



HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL CONSULTATION

TO:	Horsham District Council – Planning Dept
LOCATION:	Thakeham Tiles Ltd Rock Road Storrington
DESCRIPTION:	Outline application for the demolition of existing buildings, and the re-development of the site for up to 108no. dwellings (including a mix of private and affordable housing units), with associated infrastructure including vehicular, cycle and pedestrian access, parking, landscaping, open space and play provision, and sustainable drainage with all matters reserved except for access
REFERENCE:	DC/25/2087
RECOMMENDATION:	Advice / More information/ modification I.e. removal of all development from with the Western Wood next to site access.
SUMMARY OF COMMENTS & RECOMMENDATION: The application is supported by an Arboricultural Implications Assessment (AIA) prepared in accordance with BS5837:2012. The site contains a mixture of individual trees, groups, hedgerows, and woodland. The AIA has recorded 84 individual trees, 14 groups, 2 hedges, and 3 woodland areas. The overall site layout is, for the most part, arranged in a similar manner to that previously approved under DC/18/2095 on 28/02/2020, except for two additional heavily treed woodland sections located to the east and west of the existing site access within the northern part of the site. The site is subject to two separate Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). The first relates to trees within the heavily wooded area in the southern portion of the site, protected under TPO/1298 (served in 2005). The second relates to the wooded area to the east of the existing site access (TPO/0820, served in 1985). The proposed scheme would result in the removal of a significant number of TPO-protected trees.	

MAIN COMMENTS

Site observations

Woodland in the Southern Part of the Site

The wooded southern part of the site is located within what was historically an old sand pit. The retained peripheral tree cover is predominantly Scots pine, with some deciduous species including silver birch, oak, and sweet chestnut. Since sand extraction works ceased, the lower central area of the former pit now comprises largely semi-mature to mature scots Pine trees, and more domestic shrubby vegetation such as buddleia and cotoneaster.

The size and maturity of the trees indicate that this area has been wooded for many decades and makes a positive contribution to the rural and wooded character of this part of the parish. To accommodate the proposed residential development in the southern portion of the site, approximately 50% of the trees within this area would require removal. Although it is accepted the wider amenity visual value impact of these removals would be contained with the site due to its topography.

Eastern Wood Next to Site Access

The mature trees within the woodland to the east of the primary access to the Thakeham Tiles site benefit from protection under TPO/0820, an Area Order served on 18/08/1995. Trees present within the designated TPO area at the time the Order was served are protected, whereas trees that have grown since that date are not automatically covered.

There has been limited recent management within the eastern woodland, and it would likely benefit from a programme of woodland management. The supporting documentation indicates that several trees along the western boundary would require removal to facilitate the proposed access arrangements.

Western Wood Next to Site Access

None of the trees within this area are subject to statutory protection. The woodland predominantly comprises densely spaced semi-mature to mature deciduous trees, with occasional Scots pine.

As with the eastern woodland, the trees have not been subject to recent management and vary in overall quality and condition.

None of the wooded areas affected by the proposal are classified as ancient woodland. However, some sections proposed for removal are mapped on DEFRA MAGIC as Priority Habitat — Lowland Deciduous Woodland. Accordingly, parts of the site constitute habitat of principal importance under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 and represent a material planning consideration.

When the existing tree cover is assessed against the extent of proposed removals, it is unlikely that meaningful on-site Biodiversity Net Gain can be achieved within the site boundary. As such, a substantial proportion of existing canopy cover and woodland habitat would be permanently lost at the site.

While the quality of trees within the western woodland ranges from good to poor, the woodland as a whole performs an important landscape and habitat function and makes a positive contribution to the character and ecological value of the immediate and wider area. Consideration should therefore be given to removing all development from the Western Wood next to the site access and retaining and enhancing this woodland feature should be encouraged.

Root Protection Area Observations

The Tree Protection Plan (TPP) lacks clarity as to whether the residential development within the southern section of the site can be accommodated without direct incursion into the Root Protection Areas (RPAs) of retained trees within Group W1B. Level changes and construction within RPAs could materially affect retained trees. Further clarification of finished site levels is required to enable a robust assessment of potential impacts.

Additional RPA incursions are indicated on the eastern side of the site. Some RPAs already contain existing hard surfacing, while others do not. From the TPP and AIA, it is unclear whether the proposed incursions exceed the 20% guideline allowance set out in BS5837:2012. This will need to be confirmed.

Future Residence Pressure Observations

Retained trees adjoining the rear gardens of proposed dwellings are likely to be subject to future pressure from residents due to shading, leaf fall, perceived safety concerns, and general maintenance issues. This commonly results in requests for pruning or removal, leading to incremental post-development canopy loss and reduced long-term amenity value.

Appropriate separation distances, careful siting of dwellings, and clear management guidance will be important in minimising future pressure and supporting the sustainable retention of these trees.

ANY RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS: N/A

NAME:	Andy Bush Arboricultural officer (Planning)
DEPARTMENT:	STRATEGIC PLANNING - SPECIALISTS
DATE:	71/02/26