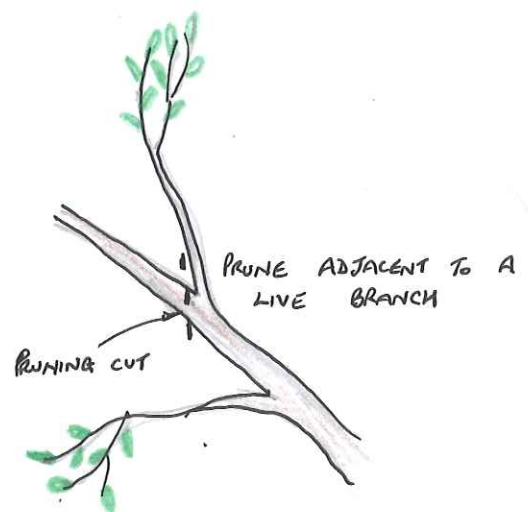
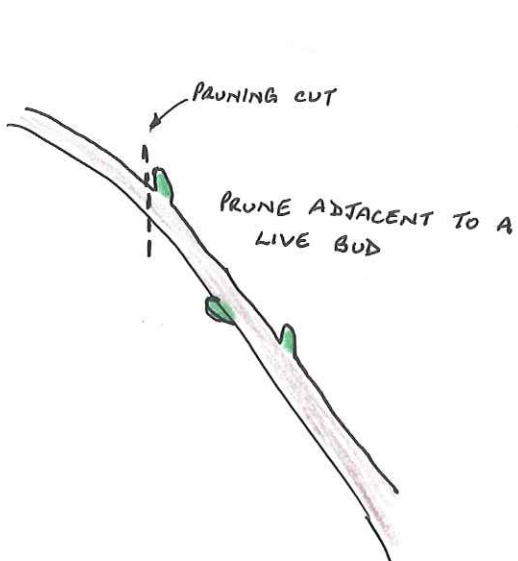
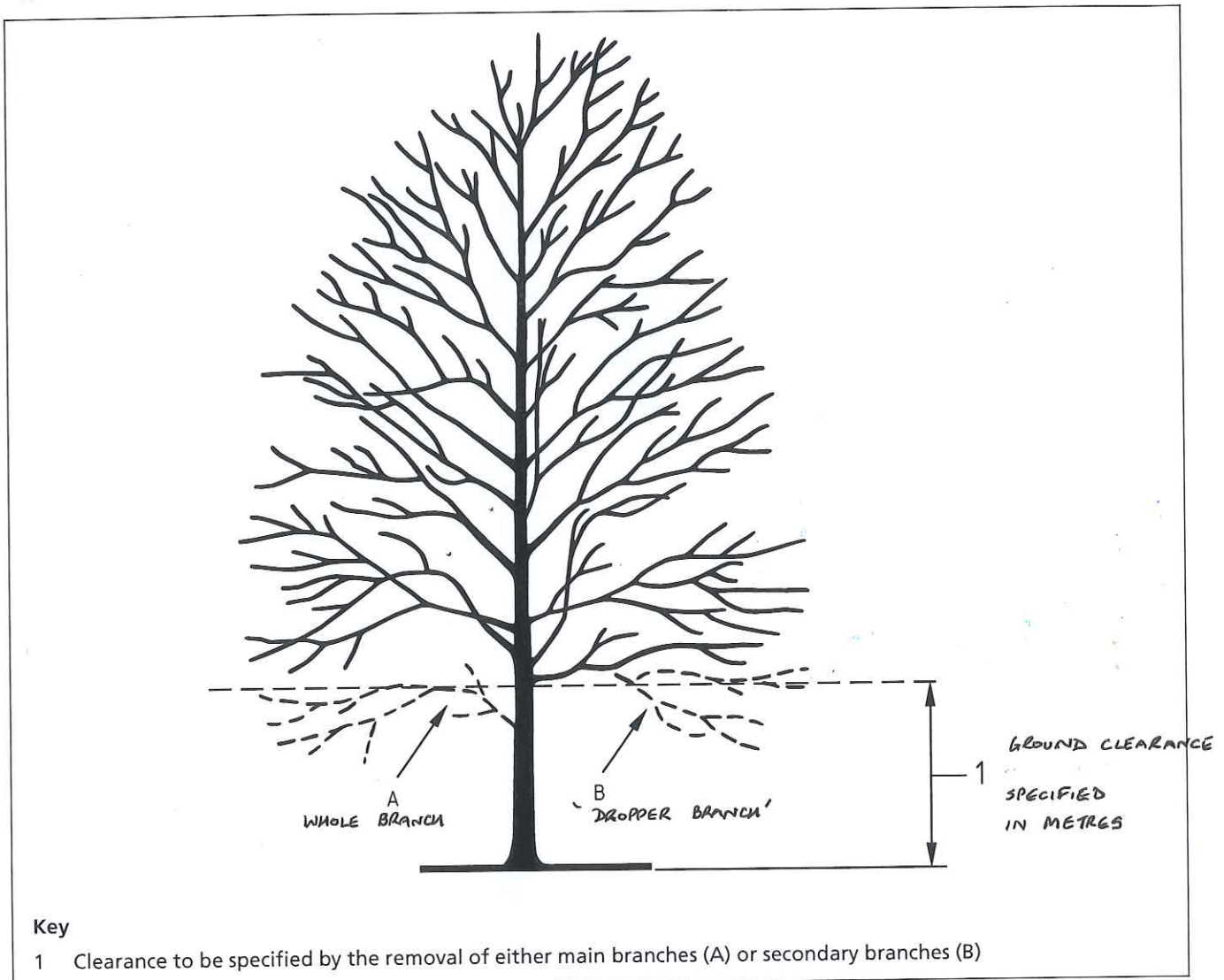


Figure 2 Positions of final cuts

