



HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL CONSULTATION

TO:	Horsham District Council – Planning Dept
LOCATION:	Woodfords Shipley Road Southwater
DESCRIPTION:	Reserved matters application for the erection of up to 73no. dwellings, open space and child play provision, residential parking facilities and associated infrastructure, including access arrangements following outline application DC/21/2180, relating to layout, scale, appearance and landscaping.
REFERENCE:	DC/25/1658
RECOMMENDATION:	Advice/Modification
SUMMARY OF COMMENTS & RECOMMENDATION: The proposed layout is relatively favourable towards arboricultural constraints at the site. Significant boundary trees and hedgerow features are largely retained, and tree loss is for the most part limited to low-quality, dead, or diseased specimens or minor hedgerow sections required for access. Some incursions into RPAs occur, and have been technically justified, and mitigated through appropriate no-dig construction and arboricultural supervision, although some amendments to the route of the drainage infrastructure in some areas to avoid RPA conflicts. The proximity of a small number of dwellings to mature boundary oaks may give rise to some future resident concerns, but these can likely be managed with appropriate long-term maintenance.	

MAIN COMMENTS:**Site Layout Observations**

The mature tree belt south of the residential estate Rascals Close to the north is subject to statutory protection under TPO/1436, it is listed as W3 of the order it should be noted that TPO is a woodland order whereby all trees with the designated area benefit from protection under the TPO regardless of species or size.

The scheme appears to demonstrate a relatively well-structured response to the site's arboricultural constraints, particularly the prominent oak-lined tree belts and mixed hedgerows along Shipley Road, and those along the northern, eastern and southern site boundaries. The residential development parcels are positioned within former paddocks, while the access roads are placed around the outer edges of the site, which is positive to see.

The revised vehicular access diminishes the total level of tree removal compared with the previously consented alignment. The pedestrian link in the northwest corner has been redesigned to utilise an existing track, thereby avoiding unnecessary breaks in the tree line and retaining the integrity of the boundary vegetation and mature tree coverage in the area. SuDS features such as basins and swales have mostly been aligned to avoid RPAs wherever possible, with only some minor hedgerow disturbance being shown in the supporting tree documents; this mostly in the southeast corner of the site.

RPA Observations

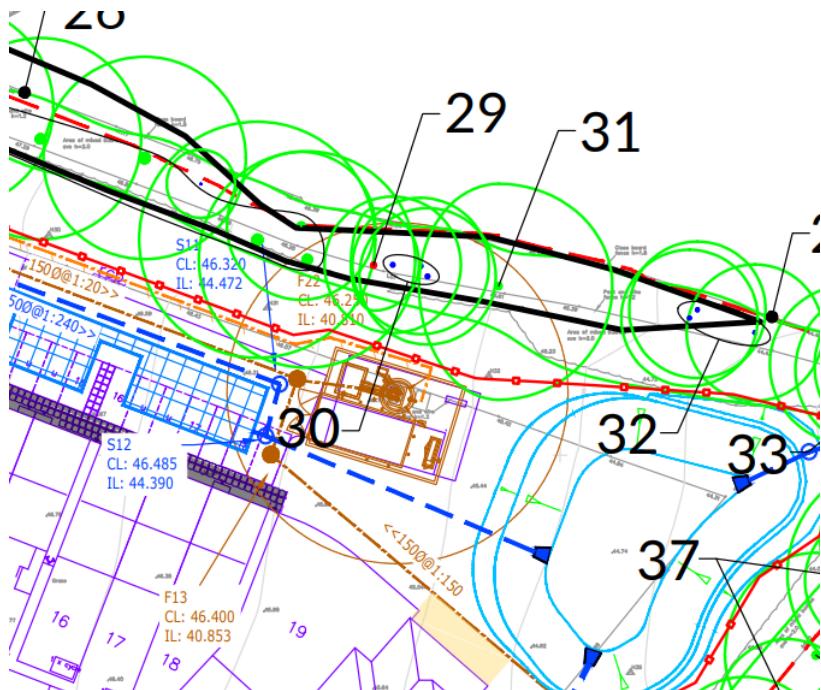
Intrusions into RPAs occur in some locations, particularly where footpaths and limited hard surfacing pass close to, or partly within, the RPAs of retained boundary trees. These areas are proposed to be constructed using industry accepted no-dig methodologies, including cellular confinement systems installed on top of existing soil levels. For the most part, subject to these RPA encroachments being limited to what is presently shown, and the strict adherence to the no-dig principles (can be conditioned) the works within the RPAs of retained trees can be appropriately controlled.

