

From: Stewart, Maria
Sent: 12 October 2018 10:49
To: Haywood, Daphney <Daphney.Haywood@havant.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: APP/18/00672 Land off Westwood Close, Emsworth

Hi Daphney

I have no further comments.

Kind regards,

Maria

Maria Stewart - Arboricultural Officer
Neighbourhood Support

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From: Haywood, Daphney
Sent: 26 September 2018 13:52
To: Stewart, Maria <Maria.Stewart@easthants.gov.uk>
Subject: APP/18/00672 Land off Westwood Close, Emsworth

Maria

Further to your comments:-

The trees are protected by a group TPO but the trees/part of hedges to be removed are low quality and there is no objection to their removal. Off site trees have recently been made the subject of a TPO. Providing the work is carried out in strict accordance with the Barrell Tree Consultancy report and Tree Protection Plan, the development can be achieved without detriment to the trees on and off site. Drainage/service plans should be submitted prior to any decision on the application.

I have now received an objection from HBC Tree Wardens. Could you please take a look at these and let me know if you think there is anything that needs additional information or comment?

HBC Tree Wardens

The proposed development site forms part of a wildlife corridor that links Emsworth and Westbourne. To the north is Hampshire Farm Meadows and to the south is Brook Meadow nature reserve, a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC).

The proposed site is close to the River Ems which runs to the east of the site and is only slightly higher than land currently classified as Flood Zone 2. The Environment Agency is reviewing the classification. It would seem prudent to defer the application until the outcome of that review is known. The development is likely to have an impact on water flow and water quality in the River Ems.

We feel there are several areas being glossed over concerning trees to be felled, those for which pruning is proposed to allow for construction access and clearance between building plots and root protection areas.

The proposed site includes trees subject to Tree Preservation Orders, two oaks within the hedgerow (currently a group TPO) and three TPOs close to boundaries within gardens in Westbourne Avenue. The latter have recently been applied for by owners in two gardens due to proposed building almost up to their fences and there will resistance from owners to any pruning.

Excavation work appears to be planned within the root areas and the Arboricultural Assessment suggests they are healthy trees well able to cope with the disturbance. If the trees are worthy of Tree Preservation Orders then they are worthy of protection and the root protection areas should be extended to minimise disturbance.

Approximately one-third of the central hedgerow which is subject to the group TPO is intended to be removed to make room for an access road, leaving the smaller of the two TPO oaks with an inadequate root protection area. The tree has an extended canopy of 6.5m on the southern side that gives a hint as to its root spread.

In his book 'Ancient and other veteran trees: further guidance on management' (The Tree Council / Ancient Tree Forum) David Lonsdale recommends providing increased root protection areas for veteran trees to 15 times the stem diameter at breast height or five metres beyond the tree's canopy, whichever is the greater. The white arrow at the extreme left in the attached illustration shows where ploughing has revealed the extent of roots.

The Arboricultural Assessment states that six trees and parts of three groups of trees are to be removed, all of low quality. We take issue with this classification. The trees include some ash which may succumb to ash dieback but currently appear healthy and two well established seven metre tall field maples with the potential for further growth. The trees may not be important to developers whose main motivation is to maximise profits. However, they make a contribution to the landscape and there would be a noticeable gap if they were to be removed. These trees are possibly veteran and should be considered appropriately during the planning process. Both have been entered on the Ancient Tree Inventory.

The revised National Planning Policy Framework now recognises the exceptional value of ancient and veteran trees for their cultural and heritage value and as irreplaceable habitat. Their loss or deterioration should only be permitted in wholly exceptional circumstances when deciding planning applications. This puts ancient and veteran trees on a par, in policy, with ancient woodland and other highly valued elements of the natural environment such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest and the built heritage.

We are concerned that the supporting reasons for removing trees depend simply on their current (disputed) insignificance in terms of skyline features and contribution to local character. This ignores their contribution to thriving bird life (nests & foraging) plus bats flying along them to hunt insects above the River Ems. These considerations may not be relevant in terms of placing TPOs, but they are significant in terms of the local semi-rural character and as an important part of a major wildlife corridor linking the South Downs National Park to Chichester Harbour via Brook Meadow local nature reserve. The general connecting area is already under significant development pressure, e.g. Long Copse Lane.

We object to the felling of trees and destruction of hedges that support wildlife. It appears from the plan that, apart from trees within the residential development, few additional trees will be planted and it is not known what species or how large they will be. They are therefore unlikely to replace the trees lost in terms of contributing to the landscape or wildlife value.

The Sussex Border Path which runs through the site is a historic pedestrian route between two historic settlements. It is a consistent route shown in 1849 Ordnance Survey maps and since and is well used by local and visiting walkers. The proposed diversion would place the footpath in an area that is likely to be muddy and, at times, unusable in the winter. The proposed development will completely change the character of this part of the walk; instead of pleasant country views, the path will pass near to a housing estate which will be visible from the southern end of the field.

This is not a suitable site for the proposed development and we would urge the council to refuse this application. The strength of feeling towards this application is evident from the number of objections. This application should not be considered under Delegated Powers. The application must be carefully deliberated by our elected representatives.

Should the application be approved, we have the following additional comments. There is no instruction to avoid removal or disturbance of the hedges during the bird nesting season.

Root protection areas are indicated on the plan and we note there will be some disturbance to roots of trees offsite at the proposed entrance from Westwood Close and at the north-west boundary. Close monitoring of root protection areas and activities on site will be required to ensure that barriers are positioned correctly and no additional harm is caused to tree roots.

The plan indicates that trees and hedges will be planted. The Combined Landscape Visual Impact Assessment and Landscape Design Statement includes a Tree palette (section 6.5) for trees to be planted within the residential area and a Native Hedgerow Palette (section 6.6).

We note that all the hedgerow plants will be planted as bare root stock; at 900-1200mm height (and then cut back to a standard height); at 5 plants per linear metre on a double staggered row layout. This suggests the hedge will be a uniform height along its length. The 'standard height' is not stated and is expected to be two metres. While the new hedge will eventually partly screen the houses, the trees will not be allowed to grow to the size of the trees removed and make a significant contribution to the landscape. There is an opportunity for more screening of the houses by allowing some to grow as hedgerow trees.

The illustration for Guelder Rose in the Native Hedgerow Palette shows an ornamental variety and not the native species.

Many thanks
Best Regards

Daphney Haywood
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Planning Services

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Please note my usual work days are Monday, Wednesday and Thursday

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PLEASE NOTE THAT THE PLANNING PORTAL WILL BE INTRODUCING A FLAT RATE PAYMENT FEE FROM MONDAY 10TH SEPTEMBER 2018.