

WSCC COUNTY ARBORICULTURIST response to planning consultation

Application reference number: WSCC/012/23

Location: Downlands School, Dale Avenue, Hassocks, West Sussex, BN6 8LP

Proposal: Proposed new single storey classroom block and associated external works. Alterations to existing car park to provide additional spaces and EV charging points.

District: Mid Sussex

Date: 09/05/2023

Summary response: No objection subject to conditions.

Response:

No objection is raised to this application which proposes the removal of a section of hedgerow within H9 (approximately 20m in length), as well as the loss of a single tree T38 (category C). This loss is required in order to facilitate and construct the proposed building and surroundings, as detailed in the statement of tree and hedge removal and arboricultural impact assessment.

Retaining T38 adjacent two buildings would not only require ongoing cyclical maintenance of a sparse crown, but the works within the root protection area would likely lead to its further deterioration. Replacing the tree within an improved growing environment with a more suitable species is a preferable option to appease both construction and landscape requirements. The loss of T38 is proposed to be compensated for with a replacement tree within the existing location, as well as three new trees planted on the site of the school which will enhance the landscape and potential tree canopy cover of the school. Photos of the site (April 2023) shows the ground where T38 stands to be of poor condition and likely compacted and will need to be addressed in detailed landscaping documents.

Whilst H9 has been categorised of moderate arboricultural quality (B category), its main value exists as a landscape feature hedge rather than the quality of the trees themselves (arguably of a lower quality individually). Partial removal is proposed and compensated for with the planting of a replacement beech hedge which will be managed to a much lower height and width, whilst the value of the hedge as a landscape feature would remain, it is to a lesser degree. Details for a suitable planting trough for this new hedgerow situated adjacent all proposed constraints are required to ensure successful establishment can be achieved.

A number of young trees (hedgerow H10) are proposed to be translocated within the school grounds. H10 is not shown on landscape proposal plans though is scheduled for translocation within the tree protection plan and other arboricultural documents.

Most retained trees and hedges are proposed to be adequately protected during construction. It is not clear what happens to the section of hedgerow which runs contiguously with H9 to the east side of the MUGA as this is not identified within supplied documents. This section of hedge itself, its positioning, as well as the hard surfacing adjacent, all form a barrier from construction related damage and no further requirement to provide a barrier or ground protection is considered necessary.

A number of individual documents contain information for landscaping arrangements, planting specifications and maintenance suggestions. It is prudent to ensure full detailed landscape plans and maintenance plans are provided to ensure trees, planted or translocated, become established in the landscape and important particulars are not overseen throughout the project by any party. The creation of an overarching 'landscape maintenance and management plan' is recommended taking account of the following documents sections and plans (as well as specific concerns outlined in the recommended condition following):

- Arboricultural Method Statement *ref 221012 AMS: Section 6 – Transplanting Trees;*
- Tree Protection Plan *drawing no. 221012-TPP v2* (which indicates the translocated position for H10);
- Landscape Proposals Plan *drawing no. 2417-TFC-XX-XX-DR-L-1002*
- Additional Tree Planting Plan *drawing no. 2417-TFC-XX-XX-DR-L-1006*

Recommendations:

A condition to the following wording are applied on consent:

- a) Prior to commencement of development (including any enabling works), full details of all tree planting and translocations in the form of a landscape maintenance and management plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Specific issues to be dealt with in the landscape maintenance and management plan not already identified:

- i. Plans locating all tree planting including translocated trees (specifically H10).
- ii. Ground/soil treatment for all planting locations (specifically T38).
- iii. Details of planting pits/troughs for all trees (including hedgerows and translocated trees).
- iv. Defect period and replacement for potential failures for all tree planting including translocated trees.

The development thereafter shall be implemented in strict accordance with the approved details.

(**Reason:** To ensure the planting of trees in compliance of the duty within S197 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.)

Informative advice to applicant:

The Additional Tree Planting Plan proposes the planting of 3x new trees to a stock size of extra heavy standard (16-18cm girth), given the site and locations, I recommend that these are revised to select standards (10-12cm girth) as they generally require less maintenance and are more likely to survive.

2.1 of the arboricultural method statement (p.3) should revise the contact of the LA Tree Officer to: Jordan Walker – West Sussex County Council – jordan.walker@westsussex.gov.uk (this should be amended before issuing to contractors).

Jordan Walker MArborA

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