Drainage infrastructure has mostly been positioned outside RPAs, with shallow swale outfalls only touching the margins of rooting zones in locations where root presence is expected to be limited due to existing historical ditch features. Notwithstanding, the above, some amendments are needed with certain sections of the drainage system, please see Trees with RPAs Directly Affected below.

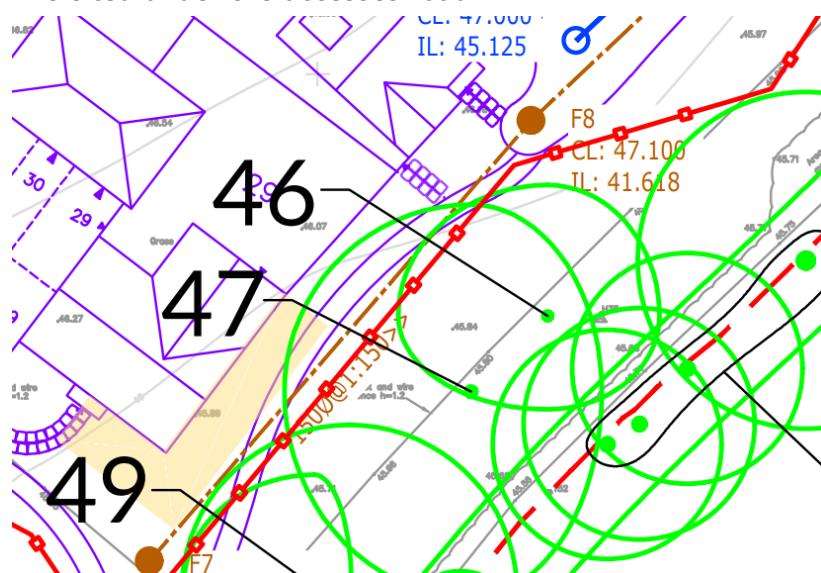
Given the greenfield nature of the site, if amendments to the utilities or drainage infrastructure are considered to be unworkable, suitable root-friendly installation techniques, such as thrust boring or impact moling, MUST be used and secured by a planning condition. Furthermore, if the use of thrust boring or impact moling be deemed to be too costly, and hand digging is suggested, it should be noted that BS 5837 does not permit excavation within RPAs based solely on the assumption that the use of hand tools makes it acceptable; such work must be supported by prior investigation and a detailed method statement. Paragraph 7.7.2 of BS 5837 allows hand-dug excavation within RPAs only where it can be demonstrated that roots can be retained and protected without loss of vitality to the affected tree. In short, open trenches in RPAs, even if dug by hand can not be supported, on new development sites.

Trees with RPAs Directly Affected

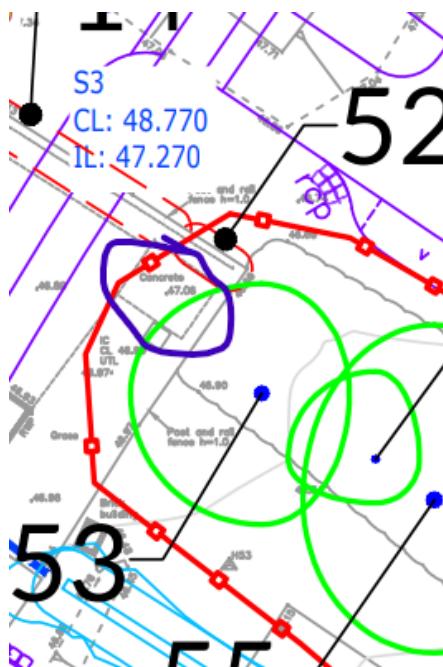
TPO trees in northeast corner – Drainage infrastructure sited in southern section of RPAs, given the protected status of the affected trees this should be moved and any drainage infrastructure should be located outside of RPAs, and the Pumping Station should also be moved at least 2m to the south, to allow for an appropriate amount of separation from the RPAs in the area, not only to protect the RPAs during the build process, but also form likely post development impacts. Whereby, new infrastructure often requires ongoing maintenance and occasional intrusive repair, posing additional long-term risks to the affected protected trees and their RPAs, should any underground services need to be re-opened to allow for future repairs to the pipework post development.



