



Horsham
District
Council

HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL CONSULTATION

TO:	Horsham District Council – Planning Dept
LOCATION:	Land South of The Bowling Green The Daisycroft Henfield
DESCRIPTION:	Erection of 9no. detached dwellings with associated parking, landscaping, hardstanding, access and associated works
REFERENCE:	DC/26/0006
RECOMMENDATION:	Advice / re-design / Holding objection to the existing site lay out and the foreseeable post development conflicts and pressure upon the TPO trees at the site
2nd response in Red	Advice / re-design / Holding objection maintained for the previous reason set out above.

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS & RECOMMENDATION:

The principal arboricultural features at the site are the two Category A grade, open-grown oaks located along the eastern boundary. Both trees are subject to statutory protection under TPO/1468 T1 and T2, served on 19 August 2014.

The OS map of the area **Surveyed: 1874 to 1875, Published in 1879**. Clearly shows a line of five oak trees along the eastern boundary of the site. Considering their size, stature, and age, it is highly probable that the two existing trees are the last surviving members of this historic line and are of significant age, historical and landscape importance.



The application is supported by an Arboricultural Implications Assessment (AIA) and Method Statement (AMS) prepared by Canopy Consultancy on behalf of the applicant, Bruckland Developments.

The AIA and AMS provide a reasonable assessment of the quality of the tree stock on site and the potential impact of the development during construction. However, it does not appropriately address likely post-development conflicts or pressures on the retained trees, particularly those along the eastern boundary and within the rear gardens of units 6, 7, and 8.

Regrettably, the only evident changes within the revised submission with regards to the points previously raised appear to relate to the removal of the bike and bin stores in the rear gardens of units 6, 7 and 8. These previously shown within the RPA of the TPO proposed to the rear gardens of units 6, 7 and 8. These are now located outside the root protection areas of the TPO trees.

However, this amendment does little to address the concerns raised regarding the future resident pressure concerns raised with site layout, which continues to fail to properly acknowledge or respect the significant constraints these trees represent on the proposed scheme.

MAIN COMMENTS

Site layout observations.

Due to the Greenfield nature of the site and the only substantial trees being located on the eastern boundary for the most part the site layout is acceptable, except for the location of units 6, 7 & 8.

The size and positioning of Units 6, 7, and 8 would place the Root Protection Areas (RPAs) of trees T10 and T11 on their western side entirely within the proposed garden areas. This arrangement is likely to result in clear and foreseeable post-development conflicts, particularly regarding the introduction of domestic landscaping works, patios, sheds, and other incidental structures. Indeed, this potential conflict is already evident in the current layout, which shows bin and/or cycle stores positioned within the RPAs. The introduction of general garden infrastructure and works would negatively impact the trees in question, by way of likely changes in ground levels, soil compaction, and root severance. Mature trees such as T10 and 11 highly susceptible to rapid decline due to changes within their key rooting area, all of which is foreseeable with the current site layout and the placement of the trees, and their RPAs within the rear gardens of unit 6, 7 and 8.

Furthermore, given the protected status of the trees, all parts of the trees including their roots, are legally protected under the TPO. Any future post-development works within the RPAs, including the simple act of inserting a spade into the ground where roots may be present, could constitute wilful damage if roots are severed, and thus represent an offence under the TPO regs; particularly as the extent of the RPA would be known at the development stage. This situation may place future residents in a difficult position, restricting the reasonable use of their rear gardens and creating ongoing tension between domestic use and the long-term protection of these important trees.

Future resident pressure concerns.

Neither of the TPO'd oaks at the site have been subject to any substantial surgery works. As a result, they retain their natural, broad-spreading form, which is their primary feature, and they several substantial lower limbs extending westward into the proposed rear gardens of Units 6, 7, and 8; up to 8m in places.

These trees are high-quality specimens with significant public amenity value. Due to their size and form, they are readily visible from numerous public viewpoints, particularly when viewed from Henfield Common to the southeast, approximately 211 m away, where the trees can be seen in their entirety.





