Arboricultural Report to Borough Planning Officer

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<th>Planning Officer</th>
<th>Miss K Parkins</th>
<th>Site inspection by</th>
<th>Nick Beardmore</th>
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<td>Planning Ref:</td>
<td>CR/2006/0082/FUL</td>
<td>Date of inspection</td>
<td>The Thurman Consultancy</td>
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<td>Location:</td>
<td>Land at 174-180 Woodfield Road, Northgate, Crawley.</td>
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<td>Proposal:</td>
<td>Demolition of existing properties and erection of 38 apartments with access, car and cycle parking and landscaping.</td>
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The trees in relation to development proposals

There are many existing mature trees on and adjacent to the site that could, potentially, be adversely affected by these proposals. The majority of the trees of value are located around the perimeter of the site, some of the trees are on land that is managed by Crawley BC and some by West Sussex CC.

The arboricultural report is difficult to follow as it shows a confused and inconsistent numbering of trees, particularly around the east of the site where the numbers appear to have been mixed up. I would advise that clarification is sought.

Whilst the assessment of a tree's value in the landscape can only be subjective I feel that the values given in the survey are rather conservative. In my opinion a rather pessimistic view of the life expectancy of a number of the mature trees has been given, particularly some trees in G2 at the front of number 178 Woodfield Road and T159 by the entrance to 174 Woodfield Road.

In addition, the survey makes recommendations for works to trees that are under the management of either Crawley Borough Council or WSCL. In my opinion, these works are inappropriate and unnecessary and further clarification is required.

The scheme will be in close proximity to the trees around the perimeter of the site (both on the site and on adjoining land) and there will be a significant amount of shading on the new building for much of the day. I believe there would be considerable and sustained pressures from future residents for either the heavy pruning or removal of these nearby trees.

The car park area to the west of the site will be constructed within 2m of council (Crawley) owned trees adjacent to boundary. Insufficient details are provided regarding how this is to be constructed without adversely affecting the trees.

I am very concerned that the proposed development cannot be achieved without significantly affecting existing trees, either by direct physical damage during construction or by post development pressures from future residents, and result in a significant loss of amenity.
Recommendations

I recommend that this application be refused on the grounds that it will have a significant adverse impact on existing trees and result in an unacceptable loss of amenity.

I also recommend that, should the applicants decide to submit a revised scheme, more consideration should be given to the retention and protection of existing trees and the shading effects that those trees may have on that scheme. In particular, I would like to see the retention of T159 and individual specimens within G2 that provide tree cover at the front of the site.

The tree survey does not adequately portray the situation regarding existing trees and whilst the report upon which it is based discusses tree retention measures in general terms it does not address tree protection issues specific to this site.

The survey and report should be revised to incorporate all the recommendations in British Standard 5837: 2005. In addition, the Tree Constraints Plan submitted with the arboricultural report does not provide details of tree protection measures that are required to safeguard retained trees.

To summarise, I would recommend that the following are required before tree issues on this site can be properly considered:

- A clear and accurate tree numbering system.
- Details of tree protection measures that includes construction diagrams where appropriate and a tree protection plan that shows the precise location of protective barriers and any other relevant measures.
- An assessment of the shading effect of the retained trees on any proposed scheme. This assessment should not assume that trees on land managed by either Crawley Borough Council or West Sussex County Council will be pruned or removed as recommended in the existing report.
- An Arboricultural Method Statement that, in particular, details any special measures required for construction works within the root protection areas of retained trees.
- A statement that contains details of arboricultural supervision during development (including demolition) and frequency of inspection along with a reporting process to the LPA’s Tree Officer.

These matters should be dealt with at the application stage and not, as suggested in paragraph 7.7 of the arboricultural report, by means of a condition attached to any consent.

Nick Beardmore
14 March 2006