EXPIRES 11/5

Development Control – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: ADC/0103/10 Recommendation - Permit

Site: **St Mary the Blessed Virgin, Church Lane, Sompting BN15 6AX**

Proposal: **Complete felling and removal of roots of 2 Leylandii adjacent to lychgate (6 Weeks prior notice of works to trees in Conservation Area).**

The Application

A section 211 notification has been submitted, giving six weeks prior notice of the intention to fell two leylandii trees growing either side of the lychgate pedestrian entrance to the church. The church is located on the west side of Church Lane, 0.4km to the north of the junction with the A27. The lychgate is located in the SE corner of the churchyard and was erected as a memorial to those who died in the First World War, and it acts as the main pedestrian entrance to the churchyard.

The applicant states that the trees are damaging the timber shingled roof of the lychgate and the telephone wires have become entangled in them. She also states that the trees were not planted in memorial to anyone departed.

Consultations and Representations

Adur District Council: The Parks Officer states the trees are healthy with vigorous growth, and at 10m tall they are currently half their eventual size. He states that the trees are not appropriate to the area and would not be considered for a TPO.

Sompting Parish Council: No objection to the application, but they would like a condition to replace the felled trees with a more appropriate species.

Third Parties: There has been one letter of objection from the owner of Sompting Abbotts, which states that the removal of the trees would greatly change the appearance of the lychgate, and the entrance to St. Mary's would be spoilt.

Relevant Planning Policies 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.

Affect on conservation area.
The planning considerations are whether the trees themselves should be subject to specific protection and whether they warrant a Tree preservation Order.

Leylandii trees would not ordinarily be considered species that would be specifically protected, due to their vigorous growth, and the likely adverse effect on neighbouring residential sites, through loss of light and outlook etc. In this case there are no nearby dwellings, however the tree is growing in close proximity to the lychgate which is a very characterful feature of the Grade I listed church. The crowns of the two trees currently appear as one, and are clearly only going to increase in size. They engulf the roof of the lychgate which has led to problems with the shingle roof, and shadow the entrance to the churchyard.

Opposite the church is a large flint wall which runs for 150m north to south along the boundary of Sompting Abbotts Preparatory School to the east. Growing adjacent to the whole length of this wall are thick mature trees. It is considered that the presence of these trees would more than compensate for the loss of the two Leyandii.

Whilst the loss of trees would change the appearance to the church it is not considered that this would be detrimental to the character of the conservation area, or to the setting of the listed building.

Recommendation

Permit works and do not make TPO.

Case Officer: [redacted]
Date: 26/04/10

Planning Services Manager: [redacted]
Date: 26/4/10

Chairman of the Planning Committee [redacted]
Date: 26/04/10