HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL CONSULTATION

TO:	Horsham District Council – Planning Dept
LOCATION:	Land to the South of Broadbridge Way Broadbridge Heath
DESCRIPTION:	Full Planning Application for the erection of 89no. residential dwellings comprising dwellings (54no.) and apartments (35no.), 36% affordable homes, creation of new vehicular access on to Sergent Way, provision of public open space, landscaping and drainage solutions
REFERENCE:	DC/25/0894
RECOMMENDATION:	**Holding objection / modification**
SUMMARY OF COMMENTS & RECOMMENDATION: **The submitted Arboricultural method statement and Tree protection plan are a fair assessment of the tree-related impacts of the development proposals at the site. However, some modification to the site layout is needed to address Root Protection Area conflicts and likely future resident pressure due to poor tree-to-build relationships post-development.**	

MAIN COMMENTS:

Tree removals

A total of 24 individual 'C' category trees and 2 groups of trees are indicated for removal. No 'A' or 'B' category trees are affected. The removals refer to trees of modest arboricultural value, and any losses can be mitigated through robust replacement planting; no concerns raised with this aspect of the scheme.

I note that the trees within G38 and the Ash T42 are in significant decline. The trees within G38 and T42 are located adjacent to a proposed garden space and are shown to be monolithed (cut back to tall standing stems) for safety reasons. While it is accepted that their retention in some form will provide some ecological benefits to the site. However, given that the trees' long-term viability for successful retention is extremely limited, even if monolithed, they will need to be removed eventually. I do not consider that their retention is realistically viable for the long term, given the change of use of the site and the future safety concerns associated with dead trees. In short, the Ash trees in question should be removed and replaced as part of the application, rather than at a later date, when securing appropriate replacement trees could become challenging.

Root Protection Area conflicts

Development is proposed within the Root Protection Areas (RPAs) of several retained trees, specifically: T19 (9.5%), likely more. T31 (5.5%) likely more. T39 (7.9%), T40 (11%), and T41 (6.3%)

BS5837:2012 paragraph 5.3.1, states:

5.3.1 The default position should be that structures (see 3.10) are located outside the RPAs of trees to be retained. However, where there is an overriding justification for construction within the RPA, technical solutions might be available that prevent damage to the tree(s) (see Clause 7). If operations within the RPA are proposed, the project arboriculturist should:

a) demonstrate that the tree(s) can remain viable and that the area lost to encroachment can be compensated for elsewhere, contiguous with its RPA;

b) propose a series of mitigation measures

While a no-dig construction method using a cellular confinement system is proposed to prevent/mitigate harm to the affected trees, where development falls with the RPA, and it is also acknowledged that the extent of the incursion falls below 20%. Nonetheless, the AMS advises that there are instances where the tree protection fencing would need to be moved during the development to allow excavations, the affected trees are T31 and T19, which do not fully eliminate significant construction activity within RPAs. This undermines the BS's intent to avoid RPA disturbance altogether.

In addition, no "***overriding justification"*** for development within the RPA has been provided to justify this action, nor has it been demonstrated that the affected trees can remain viable, or that the area lost to development encroachment can be compensated for elsewhere within their RPAs.

Additionally, I have concerns with how the RPAs of certain trees have been plotted.:

"4.6.2 The RPA for each tree should initially be plotted as a circle centred on the base of the stem. Where pre-existing site conditions or other factors indicate that rooting has occurred asymmetrically, a polygon of equivalent area should be produced. Modifications to the shape of the RPA should reflect a soundly

based arboricultural assessment of likely root distribution."

The RPA for T34 (Category A2 oak) is drawn as a standard circle, extending equally in all directions. However, the existing off-site engineered hardstanding (Old Wickhurst Lane) to the east has likely restricted root development in this direction. In this case, the impermeable surfaces to the east would, in my opinion, have discouraged root proliferation in this area, suggesting major tree roots would be located to south and west into the site. The RPA should therefore be adjusted further to the west, and not remain circular, to demonstrate the true extent of development proposed with the RPA of T34.

