

DELEGATED APPLICATIONS

ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO: **DC/26/1248: 9 Allingham Gardens Horsham RH12 4US.**

REPRESENTATION AND CONSULTATION RESPONSES:

North Horsham Parish Council has stated no objection to this proposal, subject to the considerations of the HDC Arboricultural Officer.

1 x representation from a member of the public has been received in respect of this application, and they advise the following;

“This prominent oak tree with a preservation order has been an important visual enhancement to Allingham Gardens and the surrounding area for fifty years. It would be devastating to see it removed unless it is diseased and in a dangerous condition. Hopefully it will be assessed by a qualified arborist before an important decision is reached.”

ASSESSMENT:

1. The tree subject to this application is a mature Oak located to the front of the applicant's property and protected by TPO 0036. It forms a prominent feature within the local streetscape, with the principal views obtained from Altrincham Gardens, where it makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the surrounding residential environment. Additional views are also available from Willow Road, with the upper crown visible above adjacent vegetation and built form. Overall, the tree is considered to provide a meaningful contribution to local amenity and the treed character of the area.

2. The application has been submitted due to concerns regarding the tree's condition and structural integrity. During the inspection, the crown appeared to be in fair physiological condition, exhibiting approximately 80% foliation. However, a number of the principal scaffold branches contained woodpecker holes, which, whilst not indicative of structural failure in themselves, often occur in association with decayed timber and provide an indication that dysfunction may be present within parts of the crown structure.

3. The principal concern relates to extensive decay associated with a large historic pruning wound on the southern side of the stem. Visual inspection identified significant dysfunction around the wound, whilst sounding with a mallet produced a pronounced hollow response extending vertically up the stem towards a second historic wound located approximately 700mm above. The consistent hollow sounding response between these defects suggests the presence of a large decay column within this section of the stem.

4. Further evidence of significant internal decay was provided by the presence of Oyster Fungus (*Pleurotus ostreatus*). This species is commonly associated with the development of white rot within broadleaved trees and can result in a progressive reduction in the mechanical strength of affected stems and branches. Although trees colonised by this fungus can often retain a relatively healthy crown appearance, extensive internal degradation may occur concurrently.

5. Inspection of the principal wound identified a cavity approximately 500mm wide and 700mm high, with probing achieving penetration in excess of 500mm into dysfunctional wood. Given the stem diameter at this location, the extent of probe penetration, together with the fungal fruiting bodies and hollow sounding response, strongly indicates the presence of significant internal deterioration extending beyond that visible externally.

6. Whilst advanced diagnostic testing has not been undertaken, the combination of extensive cavity formation, significant probe penetration, associated fungal decay and hollow sounding responses provides sufficient evidence to conclude that substantial structural dysfunction is present within the stem, notwithstanding that the precise extent of internal decay has not been quantified. Furthermore, given the nature and extent of the defects observed, it is considered unlikely that additional diagnostic investigation would materially alter the conclusion that significant management intervention would be required to retain the tree safely.

7. The tree is situated approximately 6.5 metres from the applicant's dwelling and immediately adjacent to the principal parking area, thereby creating a readily occupied target zone. Whilst the crown currently remains in fair physiological condition, the extent of decay identified within the stem gives rise to concerns regarding the risk of stem or major limb failure. The principal concern relates to stem failure at or above the primary cavity location, although the wider extent of dysfunction also raises concerns regarding the long-term integrity of the crown structure.

8. Whilst the loss of a tree of this nature is regrettable, particularly given its contribution to the character and visual amenities of the locality, the extent of the structural defects identified limit its suitability for long-term retention. Any attempt to retain the tree would likely require substantial crown reduction and ongoing management works, which would materially diminish its form, stature and amenity value. As such, the tree's long-term retention potential is considered to be severely constrained.

9. Notwithstanding these concerns, the tree currently provides a valuable contribution to local amenity. Consequently, whilst its removal is considered justified on arboricultural and safety grounds, it is also considered appropriate to secure replacement planting by condition to ensure the long-term continuity of tree cover and amenity value within the area.

10. Accordingly, having regard to the tree's condition, the extent of structural decay present, the proximity of high-value targets and the limited scope for sustainable retention, the proposed removal is considered reasonable and justified.

RECOMMENDATION:

Grant consent subject to the conditions below.

CONDITIONS TO BE APPLIED:

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|--------|----------------------------------|
| 1. TR2 | <i>Time limit, 2 years</i> |
| 2. TR7 | <i>Replacement (Single tree)</i> |
| TINF1 | <i>Note to applicant.</i> |
| TINF2 | <i>Wildlife protection.</i> |

DELEGATED

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

Date.....08 Oct 26.....