T47 - It is apparent that drainage infrastructure sited with the RPA of T47, as with the section of drainage infrastructure in the northeast corner this should be removed from the RPA of the affected tree. Also there is no reference to no no-dig build methods where the RPA of T47 is sited under the accesses road.



T53-T56 (English oaks along the internal tree line): Footpath alignment in the northern parcel crosses into their outer RPAs. A no-dig cellular confinement system is proposed to avoid root disturbance. However, confirmation should be sought on what this concrete base is shown in the RPA of T37



T72-T76 (Mature oaks within the western hedgerow line): The proximity of pathways and potential garden edging intersects minor parts of their RPAs. Any new surfacing in these areas must be installed using a no-dig cellular confinement system above existing levels.

T5 (English oak near revised driveway access): Although the new access is sited to avoid the RPA, the existing track removal and reinstatement to soft ground occur within the RPA margins, this will require sensitive approach completed arboricultural monitoring.

Hedgerow Group 22: Localised RPA overlap occurs where drainage swales pass through the understorey. Impact is minimal but requires care during installation.

Trees with Indirect or Edge-of-RPA Effects

The incursions are fairly modest and, in all instances, fall below the 20% threshold for new hard surfaces within the RPA of retained trees; subject to controls, the long-term health of the mature and significant retained trees at the site is unlikely to be compromised.

Provided the above recommendations are enacted, and the Tree Protection Plan is fully implemented and monitored throughout construction, the anticipated impacts are considered to be mostly within tolerable limits; this can be secured and controlled by condition.

Future Resident Pressure Observations

The proposed dwellings are generally placed outside canopy spreads and RPAs of significant trees, ensuring workable garden spaces and reduced future conflict risk. Nonetheless, several plots along the eastern boundary will experience some degree of

shading, leaf fall, and a sense of enclosure from large mature oaks (notably T45-T48). While typical of development adjoining mature trees, these issues should be communicated to residents to avoid future pressures for unnecessary pruning.

Internal hedgerows and smaller trees pose minimal concern and will require standard cyclical management. Boundary vegetation will continue to provide a strong landscape framework and enhance amenity for residents.

Trees to Be Removed and Surgery Works to Retained Trees

Trees Identified for Removal

T7 – Mixed internal hedgerow section.
T9 – Weeping birch.
T13 – Ash with advanced Ash Dieback.
T14 – Mixed broadleaf hedgerow section.
T17 – Field maple (dead).
T19 – English oak (dead).
T20 – Ash with significant structural decline.
T21 – English oak (dead).
T22 – Section of hedgerow understorey required for access.

Four trees within Group 23 for revised vehicular access.

T52 – Row of Leyland cypress.

T51 – One hawthorn stem from the group.

These removals predominantly relate to low-quality, dead, or hazardous trees, and to small hedgerow sections required for essential access works, subject to appropriate and robust replacement planting, these losses can be compensated for elsewhere within the site.

Surgery Works to Retained Trees

T15 – Remove dead wood over 25 mm.
T16 – Remove dead wood over 25 mm.
T78 – Remove dead elm stems.
T79-T84 – Ivy management may be required in the medium term.

The proposed surgery works represent routine arboricultural maintenance to improve safety and tree health, subject to the works being completed in accordance with best industry practice as set out in BS 3998 Tree Works Recommendations (2010), they will not adversely impact the overall health of the affected trees or nullify the visual amenity or landscape value of the trees in question.

Conclusion

The proposals retain the most significant tree assets on the site while limiting removals to essential or low-value specimens. Minor RPA incursions have mostly been justified and are supported by best-practice mitigation measures set out in the supporting documents. Subject to amendments to the drainage infrastructure being made, full compliance with the Tree Protection Plan and appropriate arboricultural supervision, the development is, for the most part, considered acceptable in arboricultural terms and should ensure that the retained trees can be successfully integrated into the new estate.

ANY RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS: None at this stage

NAME:	Andy Bush Arboricultural Officer
DEPARTMENT:	Strategic Planning (Specialist Team)
DATE:	20/11/25