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Planning Department
Horsham District Council
Albery House
Springfield Road
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RH12 2GB

Dear Sir/Madam

**DC/25/1377 – Field House
Fell 1x Oak Tree**

Background

In 2023 Rudgwick Parish Council (RPC) was initially very disappointed that planning permission was granted to build a house in the field adjacent Oakfield outside of the settlement boundary but accepted that it was perhaps inevitable, given that the tilted balance was operable. Fortunately, the impact on the rural street scene of Cox Green was mitigated somewhat by the planned retention of the TPO Oak (T30) and the proposed replacement of the removed street-facing native hedge (shown on 1871 edition of Ordnance Survey). The extensive RPA of the protected Oak also meant that significant greenspace surrounding it would be kept as such, maintaining the long established pleasant open rural feel there. Unfortunately, the Oak has not survived the works in good shape. RPC considers that allowing virtually the maximum theoretical encroachment into the RPA for driveway and car park space construction will have been a major factor, especially if (as is now claimed) the tree was not in the best of health. If true, then no encroachment should have been allowed for this (at least) 150-year-old tree to thrive. In considering options, RPC therefore would support a long-term protected landscape solution that correlates with the above and maintains the same ambience of street scene for Cox Green.

Detailed Comments

Rudgwick Parish Council (RPC) having now further considered the DC/25/1377 application details notes that the existing tree (T30, protected by TPO), together with its root protection area, affords some protection to a considerable area of green space from future development i.e. extension of hard standing or driveway. This would not necessarily be the case were the tree to be replaced.

Faced therefore, with the scenario of felling the tree versus retaining it, and with no guarantee or future certainty that any replacement(s) could be protected by TPO, RPC (with some regret for the new occupants of the property) requests that efforts are made to try and save the existing tree first and review in 2 years, as suggested by the applicant's tree consultants.

However, there is a further matter to be resolved before a decision can be made over the future of the tree. RPC have asked several times why it is possible or appropriate for the current owners of Field House to include it at all in the Landscaping plan submitted for their property in DISC/25/0186 and amended in DC/25/1377.

This Landscape Plan was submitted when Field House was named as Oakfield, being part of a 3 house development on a site called Oakfield (name of the original single property on the site). But the red line boundary of Field House in the submitted Landscape Plan of DISC/25/0186 (still called Oakfield at that point in time) **excludes part of the site of the tree and the tree itself**, being consistent with the originally granted planning approval for Field House, then noted as 'land adjacent to Oakfield' plot, in DC/23/0235.

The documents submitted in this approved application DC/23/0235, for the plot now known as Field House, clearly display the oak tree in question as being outside the red line boundary for Field House. See the submitted site plan, design statement and planning statement on the application details.

However, the Tree Protection Plan for Oakfield in approved application DC/24/0625 relates to the part of the site where the original dwelling of Oakfield stood (recently demolished and replaced). So this is the plot now adjacent to Field House. This Tree Protection Plan clearly shows the protected tree **within** the red line boundary for Oakfield (the original house/plot) and again **outside** the red line boundary for the plot now known as Field House.

Having trawled through the innumerable applications relating to the whole of the 'Oakfield' site (covering now 3 dwellings), there are no documents displayed relating to any application which gains approval for changes to the red line boundary relating to this tree.

Therefore, it would seem apparent that the tree in question (T30) is sited within the redline boundary of Oakfield itself (the original and main dwelling), not Field House, and would be subject to the Discharge of Conditions relating to application DC/24/0625. There have been no applications as yet for discharge of conditions on this application in relation to landscape.

Recognising that the number of applications relating to the whole 'Oakfield' site may have caused some confusion, decisions on determining or discharging outstanding applications DC/25/1377 & DISC/25/0816 should be halted until the redline boundary position has been properly investigated and the situation formally and officially rectified.

Yours faithfully
Sarah Hall

Sarah Hall
Assistant Clerk to Rudgwick Parish Council Clerk