

## WSCC Landscape Architect Response to Planning Consultation

**Application ref:** WSCC/052/12/WC

**Description:** The siting and development of a temporary borehole, well site compound and access road including all ancillary infrastructure and equipment, on land at Wood Barn Farm, Broadford Bridge, for the exploration, testing and evaluation of hydrocarbons in the willow prospect.

**Address** Wood Barn Farm, Adversane Lane, Broadford Bridge, Billingshurst, West Sussex

**LPA:** WSCC

**Date:** 18<sup>th</sup> December 2012

**Summary response:** Objection

### **Comments:**

A landscape holding objection was raised owing to insufficient information relating to existing trees being included in the application. Having since received the information requested, I consider that the proposed entrance to the temporary site is likely to cause significant damage to the root protection area of an existing mature oak tree (numbered T3 in the tree survey). Lower crown branches of T3 would also be adversely affected by high vehicles if entering the site at this point. The tree survey values this tree as 'A1' – the highest quality tree.

The applicant proposes to protect the rootzone area of T3 with a steel plate road construction which will be impervious. This area of the rootzone affected is identified in the tree survey as being the main zone of rooting for the tree owing to the existing road and ditch limiting root activity to the east. Called an 'offset rootzone' (according to BS 5837 'Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction' 2012) this will exacerbate the negative impacts on T3.

My recommendation is to realign the proposed entrance bellmouth to a slightly more northern position in order to reduce/remove this potential impact. In realigning the entrance to this more northern position it would be necessary to remove a very poor oak tree classed in the tree survey as 'R' (ie remove on safety grounds owing to death, disease and/or dangerous).

The applicant has stated that there is an intention of realigning the entrance in the future, should the site become permanent. I see no value in postponing this realignment to a later point, by which time the avoidable damage to T3 would already have occurred.

The impact of the compound and associated activity I consider to be visually well contained within the surrounding woodland and hedgerow trees.

Should the LPA be minded to approve the application I suggest the following conditions, however this is not my recommended approach.

#### Tree Protection Plan

Prior to commencement of the development a Tree Protection Plan shall be submitted to the LPA for approval in writing. No development shall commence until such approval has been given and the approved fencing erected in full on site to the satisfaction of the WSCC Trees and Woodlands Officer. The protective fence line shall follow the edge of the root protection area in accordance with BS 5837 'Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction 2012 : Recommendations' unless by agreement with the LPA.

#### No Dig Construction Detail

Prior to the commencement of the development a construction detail showing materials, depth of construction, edge restraints and the construction methodology of any no dig construction required in accordance with BS5837:2012 shall be submitted to the LPA for approval in writing. No development shall take place until such approval has been given by the LPA.

Landscape Scheme

Prior to the commencement of the development a landscape scheme detailing all planting proposals shall be submitted to the LPA for approval in writing. The scheme shall include details of species, planting sizes, soil amelioration and planting spacing. The approved scheme shall be implemented in full in the first planting season (Nov-Feb) following the commencement of the development.

Scheme of Reinstatement

Prior to the commencement of the development a scheme of removal and reinstatement of the landscape features shall be submitted to the LPA for approval in writing. The scheme shall include the methodology for removal of the no dig surfacing. No development shall take place until such approval has been given.

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