Development Control – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: ADC/0243/09 **Recommendation – Permit Application**

Site: **Southern Cross The Street Shoreham-by-Sea West Sussex**

Proposal: **Height reduction of sycamore trees (subject to TPO 162/4/83/SU)**

The Application

The application relates to 10 Sycamore trees within group TPO 162/4/83 (SU) which are sited within the rear garden of Southern Cross, The Street Shoreham. The site is within the Conservation Area and the built up area of Shoreham. Permission is sought to reduce the height of the Sycamores by 33%.

Consultations and Representations

Jeremy Sergeant: **-** The request to reduce the trees by 33% would not enhance the overall appearance of the trees as a group. Also by reducing the trees they will become top heavy with re-growth and the resulting increase in the density of the crown would create more shade. A smaller reduction of 20% is recommended to control the height of the trees and to maintain a more natural look, so as to keep the original feature of the group. All works must be carried out to British Standard recommendations for tree work; BS3998, in relation to crown reduction.

Further comments following site meeting with applicant: - Allow trees to be crown thinned by up to 30% and crown lifted up to 8-10 metres as required. The trees on the southwest side of the group need heavier reduction (up to 40% with no loss in height) to reduce lateral spread of the crowns, and create a slimmer more compact tree. In addition to this permission to reduce the tops of the trees by selecting new leaders could be carried out. This would be crown reduction of up to 20%.

Third Parties : **-** 3 letters of support have been received stating the following:-

- The trees are at a size that makes then exposed to high winds.
- They result in loss of light.
- Threat of falling in high winds.
- Works will be beneficial to health of trees.
- The works will improve the visual appearance of the trees.

Relevant Planning Polices and Guidance

Adopted Adur District Local Plan 1993-2006 (ADC 1996) (saved policies): AB23
Design Bulletin No.1 'Trees and Landscaping' (ADC 1996)
'Tree Preservation Orders: A Guide to the Law and Good Practice' (DETR 2000)

Planning Assessment

Policies

Local Plan policy AB23 states that Tree Preservation Orders will be made to safeguard existing trees in the District where their loss would have an adverse effect on the existing and future environment and its enjoyment by the public.

Trees

Jeremy Sergeant has advised that the trees should only be reduced by 20% and not 33% as stated in the application. The trees are overly tall within this area. It is advised that a reduction of 20% will control the height of the trees and maintain a more natural look, to keep the original feature of the group of trees. It is considered that these works will enhance the amenity value and overall value of the group TPO. Following these comments a site meeting was held with Jeremy Sergeant and the applicant to discuss the proposals. It was agreed that the trees could be crown thinned by up to 30-40% and a crown lift up to 8-10 metres. A reduction of up to 20% to control the height of the trees and to maintain a more natural look, so as to keep the original feature of the group.

The Council has been advised informally that the trees subject to a TPO may provide a habitat for bats. It is considered that the proposed works to the crown of the trees are unlikely to affect any bats as they would be within the main trunk. However it is considered reasonable to attach a condition to ensure that the proposed works are carried out August to September to safeguard this habitat during the breeding season.

Recommendation

APPROVE: -

Subject to: -

1. C1Ciii
2. C11M
3. The following works are hereby approved:
    a. G2 (Sycamores): Crown thin trees by up to 30-40% and crown lift up to 8-10 m. Reduction of up to 20%. Reason: - In the interests of amenity and to comply with policy AB23 of the ADLP.

4. The works hereby permitted shall take place between 1st August and 30th September only.
Reason: - To allow for the conservation of wildlife by habitat protection during the breeding season, having regard to policies AN4 of the Adur District Local Plan.

Case Officer..[redacted].....Date..18/8/09.....

[redacted]