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**~~
RECOMMENDATION: 2nd Response in Red	~~**Objection maintained, as modification is still needed to address Root Protection Area conflicts and concerns.**~~
RECOMMENDATION: 3rd response in green	~~**Advice / Holding objection withdrawn**~~
RECOMMENDATION: 4th response in orange	**Advice**
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.

Conserns addressed

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.

Conserns not addressed.

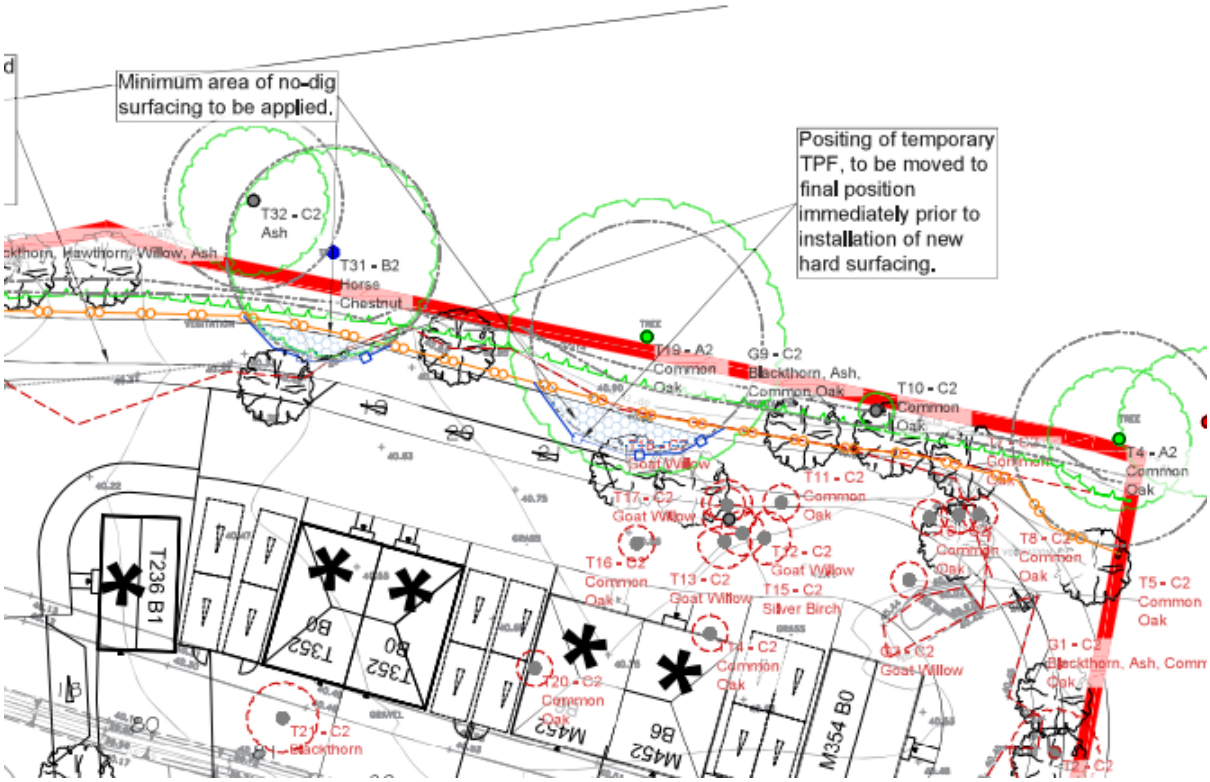
The Root Protection Areas (RPAs) for trees T31, T19, and T34 are still not considered to be plotted in accordance with BS5837:2012 (Section 4.6.2). whereby, existing off-site hardstanding within the northern portions of the RPAs of T31 and T19, and to the east of T34 where the RPA extends beneath Old Whickhurst Lane, has not been considered, offset, or modified to reflect the likely asymmetric rooting environment created by these constraints.

BS5837:2012 requires that where existing obstacles or surfaces constrain root development, the RPA should be amended to show where roots are most likely to occur. In this case, the off-site car park to the north of T31 and T19, which is clearly visible on the indicative site plan, has been omitted from the Tree Protection Plan. This results in a misleading representation of the trees' functional rooting environment and raises concern as to why this constraint has not been factored into the arboricultural assessment, particularly as it was raised in my previous response.

For both T31 and T19, nearly half of the theoretical RPA is currently shown extending beneath an impermeable car park surface to the north. This means that any additional encroachment into the remaining functional (southern) portion of the RPA becomes significantly more critical. As such, based on the current assessment the proposed cycle path, to the south of the trees, in particular, would in my opinion, increase development within the RPA as is currently shown well beyond the 20% threshold generally accepted within BS5837, further exacerbating non-compliance with the BS.

PROPOSED SITE LAYOUT showing the carpark to the north of T31 & T19

Tree Protection Plan DWG NO: VYH24657-03A Sheet 2 of 2. It should be noted that the date on the new TPP has not been updated from the 17/04/2025 submission, despite the plans and site layout having been altered.



Given the likely southward rooting bias for T31 and T19, caused by the existing hardstanding, the proposed new road to the south is expected to lie partially or wholly within the functional RPAs of T31 and T34. No mitigation measures have been proposed to address this conflict. As such, the scheme is not considered to be compliant with BS5837 and is likely to result in significant, delayed-onset harm to these trees over the next 5–10 years, due to construction activity and root loss/damage within their key rooting areas, unless the layout is amended accordingly.

