DELEGATED APPLICATIONS

ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO: **DC/26/1262: Hycoombe 29 Coombe Drove Bramber/Steyning.**

REPRESENTATION AND CONSULTATION RESPONSES:
A single representation of objection has been received in respect of this application. They have advised the following;

Object to felling but would support reduction in tree crown.

ASSESSMENT:
1. The trees the subject of this application is a mature Sycamore protected by TPO/0145, located within the rear garden of Hycoombe, 29 Coombe Drove, Bramber, Steyning. Consent is sought either to remove the tree or, alternatively, to undertake crown reduction works comprising a reduction of approximately 3 metres all round.

2. The reasons given in support of the application are that the tree exhibits uneven growth as a consequence of the position of neighbouring trees and that neighbouring residents have requested pruning or removal of the tree to increase the amount of natural light reaching their property.

3. Upon inspection, the tree was found to be in good condition and exhibiting good vitality and vigour, with a healthy leaf cover and crown density. No significant structural, physiological or arboricultural defects were identified, and there are no obvious management concerns that would justify removal on condition grounds.

4. Although located within a rear garden, the tree is readily visible from the public domain, particularly from Coombe Drove to the east. It forms part of a prominent linear group with two adjacent beech trees and, following recent pruning of the northernmost beech, has become increasingly conspicuous within the group. The tree is clearly visible above and behind Nos. 13-21 Coombe Drove, where it contributes positively to the area's established landscape framework, providing an attractive treed backdrop that enhances local character and visual amenity. Accordingly, the tree is considered to make a positive contribution to public amenity and to the established treed character of the locality, possessing sufficient landscape value to warrant its continued protection.

5. It is acknowledged that the retention of the tree may, at certain times of the day, limit the amount of natural light reaching neighbouring properties. Whilst Sycamore (Acer pseudoplatanus) is generally regarded as a species that responds well to pruning, the extent of the proposed reduction is considered excessive having regard to the tree's form, size and amenity value. Due to the lateral spread of the crown, a reduction of 3 metres throughout would not fully accord with good arboricultural practice and could result in a more severe intervention than is necessary to address the concerns raised.

6. It is therefore considered more appropriate to limit the extent of the reduction to approximately 2.0-2.5 metres where required, whilst also permitting the removal of the lowest branches on the eastern side of the crown to provide a ground clearance of approximately 5 metres. Such works would provide a meaningful reduction in the tree's perceived dominance and shading effects whilst retaining its overall form, character and amenity contribution, thereby representing a balanced arboricultural solution that addresses the applicant's concerns without giving rise to unjustified harm to the tree's public amenity value.

7. Whilst it is accepted that the complete removal of the tree would provide the greatest increase in light levels to neighbouring properties, such benefits are not considered sufficient to outweigh the harm that would arise from the loss of a highly visible tree that makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area. The removal of the tree would result in the loss of an important component of the local landscape structure and would diminish the established treed backdrop visible from Coombe Drove.

RECOMMENDATION:
It is recommended that the application be determined by way of a **split decision**, whereby:

- Consent is granted for a crown reduction of up to 2.0-2.5 metres where required, together with the removal of the lowest branches on the eastern side of the crown to provide a ground clearance of approximately 5 metres; and
- Consent is refused for the proposed felling of the tree.

CONDITIONS TO BE APPLIED:
1. TR2 *Time limit, 2 years*

2. TR3a *Treeworks limit (bespoke)*

The tree work to which this consent relates shall be limited to:

- Crown reduce tree all round by trimming branches to suitable growth points by up to no more than 2.0-2.5 metres where required, to achieve a well-balanced crown, together with the removal of the 4 lowest branches on the eastern side of the crown to provide a ground clearance of approximately 5 metres.
- **Consent is refused** for the proposed felling of the tree.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt

3. TR4 *Surgery standards*
TINF1 *Note to applicant.*
TINF2 *Wildlife protection.*

DELEGATED

Authorising Officer sign…….ANBU…….. ***Arboricultural Officer (Strategic Planning).***

Date……16 Oct 26…