1357.bjh.let

2nd May 2024

Mr M Black
6 Record Road
Emsworth
Hampshire

Dear Mr Black,

Ref: Development Application for land adjacent to 6 Emsworth House Close, Emsworth

You have instructed me to undertake a 'desk study' review of the arboricultural information which has been submitted to Havant Borough Council in support of the above referenced planning application.

The author of the report is Fallen&Found Arboriculture Ltd. [*FFA Ltd.]* who act for the applicant Mr Shakir Ali and it is headed – Arboricultural Impact Appraisal & Preliminary Arboricultural Method Statement – 4th February 2024. The Planning Application Number is not referenced within the report nor is there a reference to whether or not any trees are covered by a Tree Preservation Order. The appendices to the report include Appendix A - Tree Survey Schedule and Appendix B - Tree Protection Plan [Q0367\EmsworthHouseClose\TPP_V1 2024].

At 2.1.1 of the report it states that '*All off site tree measurements were estimated from the property boundary based on what tree structure components can be viewed*.' Thus it can be assumed that the diameter measurement for the off site T2 Common Oak that FFA Ltd. quote in the Tree Survey Schedule at Appendix A of 1185mm, although precisely specified, may well be inaccurate given that it was estimated by eye and is not an accurately measured diameter. I can however confirm that an 1185mm diameter would attract a radially measured protection zone of 14.2m.

At 3.2.1 of the report there are three tables specifying Vegetation to be Retained (Table 1); Vegetation to be Removed (Table 2) and Vegetation to be Pruned (Table 3). The Oak T2 is listed as being off site and shown in Table 3 to be retained but pruned back to facilitate development as proposed. Thus the proposed development cannot be accommodated without this tree having to be pruned back. This does not sound like appropriate thought and planning has been applied to the layout and one might conclude that showing two units on this small area of land could be constituted as over development. Notwithstanding this the need to have to prune this Oak tree back to facilitate the layout places it under immediate threat both now and in the future. The canopy of this tree is shown on the Tree Protection Plan to cover the entire rear garden to the northernmost plot and overhangs approximately half of the roof area. This means that it will dominate the open space and leave the new owners with no useable garden space. If we actually consider the high probability that not only will the new owners wish to fully utilise this space but they are highly likely to want a Patio Area; Conservatory and have a designated area for drying their washing, this tree will be under significant pressure in the immediate future to be even more heavily lopped back to facilitate same. This would in my opinion be detrimental to its visual amenity value as well as its ongoing health and vitality in contravention of sound arboricultural practice and contrary to industry standards contained within **BS3998:2010 Tree Work Recommendations.**

If we now turn our attention to consideration of what threat this development represents to the below ground rooting system of the T2 Oak tree there is yet more pressure being applied. The report states that it complies with **BS5837:2012 Trees in relation to Design, Demolition and Construction-Recommendations** which states that :–

'5.3 Proximity of structures to trees

5.3.1 *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 that prevent damage to the tree(s) (see Clause7). If operations within the RPA are proposed, the project arboriculturist should :*

a) demonstrate that the tree(s) can remain viable and that the area lost to encroachment can be compensated for elsewhere, contiguous with its RPA;

b) propose a series of mitigation measures to improve the soil environment that is used by the tree for growth.'

To the best of my knowledge the applicants have by design placed the plot within the RPA of this tree without specifying any overriding justification for construction within that RPA. Furthermore, they have ***neither*** - demonstrated that the tree can remain viable and that the area lost to encroachment can be compensated for elsewhere contiguous with tis RPA, ***nor*** - proposed a series of mitigation to improve the soil environment that is used by the tree for growth. Therefore in my opinion their report does not comply with the basic industry recommendations contained within BS5837:2012.

I am deeply concerned having read the Preliminary Method Statement that at Section 4.4 Hand Digging of Pile Locations that FFA Ltd. refers to '*The first 600mm of topsoil shall be excavated by hand using hand tools or air displacement technology. All roots under 250mm diameter may be pruned back to the hole edge using a sharp set of bypass secateurs.*'

Firstly, why are they excavating through the primary rooting zone of this tree when technology allows for above ground pile head formation without the need for excavation?

Secondly, roots of 250mm are ten times the maximum diameter that is specified within BS5837 -

7.2.3 Roots smaller than 25mm diameter may be pruned back, making a clean cut with a suitable sharp tool (e.g. bypass secateurs or handsaw), except where they occur in clumps …'

They could cause considerable damage to the tree if they excavate and sever roots in this way.

In my opinion the FFA Ltd. report Conclusions at 3.8 are undermined and contradicted by the above points and do not comply with industry standard recommendations within both BS3998 & BS5837. Therefore, I have serious concerns that if approved by Havant Borough Council Planners in its present state this development would lead to the undermining of the amenity value of this Oak tree and very probably have a significant detrimental effect on its ongoing health and viability.

I trust that the information contained within this letter will allow you to effectively challenge the arboricultural evidence which has been submitted in support of the planning application.

Yours sincerely,

Bernie Harverson

Arboricultural Consultant

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