Development Management - Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: **Recommendation – Approve**
AWDM/1095/12

Site: **82 Elms Drive, Lancing BN15 9LR**

Proposal: **Sectionally fell Sycamore (T8) of TPO 13.53/1/01L (2001) and replace with Field Maple or Silver Birch.**

Date of site visit: 14.09.12

Neighbours checked: N

Additional neighbour notifications: Y

Proposal, Site and Surroundings
The application relates to a Sycamore tree (T8 of the TPO) growing in the rear garden of the dwelling, a semi-detached bungalow on the east side of the road.

The tree is approximately 6-7m in height and has a natural shaped crown with dense canopy. The trunk of the tree is growing directly adjacent to the rear boundary wall on the south side of the site. The wall is of a traditional brick construction, and has a crack from its base to the top, adjacent to where the tree is growing. It is evident that attempts have been made to repair the crack some time in the past.

Permission is sought to fell the tree to ground level and to replace with either a Field Maple, Silver Birch or Wild Cherry, away from the property boundary.

Consultations

Adur & Worthing Councils: The Assistant Parks Manager states that the tree is in generally good health with a full crown and strong re-growth over the various wounds etc. The main trunk of the tree is damaged at ground level with a split in the trunk rising to about 1 meter. Although this damage has healed and callused over there are signs of decay inside, and the tree is compromised. This tree is not very significant to the area and cannot be seen from the highway, because of this and the damage to the main stem I do not consider that it should be retained.

Lancing Parish Council: No objection

Representations

Third parties: There have been no third party objections to the proposals.

Relevant Planning Policies
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

Visual amenity
The tree is visually a good specimen however it is not so large that it is clearly visible in streetscene views from the west in Elm’s Drive. The tree can be seen in between the gap of No’s 82 & 80, but it is well to the rear of the properties and partially screened by the rear extension of No.82, and the side boundary gate of No.80. In views further to the north or south the tree is screened by the built form of the bungalows within the road.

The access track to the rear of the properties in Elms Drive and Lancing Close has an entrance to the north off of Crabtree Lane, where the trees subject to the TPO are visible. The larger Poplar trees are of a more significant height and are clearly visible towards the south. The Sycamore subject to the application is 53m from the junction with the road, and is seen in the foreground from the access way only and therefore has little prominence. The impact it has is limited to the most immediate of views from the access track itself, whereas from Crabtree Lane to the east and west it is obscured by the buildings themselves.

The Parks Officer has inspected the health of the tree and is of the opinion that it is compromised due to splits and other wounds within the main trunk rising to approximately 1m in height, and the long term health of the tree would therefore not be assured.

The applicant proposes to replant a replacement of a different species in an area of the back garden to be agreed which would be subject to a relevant planning condition.

Residential amenity
The existing tree is growing in close proximity to the side boundary wall of the property at the very rear of the garden. It is clear that a crack has developed and is pushing the wall in the direction of the neighbour. Whilst the lean to the wall is not particularly severe, it is claimed that the wall has been subject to repeated damage, however no evidence has been submitted.

Should the wall fail it is likely that it would fall in the direction of the neighbouring site, and could cause harm should anyone be in close proximity at the time of the event.

Recommendation

APPROVE subject to:-

1. Sectionally Fell Sycamore (T1) to ground level and treat stump to prevent re-growth.

2. Replacement tree and position to be agreed in writing by the LPA, and to be planted within the first planting season after the sycamore is felled unless otherwise agreed in writing.

Is recommendation contrary to letter(s) of representation? N

Case Officer: C. Hone Date: 25.10.12

Authorised by: Jo Morin Date: 13 Nov 2012