It should also be noted that T31, T19 and T34 are all mature specimens that make a positive and significant contribution to the character and amenity of the immediate area and the wider landscape.

Conserns mostly addressed

Following my previous comments dated 21 November 2025, I have revisited the site to confirm the actual stem diameters of trees T19 and T34 to ensure an accurate assessment of the proposals and the development impacts on their respective RPAs, for the most part due to the vagueness of the measurements contained with the tree survey.

In the case of T19, surface rooting was evident within the car park to the north, with clear signs root disturbance in the surface of the car park, and evident patch repairs. As such my earlier concerns regarding the apparent absence of rooting to the north beneath the car park have been mostly addressed by on-site observations. However, the original stem diameter recorded in the tree survey is incorrect. It was recorded in the tree survey as 650 mm given the tree an RPA of 7.8m, whereas the true measurement is 770 mm, which, although seemingly modest, this equates to an RPA of approximately 9.2m and an additional 1.4m to the circumference of the calculated RPA, as is presently shown.

In addition, for the Horse chestnut T31, a stem diameter at 1.5 m could not be measured due to bifurcation and stem bulging, so a measurement was instead taken at 1m above ground level (over ivy), recorded as being just under 790 mm compared to the 600 mm stated in the tree survey, which equates to an RPA of approximately 7.2m. However, if the RPA is based on my measurements, there are discrepancy between the measurements, and results in an approximate 2m increase in the RPA compared with what is currently shown on the TPP. Whereby, the RPA of T31, presently shown as 7.2m would in fact be 9.2m when the ivy on the stem is considered.

While my earlier concerns regarding the apparent absence of rooting to the north beneath the car park have been addressed, I maintain that the proposed development within the RPA of T19 (specifically the inclusion of the cycle/footpath) exceeds the 20% threshold for incursion as advised in BS guidance due to the existing hard surfacing in the north section of the trees RPA not being factor in to the applicants' assessment. Furthermore, the additional 1.5 -2m southward extension into the site introduces road construction works within or on the periphery of the RPAs of both T19 and T31, which has also not been considered as part of the Arboricultural assessment.

The removal of the cycle route from the RPAs of trees T31 and T19, coupled with the amendments to the RPAs and the larger area covered by the TPF, is welcome. Subject to the works in the more sensitive areas being completed in accordance with the Arboricultural Method Statement, this should ensure that the retention of trees T31 and T19 is viable in the long term.

T19	Quercus robur (Common Oak)	15(4)	650(1)	9	9.3	9.3	9.3	EM	40+	Offsite tree, diameter estimated. Deadwood visible in western aspect of Crown.	A2

T31	Aesculus hippocastanum (Horse Chestnut)	14(4)	600(1)	7	7	7	7	M	20+	Ownership of tree unclear. Tree situated behind dense group and undergrowth. Adjoining Ash tree on western aspect, location and impact to site uncertain.	B2

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.

Conserns mostly addressed, whereby the amendments to the site layout in this area now provided a better degree of spatial separation between the retained trees referenced above and the built form the proposed dwellings in the area.

ANY RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS: Yes - If minded to approve.

6.8 Arboricultural Method Statement - Implementation

Regulatory Condition: All works shall be executed in full accordance with the submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment/Method Statement - Land at Wickhurst Green Broadbridge Heath Horsham, Ref: VYH24567aia_ams, Revision: A: dated 22/10/2025

Reason: To ensure the successful and satisfactory protection of important trees, shrubs and hedges on the site in accordance with Policies 30 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

Pre-commencement Condition: No development shall commence, including demolition pursuant to the permission granted, ground clearance, or bringing equipment, machinery or materials onto the site, until the following preliminaries have been completed in the sequence set out below:

i. All trees on the site shown for retention on approved drawing number Tree Protection Plan, Drawing no**:** VYH24657-03A Sheet 1 of 2, and 2 of 2, dated - NOT KNOWN as well as those off-site whose root protection areas ingress into the site, shall be fully protected throughout all construction works by tree protective fencing affixed to the ground in full accordance with section 6 of BS 5837 'Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction - Recommendations' (2012).

ii. Once installed, the fencing shall be maintained during the course of the development works and until all machinery and surplus materials have been removed from the site. Areas so fenced off shall be treated as zones of prohibited access and shall not be used for the storage of materials, equipment or machinery in any circumstances. No mixing of cement, concrete, or use of other materials or substances shall take place within any tree protective zone, or close enough to such a zone that seepage or displacement of those materials and substances could cause them to enter a zone.

iii. Before any work begins on site, the person(s) responsible for supervising the works must meet the Arboricultural Officer of the Local Planning Authority, on site, so the Arboriculturist Officer can supervise that the tree protection measures have been installed in accordance with the approved drawing number Tree Protection Plan, Drawing no**:** PJC/6768/25/C dated- NOT KNOWN.

iv. Any trees or hedges on the site which die or become damaged during the construction process shall be replaced with trees or hedging plants of a type, size and in positions agreed by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: As this matter is fundamental to the acceptable delivery of this permission, in the interests of amenity in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

NAME:	Andy Bush Arboricultural Officer
DEPARTMENT:	Strategic Planning (Specialist Team)
DATE:	1st 11/07/25, 2nd 21/11/25