



HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL CONSULTATION

TO:	Horsham District Council – Planning Dept
LOCATION:	Oaklands Stud, Forest Grange, Horsham
DESCRIPTION:	Demolition of pole barn. Conversion of existing stable building into 1no. detached dwelling with associated works
REFERENCE:	DC-25-1597
RECOMMENDATION:	Advice
SUMMARY OF COMMENTS & RECOMMENDATION:	
<p>Direct impacts of development on the adjacent off-site drive side trees can be controlled by sensitive demolition and by installation of appropriate tree protection measures.</p> <p>Indirect impacts of development on the veteran beech tree subject of Tree Preservation Order no. 1574 (identified as T2 on the submitted tree survey) need to be appropriately considered within the wider planning context. This was formerly highlighted in respect of the dismissed appeal for development at the property in 2023 (ref: DC/22/0974).</p> <p>Some amendments to afford future protections to the trees recommended minimum buffer zone from the proposed change of use may be considered necessary.</p>	
MAIN COMMENTS:	
<p>Existing site usage and development includes hardstanding, stable buildings and a pole barn in relatively close proximity to the Southern boundary line.</p> <p>The site is externally bounded to the South, by a strip of remnant woodland that contains several mature beech, sweet chestnut and pine trees and associated understorey, principally consisting of Rhododendron bushes.</p> <p>These trees can be reasonably protected from further direct impacts of the proposed demolition/construction process by appropriate tree protection measures.</p> <p>The engineering previously undertaken for the existing facilities may have impacted upon the principal rooting areas of some of the trees which are of recognised landscape significance.</p>	

This is of particular note in respect of the veteran beech tree (identified as T2 in submissions) that was latterly made subject of a Tree Preservation Order in November 2024 (Ref: TPO/1574) when it came to the attention of the LPA as being under potential threat from desires to develop the adjacent land.

This tree is of recognised irreplaceable habitat value due to its age, size and condition/features. The tree is exhibiting some crown dieback that may be directly associated with services trenching/hardstanding installations that have historically occurred within the site in association with its equestrian usage.

The submitted arboricultural impact assessment considers the tree to be a "U" category due to the observed decline in vigour and presence of deadwood. It refers to it requiring a "crown clean... to remove all deadwood and removal of all weak or crossing branches" as well as the desire to lift the live crown over the existing hardstanding within the site to a height of 4m, to enable unhindered vehicle movement.

I disagree with the survey categorisation and proposed course of action which is a recognised impact of the proposed development within the submissions.

Within the existing site context and land use it is reasonable to ensure the safe passage of people within close proximity to the veteran tree. This duty of care to ensure the tree does not pose an unreasonable risk to people and property remains with the tree owner. IME it would be reasonably expected that the tree owner has their trees regularly inspected by a competent person in accordance with the National Tree Safety Group guidance in this respect.

Providing the tree can be reasonably retained without unreasonable risk to adjacent land users, works to ensure it does not pose a significant risk now or in the future should be kept to a minimum and regularly reviewed. Where deadwood can be reasonably retained without significant likelihood of it falling outside of the remnant woodland strip it should be left in accordance with the recognised conservation value that it warrants. Crossing branches should be retained unless a foreseeable significant risk of failure. This is part of the reason why the term "crown cleaning" is a redundant historic tree pruning term that has no place within the current relevant tree pruning standard - BS3889:2010 Tree Work – Recommendations which has now been the recognised guide for tree pruning in the UK for the past 15 years.

As a veteran tree, the NPPF requires all new development to be considered in terms of its potential to have a negative impact on the tree or its key rooting environment. The recommended minimum buffer from new development for a tree of the surveyed size, including change of land use to garden curtilage, is approx. 21m.

Whilst the submitted scheme does not incur any additional extent of hardstanding or new structures within the stipulated buffer, it would result in a change of use that could have a detrimental impact on the roots/rooting area of the tree and potentially place it under even greater future pressure for lopping/removal.

If minded to approve the application I recommend that safeguards are put in place to restrict further domestic development within the aforementioned minimum recommended buffer zone and to control activity on either side of the driveway. This may require the designated curtilage of the dwelling to be amended accordingly to comply with the recommendations of the NPPF in this respect.

ANY RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS:

Yes - If minded to approve either with current curtilage proposed or as amended, standard conditions to control the development process should be imposed for tree protection measures to be erected/installed and maintained for the duration of the development (standard condition 3.8) and for a revised Arboricultural Method Statement with associated Tree Protection Plan that takes account of the minimum recommended buffer for the veteran beech tree) to either be provided as part of the application submissions and approved/conditioned for compliance, or required by pre-commencement condition (standard condition 3.9).

NAME:	ANDY CLOUT – ASST. ARBORICULTURAL OFFICER
DEPARTMENT:	STRATEGIC PLANNING - SPECIALISTS
DATE:	23/12/25