

Planning Officer: David Easton

Planning Application Ref: Y/91/17/OUT

Location: Land at Bilsham Road, Yapton

Description of works: Outline application for the development of up to 250 residential dwellings (Class C3) vehicular access, public open space, ancillary works and associated infrastructure. Departure from the Development Plan

Comments on Application:

- The applicants employed the PJC Consultancy back in November 2017 to undertake a tree survey and then prepare an Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) PJC/4699/17-02 R2. Tree Survey data is adequate at this stage and broadly accords with the requirements of BS5837:2012. I have referred to Illustrative detailed masterplan drg. 1244G.03 to assist with determining the accuracy of the Tree Constraints and Tree Retention Plans submitted by PJC with their AIA report. This allows me to gain a general understanding of how the plot layout and access routes relate to trees but is not specific enough for me to have full confidence they will be adequately respected and protected. PJC Consultancy have submitted a revised Arboricultural Survey and AIA, ref. nos 3867/15/01 & /02 - Rev 04 and dated 13th and 14th March 2018 respectively. I have been asked to consider the amendments and provide comment. The supporting text within suggests a well-intentioned plan for significant trees on the site although it lacks the necessary detail to ensure their adequate protection and respect once development is underway.
- The site contains a number of significant trees, both within and along most aspects of the site perimeter. These have already attained considerable landscape value and have potential to provide a long-term aesthetic contribution to the proposed development. The stem diameter readings (an important factor informing the appropriate extent of RPA) are reasonably estimated but many of the tree heights are substantially underestimated and retention categories suggest an inclination to demote their status. A number of additional trees have been identified for removal (T11, T12, T21, T27, T38 & T40). None of these appear to have been included in the recent making of Orders (TPO) at the site and there is ample opportunity to compensate for their loss with the provision of a suitable soft-landscape design.

Conclusions:

- I am pleased to see there is intent to retain the vast majority of recorded trees in harmony with the development, but I cannot be satisfied that this will be achievable until we receive a Tree Protection Plan (TPP) overlaying the final proposed site design layout, with supporting Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) where RPA (Root protection area) incursion is anticipated - which I would expect to see submitted with a subsequent full planning application.
- At this outline stage, the indicative layout and access arrangements and the appointed arboriculturalist's general regard for significant trees existing on site are encouraging and I am in broad agreement with their survey information. That said, I am concerned that there appear to be notable omissions in respect of existing tree cover along several sections of the site perimeter (South, adjacent arable farmland – East, rear of The Millers – North, south of dwellings at Tack Lee Road). This may be deliberate as the proposed design does not at this stage suggest any direct interference with them but it is important to consider all trees whether they are on or off-site and within potential influencing distance, so as to inform the site layout design which may of course be subject to revision. Any omissions will need to be addressed and therefore included in the aforementioned TPP and AMS should this proceed to a full planning application. Despite appearing in symbolic form on the Illustrative detailed masterplan drg. 1244G.03, significant trees located within the Southern site perimeter hedgerow were omitted from the tree survey schedule provided by PJC. They are of such dimensions and proximity as to be a material consideration and will require full consideration and appropriate levels of protection before any work can commence on site. I have determined that the majority of these merit a TPO. These trees have now been included in the tree survey schedule and so should be recognised in the anticipated TPP.

- I have considered the importance and future retention of significant landscape trees growing within the hedgerow that runs parallel along the W boundary of the site, the majority of which I proposed as subjects for Tree Preservation Order, when considering application (Y/92/17/OUT) for the adjoining site.
- We should expect the majority of retained trees to come under the usual 'pressure to prune' if development proceeds. They are in possession of largely un-modified 'natural' crown profiles and either are or could become trees of notable stature – which can be easily accommodated and respected with a sensible design. Of special concern to me is the veteran oak (T8), which I have determined as being of fair structural and physiological condition and with significant ecological value. For it to be retained satisfactorily within the development, the proposal to 'cap' the RPA at 15m radius should be re-visited to prevent any disturbance to the root system and provide this tree with the room to endure without coming under pressure for hazard abatement pruning work. Such work would reduce its ecological and habitat value greatly. The current proposal to install a footway within the North sector of the RPA (despite the suggestion of 'no-dig' construction methodology) and position a private garden beneath the crown spread on the South aspect are clearly incompatible with these objectives. My recommendation that RPA incursion is avoided and the min.15m capped zone remain sacrosanct still stands. The applicant proposes the submission of a Tree Protection Plan and Arboricultural Method Statement at the Reserved Matters stage. I may understand the provision of the latter is pending their gaining sight of proposed utility service runs and other apparatus and so at this stage generic prescriptions for adequately respecting trees during RPA incursion are all they can submit. That said, the absence of both plan and statement at this stage is unsatisfactory and until we receive these submissions and to our satisfaction I must raise an OBJECTION to the proposal as it stands.
- I anticipate the making of individual Tree Preservation Orders will be appropriate and shall be returning to site shortly with a view to assessing all those of significance about the site. I will attach the appropriate TEMPO forms and site plans to assist you in making these orders in due course. Please find attached tempo forms and corresponding site plans. I would be very grateful to receive a copy of the basic schedule and plan for the Orders once they have been served.

Mark Warwick

Tree Officer / Parks and Greenspace Team