The current site layout would, in my experience, give rise to clear and foreseeable post-development pruning pressures arising from the trees' position along the eastern boundary. Whereby, due to the existing layout, it is evident that the oaks would cast shade across the rear gardens of the units 6, 7 and 8, during the morning, and the dwellings would likely restrict the extent of natural light reaching the rear garden areas by late afternoon.

Consequently, a substantial proportion of the day would see the rear gardens of Units 6, 7, and 8 affected by shading, first from the trees and subsequently from the dwellings. Given that the siting and massing of the dwellings cannot readily be altered post-construction, it is reasonable to anticipate pressure for significant pruning to improve sunlight penetration would be forthcoming.

Pruning pressure would also likely be forthcoming to address future resident concerns with general tree-related detritus. In this respect it is material that both specimens are oaks, which during mast years can produce prolific acorn crops, resulting in a considerable volume of acorn fall within the rear gardens. Combined with seasonal leaf fall, occasional standing deadwood, and other naturally occurring debris, this is likely to be perceived as a nuisance by future occupiers and would foreseeably generate demands for pruning where no comparable pressures currently exist.

Given the significant amenity value of these Category A, TPO'd trees, any major crown reduction or heavy pruning would be concerning, as it would notably erode the existing visual amenity value that the trees provide to the immediate and wider area.

In addition, once a pruning regime is initiated, repeated interventions are likely, this would potentially causing localised decay at pruning points due to the size of wounds required to materially alter the relationship between the trees, the dwellings, and the garden areas. Such works could compromise branch integrity, accelerate crown dysfunction, and

materially diminish the physiological condition and long-term prospects of these prominent trees. While the TPO status of the trees provides some control over future works, it would be preferable to design the scheme to avoid major and currently unnecessary interventions while at the same time, minimize impact on future residents.

Conclusion.

The current layout cannot be supported on arboricultural grounds for the reasons set out above, and it is recommended that the site layout is redesigned to achieve a more harmonious and sustainable relationship with the mature TPO trees at the site.

While it is acknowledged that the site is allocated for development and the proposed nine dwellings are below the ten-unit allocation, nevertheless, concerns remain over the impact on the RPAs of the TPO oak trees along the eastern boundary. The most effective solution to address these concerns would be to remove Unit 2 and shift the entire development west, and relocating open space in the southwest corner, to the eastern boundary so as to establish a landscaped buffer that safeguards the oaks and provides a gradual transition for the built up area in to the countryside to the east.

Alternatively, retaining nine units could be achieved by reducing dwelling size and removing larger four-bedroom units to maintain a landscape buffer, protecting the trees while aligning with local housing needs. In all cases, a defensible eastern landscape buffer is strongly recommended to ensure the long-term health and amenity of the protected oaks.

The proposed scheme in its current form, is not considered to align with the core objectives of Policy 33 of the HDNPF 2015, which prioritize the successful retention of key landscape features, including trees and hedges. Although the scheme does not directly remove these features, it is likely to create post-development conflicts that will adversely affect significant trees at the site, and in turn diminish their wider landscape value and contribution.

It is also worth noting that these concerns are reinforced by appeal outcome Ref: APP/C3810/W/23/3332326 (Decision dated 03 May 2024) regarding Regal House, Shripney Road, Bognor Regis. In that case, the Inspector found that the close relationship between retained trees and proposed dwellings was likely to generate repeated pressure for severe reduction or felling, particularly where trees were perceived to affect living conditions and garden use. The decision recognised that repeated pruning would erode tree health, stature, and longevity, and that insufficient separation distances could not reasonably be resolved by condition, especially where RPAs occupied the majority of garden areas; the appeal was dismissed.

The parallels here are clear: the extent of the RPAs within the proposed rear gardens and the proximity of built form to high-value Category A oaks would foreseeably create the same cycle of pressure for pruning or removal, with consequent harm to tree health, amenity value, and long-term retention. The appeal decision demonstrates that such conflicts are not hypothetical but represent a well-recognised and material planning concern where insufficient space is provided between high value retained trees and residential development.

ANY RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS: None at this stage	
NAME:	Andy Bush Arboricultural officer (Planning)
DEPARTMENT:	STRATEGIC PLANNING - SPECIALISTS
DATE:	24/02/26