

Planning Officer: Mr A Wood

Planning Application Ref: **WA/50/20/RES**

Location: **Former Lanes End House, West Walberton Lane, Walberton, BN18 0QS**

Description of works: **Approval of reserved matters following outline consent WA/26/18/OUT for appearance, landscaping, layout & scale for the demolition of 1No. dwelling & the erection of 6 No. dwellings (resubmission following WA/7/19/RES).**

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 employed Brown Fisher Environmental LLP (Reports4Planning) to prepare an Arboricultural Report inclusive of Tree Survey Schedule, Method Statement and a Tree Protection Plan for this project.
- The Tree Survey data is comprehensive and accords with the requirements of BS5837:2012. I am mostly in agreement with the retention category ratings applied, although take issue with T15 – yew, a TPO tree being assigned Category B.
- There are significant on and off-site trees, seven of which enjoy statutory protection by virtue of their high public amenity and/or landscape value. They could be adversely affected by these proposals. In total, twelve trees have been recorded as individuals (including those seven) with eight to be retained as part of this scheme.

In respect of layout proposals, I identify the following areas for further consideration:

- This development does not seek to fully accommodate and benefit from the long-term presence of higher value trees. I recommend **removing plot 06** from the scheme to allow a **separation and movement north/re-orientation of plots 03 – 05 incl.** – so that all construction within Root Protection Areas (RPA) is avoided. Furthermore, that would reduce the effect of shading on dwellings from tree canopy (with subsequent residential pressure to prune) and ground compaction/introduction of garden installations over rooting zones.
- Several groups of trees are to be removed, which include numerous individuals in excess of 10metres height and either in good or fair condition. Whilst not an arguable constraint to an otherwise quality scheme, their loss is not insignificant from an environmental perspective and ought to be **compensated for with replacement tree planting as part of a detailed Landscape Plan for the site.**
- **The removal of T4** – established sycamore would seem to be **avoidable with a more sympathetic layout.** Established roadside trees of this size and form provide screening and contribute to the rural character of the lane.
- It is anticipated that substantial site perimeter and plot boundary fencing will occur within the nominal RPA of many individual trees. Whilst fencing installation can be undertaken sympathetically (as described in the Arboricultural Report (Method Statement) there is a risk of damage occurring to structurally important roots even at the exploratory stage. Not significant on its own, but one of several cumulative pressures that overall could have significant negative effect for the ongoing health and vitality of older trees.
- **T15 yew (TPO)** is young for its type and is in good condition with uniform crown. It should be a Category A tree and given ample room to flourish, not hemmed in by additional structures within its existing area of influence (crown/roots). Revise layout to fully respect **RPA plus minimum 2m buffer zone required.**
- **T17 oak (TPO).** Revise layout to fully respect **RPA plus minimum 2m buffer zone required.**
- 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 essential measures which could then impact heavily on retained trees/landscape plans.
- I draw attention to the nominal root protection areas (RPA) of retained trees and their growth potential as obvious constraints to both the siting of any drainage features including soakaways and introduction of subterranean utility apparatus.

Conclusions:

- Trees of lesser quality and landscape value will inevitably have to be sacrificed to provide the only logical access onto the plot. Although not described or shown in detail on any plan, the principle is reasonable and of itself ought not to incur undue detriment to the visual amenity of surrounding area.
- With so few trees remaining across the site and largely confined to the perimeter; there ought to be few incidents of (if any) conflict between trees and construction/dwelling. Those trees to be retained should be afforded sufficient room to not only flourish during any development but to permit future growth without constraint. The above areas of conflict (**highlighted**) should be 'designed out' within a revised layout that is more sympathetic to established trees.
- I am uncomfortable with this level of intrusion into the nominal root protection area of established trees, for which I see no overriding justification. The combined extent of raft foundations, ground protection and no-dig construction areas (the latter two shown on the TPP plan) is symptomatic of that intrusion. Whilst they propose recognised protection measures for working in proximity to retained trees, it must be noted that element is ambitious in extent and carries a high risk of accidental damage.
- I believe the vulnerability of trees during the construction phase (however well-intentioned the scheme of tree protection) and potential longer-term pressures from increased ground compaction over tree root systems and a 'pressure to prune' - collectively present a risk to the enduring character of the area, in part defined by the presence of mature trees and understorey vegetation, most notable along the sites southern boundary.

Recommendation:

- As it stands, I am unable to lend this scheme my support and so register an **OBJECTION**.

Mark Warwick
Tree Officer / Parks and Greenspace Team