The RPA of T19 (Category A2 Oak). Similar to T34, the RPA for T19 is shown as a uniform circle. However, off-site hard surfacing to the north will likely constrain rooting in this area; this has not been considered as part of the assessment.

The RPA of T31 (Category B2 Horse chestnut) also appears constrained to the north by off-site engineered hardstanding. As such, its RPA has not been offset accordingly; a more site-sensitive RPA plot is required.

Using default circular RPAs for T34, T19, and T31 fails to account for site-specific rooting constraints, contrary to BS5837:2012 section 4.6.2. The RPAs of the affected trees should be asymmetrically adjusted, increasing protection in the developable area to better reflect likely rooting patterns. The way in which the RPAs have been plotted underestimate existing constraints and could expose critical roots to damage during development.

Future Residents' pressure concerns

Several retained trees (T39, T40, T41) have canopies that overhang proposed dwellings. These are proposed to be pruned to allow 1.5m clearance for construction. However, BS5837 at paragraph 5.3.4 advised that:

"5.3.4 A realistic assessment of the probable impact of any proposed development on the trees and vice versa should take into account the characteristics and condition of the trees, with due allowance and space for their future growth and maintenance requirements. To maximize the probability of successful tree retention, the following factors should be taken into account during the design process.

5.3.4 - c) Direct damage. Below-ground damage to structures can occur as a result of incremental root and stem growth. Above-ground damage can occur to trees and structures by the continuous whipping of branches against the fabric of a building. Branch ends might have to be cut back periodically, possibly affecting the shape of the tree. Structures should therefore be designed and/or located with due consideration for a tree's ultimate growth, so as to reduce the need for frequent remedial pruning or other maintenance.

Thus, the proximity of retained trees to some of the new plots will, in my opinion, result in foreseeable future pressure to remove or prune them heavily, contrary to the guidance set within the BS. In short, if you need to undertake surgery works simply to build the new dwelling, this would imply that it is likely that the future residents will also have concerns with the proximity of the tree to the new property.

The key trees of concern for overshadowing, shading and tree-to-build proximity are,

T39, T40, T41 all Oaks. These are large, mature trees indicated for retention near residential units - plots 64, 50, 51, 52, and 55. The AMS advises that crown pruning will be needed to allow 1.5m clearance for the scaffolding required to erect the new dwelling in Plot 64, which would imply that as the trees recover from the works and develop new growth their canopies will overhang proposed buildings and likely shade both gardens and rear elevations of the affected buildings.

The tree protection plan (TPP) shows that plots 50, 51, 52, and 55 specifically required partial removal of G7 to create ***"adequate garden space"***. Suggesting these plots will likely experience significant shading issues seasonal leaf litter, and other tree related detritus, caused by the adjacent mature trees. Even with some above ground pruning, retained sizable trees near to plot boundaries are likely to cause post-development tree-related concerns with the new occupiers, leading to future pressures for further pruning or felling, contrary to the precautionary principle of BS set out in para 5.3.4 a).

5.3.4 - a) Shading. Shading by trees affects buildings and open spaces.

1) ***Shading of buildings. Shading of buildings by trees can be a problem, particularly where there are rooms which require natural light. Proposed buildings should be designed to take account of existing trees, their ultimate size and density of foliage, and the effect that these will have on the availability of light.***

2) ***Shading of open spaces. Open spaces such as gardens and sitting areas should be designed to meet the normal requirement for direct sunlight for at least a part of the day.***

No specific shadow path analysis or shade diagrams have been provided to support the application.

The current layout underestimates tree-related constraints within and those outside of the site and may expose critical roots to damage during development, coupled with post-development pressures to heavily prune or remove trees of high visual amenity value indicated for retention.

ANY RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS: Not at the moment

NAME:	Andy Bush Arboricultural Officer
DEPARTMENT:	Strategic Planning (Specialist Team)
DATE:	11/07/25