HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL CONSULTATION

TO:	Horsham District Council – Planning Dept
LOCATION:	Mill Cottage Old Wickhurst Lane Broadbridge Heath
DESCRIPTION:	Erection of a garage
REFERENCE:	Dc/24/0468
RECOMMENDATION:	Refusal / Holding objection/Modification

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS & RECOMMENDATION:

Around 1 to 2m north of the development proposal at the site, is a mature oak which appears to be in good health, it has a pleasant broad spreading form. The tree can be seen from the designated PROW to the south and west, as such, it makes a meaningful and valuable contribution to the verdant landscape of the locality and the character and appearance of the area. Concerns are raised with how the new garage would be built, in terms of development with the RPA of retained trees, and with the location under the tree's canopy in terms of future resident pressure to heavily prune or remove.

MAIN COMMENTS:

The form with development, as proposed, would result in substantial development within the RPA of the oak tree in question. Under the current industry standard BS5837 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations (2012), it is the default that development within the RPA of a retained tree should be avoided. Para 5.3.1 of the BS States, **"The default position should be that structures (see 3.10) are located outside the RPAs of trees to be retained. However, where there is an overriding justification for construction within the RPA, technical solutions might be available to prevent damage to the tree(s)"**. Given the space available at the site, I would not consider that there is an overriding justification for the level of development proposed within the RPA of this tree even if technical solutions were sought with regard to how the building would be founded to ground.

A large percentage of the tree's crown would be placed directly over the garage. Suggesting that the applicant may have post-development concerns with general tree-related detritus, such as falling dead wood, bird excreta falling onto the new building, and leaf litter blocking the cutters. This could lead to the tree being heavily pruned with the view of improving the tree to build relationship or removed.

As such, consideration should be given to moving the building to a different location at the site to avoid any direct or indirect impact on a tree of high landscape value.

Additionally, no tree information such as an Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA), methods statement (AMS) or tree protection plan (TPP) has been provided setting out how the development can be achieved in a way that it doesn't have an adverse impact on the trees condition and long-term viability for retention.

Due to the proximity of the proposed garage to the Oak, and the extent of the development proposed with the RPA, there is the capacity for significant root severance and harm to occur to the tree in question during the development phases and post-development. This would be detrimental to the health of the tree and its viability for long-term retention. This brings the development proposal at the property into conflict with policies 32 and 33 of the HDPF which seeks the successful retention of existing important landscape and natural features, for example, trees, hedges, and a form of development that enhances and protects the local distinctive characters, through good design, landscaping (both within a scheme and having regard to the impact on surrounding landscapes).

ANY RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS:N/A

NAME:	Andy Bush Arboricultural Officer
DEPARTMENT:	Strategic Planning (Specialist team)
DATE:	18/10/2024