

Planning Officer: Mr S Davis

Planning Application Ref: Y/72/20/RES

Location: Land at Stakers Farm, North End Road, Yapton

Description of works: **Approval of reserved matters following outline approval Y/44/17/OUT for the erection of 70 No. dwellings, public open space, play area, drainage & landscaping. This application affects the character & appearance of the Main Road/Church Road Yapton Conservation Area & affects the setting of Listed Buildings**

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.
- I am mindful of previous comments and recommendations made by our appointed arboricultural consultant, in his report dated 3rd August 2017 (Y/44/17/OUT) that mostly remain relevant at this later time and which I endorse. The recommended conditions 4 & 6 must be superseded within any approved Reserved Matters decision as the proposed layout and its impact on retained trees has substantially changed.
- The applicants have employed PJC Consultancy to prepare an Arboricultural Impact Assessment & Method Statement (AIA & AMS) along with a series of Tree Protection Plans (TPP) for this project.
- The Tree Survey data is comprehensive and accords with the requirements of BS5837:2012.
- With few trees existing across the site, there is ample opportunity to avoid conflict between them and any construction. Those trees to be retained (mostly Category B of moderate growth potential) have largely been afforded sufficient room to permit future growth above ground level without constraint (access facilitation pruning aside) although I find the footway construction along the west boundary of the site (adjacent T14, 18, 23-25incl.) problematic for the following reasons:
 - It is proposed to adjust the final position of the path to accommodate stem of T25. Such ambiguity at this stage is unhelpful and does not bode well for that tree's prospect.
 - The use of a 'No-dig' construction method within the RPA of retained trees to protect soil structure is explicit in the AMS but not illustrated upon the Tree Protection Plans. This increases the chance of a breakdown in understanding of permitted works in proximity to retained trees, with damage and/or losses resulting.
 - The proximity of footway to trees does not appear to have satisfactorily considered growth potential of those trees (stem and buttress root expansion); which is likely to lead to their premature removal.
 - The excavation into the RPA of T21 (and removal of T20) to accommodate the Infiltration Basin is undesirable from an arboricultural perspective and may also be unacceptable to our Drainage Engineer given growth potential of the former.

In conclusion, it feels as if the retention of those trees has been approached without sufficient regard for their potential long-term contribution to this development proposal. Their proposed retention appears tokenistic and unlikely to be successful, so approving this layout will represent a fait accompli.

- There does not appear to be an approvable surface water drainage 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 trees/landscape plans/open space provision.

Conclusion:

- The principle of development as described is in my view unachievable without detriment to or loss of retained on-site trees. Although I am not entirely satisfied with the proposal, believing the higher value trees proposed for retention will ultimately succumb to development pressure – their loss can be adequately mitigated with an ambitious tree planting element to the overall soft landscape scheme.

Recommendations:

- If you are minded to approve this application as it stands, I recommend the following conditions be applied:
- 1. Before the site is occupied or any machinery is introduced to the site or demolition work or construction work or alterations to existing ground levels takes place a **PRE-COMMENCEMENT Site Meeting** is to take place between the Planning Authority's Tree Officer and the Arboricultural Expert representing the site owner(s) – at this meeting all protective fencing and ground protection measures will be inspected to verify they are 'Fit for Purpose' as required under British Standard 5837:2012 and have been erected and positioned exactly as shown on the **Tree Protection Plan PJC/5593/20/C (sheets 1-6 incl.)**, **28/07/2020**.

Reasons: To comply with BS5837 and to ensure that retained trees are afforded due respect and appropriate levels of protection such that their ongoing health and vitality is not compromised, and they can continue to enhance the landscape and amenity of the area.

- 2. All activity at the site is to be carried out in strict accordance with: - **Arboricultural Method Statement, PJC ref: 5593/20-02 Rev-**, **28/07/2020**.

- If there is deemed to be a need for any Utility Service Route connections to bisect retained tree Root Protection Areas/Zones, then prior to their installation a Method Statement prepared by an Arboricultural Expert must be submitted that stipulates how this can be achieved without adverse impact on tree roots. Written approval and confirmation of acceptance of this Methodology must be issued before any works are commenced out on site.

Reasons: To comply with BS5837 and to ensure that retained trees are afforded due respect and appropriate levels of protection such that their ongoing health and vitality is not compromised, and they can continue to enhance the landscape and amenity of the area.

Mark Warwick
Tree Officer / Parks and Greenspace Team