

## Tree Officer Consultation

**Case Reference:** 2/2018/1437/FUL

**Location:** St Martins Residential, Queen Street, Gillingham SP8 4DZ

**Proposal:**

**Case Officer:** Simon McFarlane

## OBSERVATIONS

Amendments to the design and layout of the original scheme have since been submitted for consideration, following consultation with various internal and external parties.

The Pre-Development Arboricultural Survey and Impact Assessment which was prepared by Kingfisher Ecology Ltd 'ref: SM100918-01' and submitted at the beginning of the application process, was later revised in 2019 under Revision A.

The revisions seen in the latest site plan 'Dwg no. PD002 Revision G' now sees the retention of T15- Cherry, which was originally proposed for removal. The amendments to the layout have also pulled away any encroachment into T11- Horse Chestnut's Root Protection Area (RPA), with only minimal incursion of possible construction activities now seen on its south western edge. Both of these amendments are supported.

T11's RPA has been extended to 15.0m in accordance with the current Government Guidance "Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees: protecting them from development".

The RPA's of G4 have been measured with an average distance provided by the surveying arborist. They have noted that whilst it is likely the mature trees are at a sufficient enough distance to not be impacted by the proposed development; a precautionary approach should be taken with a no-dig solution imposed along the parking bays shown to encroach into the western edge of their RPAs.

The trees which have been proposed for removal (T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, G1, G2, G3 and G5) have all been surveyed as Category C (low retention value) or U (limited life expectancy) in line with table 1 of the BS5827:2012 chart for tree quality assessment. The loss of these features is not considered to be of great detriment to the amenity of the local area and could be readily mitigated with new planting.

A small amount of facilitation pruning has been recommended to enable the construction of the southern access route and it was noted that until such a time that planning permission is granted and the start date of construction activity is determined, further essential tree works may become apparent. It is therefore recommended that a detailed tree works schedule be attained prior to any construction works commencing on site.

It is also highlighted within the Arboricultural Report, that whilst the proposal will be constructed at a distance, so that it will not be in direct conflict with any of the retained trees, the indicative landscaping proposals suggest a number of new trees to be in close proximity and that they may require future management to ensure successful co-existence.

It is therefore important that the right tree is chosen for the right place, with careful consideration given to species characteristics such as future form and spread, presence of fruit and suitability for the soil type. Given that Gillingham is predominately heavy clay, consideration must also be given to any new planting when determining foundation design, to ensure it is built in accordance with NHBC Chapter 4.2 Building near trees.

Section 5 of the AIA considers that an Arboricultural Method Statement will not be required, due to there not being any significant works undertaken within the RPAs of the retained trees. Mitigation of a no-dig solution with Arboricultural supervision and auditing, has been recommended for T11 and G4; but as the Tree Protection Plan (TPP) does not clearly demonstrate the extent and type of the ground protection proposed, I would suggest full details of the methodology and an updated TPP should be secured by way of a condition.

Tree protective fencing also only appears to be placed around T11 and T15 and it is unclear why this has not been proposed for the other trees shown to be retained on site. It is possible that the root distribution of the trees situated along the eastern boundary may have been influenced by the natural barrier of the small watercourse and therefore their RPAs may be less symmetrical than suggested.

NB. In view of the proposed development, a Provisional TPO (TPO/2021/0004) has been served on five individual trees which were identified for retention and are considered to contribute positively to the amenity of the locality.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

No objection to the proposal in respect of tree matters subject to the following conditions:

- Arboricultural Method Statement- Pre commencement. To include detail on no-dig solution, Arboricultural supervision, Schedule of tree works and an updated Tree Protection Plan overlaid onto approved layout.
- Soft Landscaping and Planting detail to be submitted.
- Hard landscaping to be submitted.
- Landscape management plan to be submitted.

Officer: C Flippence

Tree Officer

Date: 27<sup>th</sup> January 2021