

Planning Officer: Ross Leal [Anita Gardner]

Planning Application: Seeking advice on a planning application for this site for 9 new dwellings.

Reference: WA/75/17/PL

Location: Land adjacent to Sunny Corner, Copse Lane, Walberton

Comments:

- The applicants have employed the **Broad Oak Tree Consultancy** to prepare an Arboricultural Impact Assessment & Method Statement along with a Tree Constraints Plan and a Tree Protection Plan for this project.
- The Tree Survey data is comprehensive and accords with the requirements of BS5837:2012.
- However the calculation of multi-stemmed trees does not - in that a 'so called' equivalent single stem diameter is quoted in place of the correct diameters of each stem being measured at 1.5m from ground and listed in the schedule and then the calculation methodology detailed in BS5837 applied to arrive at an RPA. Thus I have no way of checking if the RPA's quoted for the multi-stemmed trees are correct.
- This site abuts Potwell Copse (north of) and this is a designated site of Ancient Woodland – I have read the Ecologists report submitted in support of the application but cannot agree with its conclusions because it is the site that is important and not the individual trees within it and to reduce the buffer zone would place pressure on these edge trees to be heavily pruned or felled and thus begin the process of erosion of the woodland edge.
- Access to this site is proposed from Copse Lane - necessitating that two small Field Maple are removed (I have no issue with this) and a 'No Dig' Porous road is constructed to avoid root damage to the Oak T20. The layout proposed significantly impinges on the RPA for Oak T24.
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Conclusions:

- The accuracy of the tree root protection data submitted in support of this application cannot at this time be verified and further information on the diameters of the multi-stemmed trees will need to be submitted.
- I would advocate a 15m buffer zone is enforced across the northern side of the site abutting Potwell Copse to protect the site of Ancient Woodland – furthermore I recommend that a Woodland TPO is made to cover this Copse to provide greater protection for the future.
- Access Road - whilst this could be achieved the plans currently state that it will be a 'minimal excavation' which is not acceptable and they will have to come up with a specific design that is a porous above ground constructed 'No Dig' solution throughout the RPA of the Oak. In the interim this tree is under threat and I recommend that a TPO is made to protect it.
- The overlap of the RPA of Oak T24 is unacceptable and I would wish to see a re-design that fully respects the RPA by staying outside of it with all new buildings. In the interim this tree is under threat and I recommend that a TPO is made to protect it.

Recommendations:

- As it stands I would have to register an **OBJECTION** to the layout proposed as it poses a threat to significant and highly valued trees in the landscape as well as a site of Ancient Woodland.