



HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL CONSULTATION

TO:	Horsham District Council – Planning Dept
LOCATION:	Land East of Oaklands, Henfield Road, Cowfold
DESCRIPTION:	Outline planning application for a phased development of approximately 40 residential dwellings, vehicular access, car parking, landscaping, open space and other associated works and infrastructure. All matters reserved except for access
REFERENCE:	DC-26-0913
RECOMMENDATION:	Advice/Objection
SUMMARY OF COMMENTS & RECOMMENDATION:	
The oak tree to the North of the proposed access is a significant landscape/streetscene feature that poses a constraint on the potential widening of the existing access drive to form an engineered roadway. It is subject of Horsham DC Tree Preservation Order (TPO) - no. 0762. The tree is one of the few remaining mature oak trees along the roadside, the majority having succumbed/declined because of urbanising development and associated impacts on tree rooting that have occurred around them. The desired access widening and associated engineering for retaining structure and services installation will require excavations contrary to the recommendations of the relevant design standard BS5837 within the minimum recommended root protection area (RPA) of the TPO oak tree. The development would have a foreseeable detrimental impact on the future health of the tree which would not be resolved by hand excavation and root severance as proposed within the submissions. The engineering required is incompatible with safeguarding the minimum recommended rooting area for a mature tree of its size and stature within the streetscene.	
MAIN COMMENTS:	
As highlighted in respect of the pre-application proposal (Ref: PE/25/0181), utilising a widened access point to enable development of the field beyond impacts upon the nearest oak tree to the N of the existing drive (subject of a TPO – Ref: T22 of TPO/0762).	

The subject TPO oak tree (T6 of submitted development tree survey) is of fair form and condition for its species, age and position. It is situated in a relatively narrow roadside bank immediately adjacent to the engineered road and pavement. The tree is a constraint on any potential development within relatively close proximity.

The Henfield Road streetscene is being denuded of its soft landscape maturity as a direct result of pressures for intensified development. The other protected (TPO) oak trees to the South (outside property "Bracora") and across the road to the East (in the garage forecourt) are both in terminal decline with safe useful life expectancies that are likely to be less than 10 years. They have both suffered from root disturbance and installations of hard surfacing over the past 20 years that has affected their vitality and ultimately led to their premature decline. The only other mature tree in the streetscene is a sycamore on the opposite side of the road to the SE, that has also suffered a significant basal wound and is now structurally compromised and likewise unsuitable for longer term retention.

As a result, the only "A" grade mature tree remaining along the roadside and making a significant contribution to the streetscene for the foreseeable future, is the protected oak tree (T6).

The submitted tree survey and AIA has seemingly not been undertaken by an arboriculturist. It does not plot the tree rooting constraints in accordance with the relevant design standard (BS5837: 2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations).

Due to the constraint on rooting posed by the existing engineered road and gully, the oak tree T6 will be rooting laterally along the roadside, with key roots extending significantly further than may ordinarily be expected. The soft ground area right up to and beneath the existing tarmac driveway, will be of importance to the trees health. The proposal will require the loss of more than 20% of the unsurfaced RPA (and associated soil volume) available to the tree, all of which should be a design constraint for new development.

The submitted arboricultural impact assessment (AIA) does not take account of the constraint posed to tree rooting by the existing engineered highway. The RPA of the tree has been incorrectly plotted as a circle. The AIA should recognise that the tree will not be significantly rooting radially beneath the engineered highway due to the soil bulk density beneath the construction being inhospitable to plant growth.

The submission refers to hand excavation in the plotted root protection area of the tree. What this presumably means is that the area of conflict with the RPA (as shown on the plans) will be excavated out by hand with all roots severed prior to installation of a retaining wall, services and compaction/backfilling with a formation for the new road access and pavement. This is not an acceptable approach to the conservation of the principal landscape elements of value when planning and designing for potential new development.

If a different/altered point of access can be found to serve a new housing development in the fields beyond, I recommend that the three mature oak trees within the central hedgerow belt are given full respect and that at the very least, the minimum recommended RPA's for all the mature trees of merit are used as a design constraint, with no new engineering within these areas of construction exclusion. Engineering

requirements for levels alterations associated with the extent of ground modelling required for drainage proposals would require detailed assessment for feasibility in this respect.

The largest oak tree (T21 of submitted tree survey) is of an age, size and condition (visible signs of branch death and hollowing) that warrants consideration as a veteran tree within the terms of the NPPF. Thus, for design purpose its constraint on new development should be calculated accordingly and not as calculated and shown/used within the schematic layout submission (which accords with neither the BS5837 recommendations or the veteran tree recommendations for a minimum RPA/buffer of 15 times the trees diameter - 22.2m).

ANY RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS:

N/A

NAME:	ANDY CLOUT – ASST. ARBORICULTURAL OFFICER
DEPARTMENT:	STRATEGIC PLANNING - SPECIALISTS
DATE:	05/08/26