Development Management – Delegated Officer Report **Date; 19/03/24**

Application Number	**AWDM/0112/24**
Address	**18 Vicarage Fields Worthing West Sussex BN13 3SF**
Proposal	**Application for consent under Worthing Tree Preservation Order No.20 of 2001 to fell and replace one Holm Oak tree T1 of group G3.**

Date of site visit: 06/03/24

Neighbours checked: Y
Additional neighbour notifications: N
Site notice: (wider publicity / conservation area): N

Proposal, Site and Surroundings

The application refers to a single Holm Oak tree which is part of group G3 of TPO 20 of 2001 which consists of 43 Holm Oaks trees, four of which are in the rear garden of 18 Vicarage Fields. The building is part of an 80s cul-de-sac of 22 detached houses, of which nos.15 to 22 run parallel to the linear group of mature Holm Oak trees group G3. The tree is part of a group that is a prominent part of the street scene and makes a contribution to the character and visual amenities of the area.

Consent is sought to fell and replace the tree.

The reasons for the works are primarily in the interests of safety.

Consultations: None.

Representations: None received.

Relevant Planning History

2001: Worthing Tree Preservation order Number 20 of 2001 confirmed on 12/06/2001.

2007: Application to crown lift to 5 metres and clear out 7 Holm Oak trees in rear garden. Permitted.

2009: Application to fell one Holm Oak in North West corner of rear garden and to reduce crown spread of six remaining Holm Oak trees by up to 1 metre (part of G3). Conditional Consent.

2013: Application to crown reduce 6 no. Holm Oak trees in rear garden, to leave the trees with a finished height of 8 metres. Granted Conditional Consent = Reduction to a finished height of 12 metres.

2013: Application for consent under Worthing Tree Preservation Order No. 20 of 2001 to Fell one Holm Oak tree part of group G3

2015: Application for consent under Worthing Tree Preservation Order No.20 of 2001 to fell and replace two Holm Oak trees of group G3. Refused – split decision on appeal fell one tree.

2016: Application for consent under Worthing Tree Preservation Order No. 20 of 2001 to reduce crown height and radial spread by up to 5 metres four Holm Oak trees of group G3.

2021: Application for consent under Worthing Tree Preservation Order No. 20 of 2001 to reduce crown height and radial spread by up to 5 to 6 metres 4 Holm Oak trees of group G3.

2022: Application for consent under Worthing Tree Preservation Order No.20 of 2001 to reduce crown height by up to 2.5 metres and reduce radial spread by up to 2 metres three Holm Oak trees group G3.

Planning Assessment

The tree is a large mature Holm Oak growing near to the Southwest corner, on the Western boundary of the rear garden, adjacent to the garage compounds of Ivydore Close and Bramble Close. The tree is an intrinsic part of the established linear group of Holm Oak trees group G3. The group is prominent and makes a significant contribution to the character and visual amenities of the area.

This tree has two large diameter stems from ground level, the Northern stem is single to 4 metres the Southern stem to 3 metres. The North stem angles outward toward the garage compound of Ivydore and Bramble Close, with the South stem remaining mostly upright. The tree was reduced in 2022/3 and is now heavily laden with small regrowth foliage. The North stem has a cavity at 0.25 metres which has some calousing around it and no adjacent hollowing when tapped. This kind of decay is common on Holm Oak trees of this age. The main crown is dense and mostly compact.

The proposed works are to fell and replace the tree, due to concerns regarding its health and condition. Inspecting the tree the cavity does not appear to be exceptionally deep and is normal for the species. It has been stated that Honey Fungus has been observed at the base of the tree. This is normally a secondary fungus that will grow on dead or already decayed wood. As the tree is actively producing regrowth without any signs of thinning or chlorosis, I do not consider this to be a sign of infection. Therefore with no overall evidence of significant decline or imminent failure I consider the tree should be retained and the proposal refused.

Recommendation

REFUSE for the reason(s):-

1. The Holm Oak tree of group G3 is a prominent and established feature, which contributes positively to the local character and landscape of the area. Having regard to the maturity and stature of the tree and its prominence within the street scene there is no compelling arboricultural or other acceptable reason provided which would justify the loss of this tree.

Is recommendation contrary to letter(s) of representation?

No

Case Officer: JDS Date: 19/03/2024

Authorised by: Jo Morin Date: 20.03.2024