Expires 24/1/08.

Development Control – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: ADC/0723/07 **Recommendation – Permit Application**

Site: **Royal Buildings Marlborough Road Lancing West Sussex**

Proposal: **Reduction in height to a common level (by maximum 3 metres) of tree screen; removal of lower dead wood and removal of 8 dead or dying trees (conifers subject to TPO 162/4/82/L) (previous application for felling withdrawn)**

The Application

The application site is the Royal Buildings on Marlborough Road, Lancing. These light industrial units were constructed in the early 1980's along with the plantation of a row of conifers along the southern boundary separating the site from the rear gardens of No's 9-17 Western Close. The conifers were planted to shield the neighbouring properties from the visual and noise impact of the new units and were immediately made subject to the Tree Preservation Order 162/4/82/L. They are now a tall landscape feature of the area approximately 10-12 metres in height.
This application is a revision of a previously withdrawn application ADC/0636/07 that sought to replace the row of trees with a new plantation of Red Cedars. This revision, having sought the advice of a specialist tree surgeon, seeks permission to reduce the heights of the trees by up to 3 metres to a common level, remove eight selected trees that are dead/dying, and remove lower dead wood from the remainder. No scheme for replanting or improving the screen is proposed.

Consultations and Representations

Third Parties

No.9 Western Close requests that the trees at the rear of their property be removed.

No.14 Western Close Objects stating that this proposal takes little account for the original aims of the screen and is not a suitable solution to the problems the trees are causing with their bare lower trunks and overhangs.

Lancing Parish Council wish to see the replacement of the eight dead/dying trees.

Contributors

No representations have been received.

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

Adopted West Sussex Structure Plan 2001-2016 (WSCC 2005): DEV1
Adopted Adur District Local Plan 1993-2006 (ADC 1996) (saved until adoption of the new Adur Development Plan): 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
The two groups of trees were planted as a condition attached to the construction of the Royal Buildings under L/92/81/TP. The purpose of the trees was to create a screen between the new industrial units and the rear gardens of the bungalows on Western Close to reduce the visual and noise impacts of the development. A TPO was subsequently placed on two rows of these trees under TPO 162/4/82/L. Records show that there have been no works to these trees since.
The trees as current are vastly overgrown specimens approximately 12 metres in height. Due to the nature of the species the majority, especially to the east of the site, have grown such that their bases now feature dead branches up to 6 metres and little low foliage, reducing their screening impact. Several are of particularly poor quality and are leaning significantly.
The applicant wishes to fell eight of these trees without replacement. Under the guidance of the TPO it is necessary that these trees be replaced and so this request is attached by condition. The proposed reduction in crown by a maximum of 3 metres appears extreme, especially as it will involve the removal of vast sections of healthy foliage. There is recognition though that these trees need attention in some form to attempt to regain control over their growth and stability. A 3 metre reduction will reduce the overgrown bulk of the trees and tidy their appearance but will not encourage further growth lower down. A request has been made to the applicants to plant new trees in the gaps where the screen is at its thinnest however no response has been received and it is not possible to condition additional planting to a TPO application.
Jeremy Sergeant has viewed the trees and confirms that a reduction would serve only to thicken the foliage at the existing height and not at the bases where it has died off. There is no objection to the removal of the eight dead trees.

Recommendation

23/1/08

APPROVE:-

Subject to:

1. C1Ciii
2. C11H
3. C11M .. felling of the 8 trees .... plant 8 replacement trees of a ..
4. 'The following works are permitted in respect of the other trees:—
   G1 and G2: Crown reduction by up to 3 metres.
   Reason: In the interests of amenity'

Case Officer:..... Date: 23/1/08.

Planning Services Manager:..... Date: 23/1/08.

Planning & Regulatory Committee Chairman:..... Date: 23/1/08.