



# SUNNINGDALE PARISH COUNCIL

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Clerk: Ruth Davies

21<sup>st</sup> July 2020

Susan Sharman  
Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead  
Town Hall, St Ives Road  
Maidenhead, Berks SL6 1RF

Dear Susan,

## **Planning Application 20/01619/CONDIT - Sunningdale Park Larch Avenue Ascot SL5 0QE**

Details required by part condition 5 (Phase A1, tree protection) of planning permission 18/00356 for the redevelopment of Sunningdale Park including the part demolition, alteration, restoration, conversion and extension of Northcote House (Grade II Listed), Gloucester Stables and the Walled Garden; the alteration, restoration, conversion and extension of North Lodge, the alteration, restoration and conversion of the Gamekeeper's Lodge and Store, and The Dairy; the part demolition and part alteration, restoration and conversion of South Lodge; refurbishment and extension of Gardeners Cottages and the demolition of other buildings including Park House; and the erection of new buildings to provide 168 dwellings (Use Class C3) (160 net), a Care Community of 103 units of accommodation incorporating communal facilities (Use Class C2), restoration of the Registered Park and Garden, provision of 16.97 Hectares of SANG (within 19 hectares of open space in total), plus associated internal access roads, parking, landscaping, footpaths, drainage and other associated works

In the letter dated April 24<sup>th</sup> 2020, the RBWM Tree Team left the reader in no doubt about their opinion of the **Tree works schedule 180927-PD-12** proposed under the previous application, **20/00861/CONDIT**.

Under Item 3 the Tree Team stated that the Tree Works schedule *'is not acceptable. It refers to the removal of hundreds of trees for reasons of landscape improvement, this is in addition to trees which would have to be removed to facilitate development.'*

The Tree Team then wrote: *'227 trees are proposed to be removed in G415 alone. 67 trees are proposed to be felled in G130. 67 trees are proposed to be felled in G130, 10 trees in G405, 37 trees in G447. The applicant will need to substantially minimise this tree loss.'*

Given the severity of the criticism of 20/00861 and the RBWM Decision Notice **REFUSING 20/00861** dated 24<sup>th</sup> June 2020 it was expected that any subsequent application for tree works might take note of the Tree Team's comments.

This does not seem to be the case.

## **Revised Tree Works Schedule**

In the Arboricultural Covering note ref: 2302408 included under this latest proposal, 20/ 01619 the applicant states that there is now a revised Planning Tree Works Schedule ref **180927-PD- 12a** which identifies all the trees that are

proposed for felling by type, category and number. In this detailed 14 page report **every individual tree that had previously been identified for felling under 20/00861 is STILL PROPOSED FOR FELLING under 20/01619.**

The Tree Team could not have been clearer when they said the applicant will have to substantially minimise this tree loss. Yet, just 12 days after the Decision Notice refusing 20/01619 was published the applicant submitted a revised application on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2020 proposing **EXACTLY THE SAME TREES TO BE FELLED. The Parish Council could not identify a single tree on this list that had been previously identified for felling that will now remain.** How can this satisfy the Tree Team's objections?

### **Groups of Trees for felling**

A second area of considerable concern that the Parish Council had highlighted (letter dated 27<sup>th</sup> April 2020 ) when objecting to 20/00861 was the applicants decision to include very large numbers of significant and different tree species under the heading of a single Group which would then be felled. For example, Group 415 on the boundary with Larch Avenue included a total of 397 trees all of which were scheduled for felling. Similarly, Groups G392, G405 and G415 contained a total of 377 trees all proposed for felling under 20/00861. Consequently, felling a Group of trees without identifying the number of individual trees within that group was misleading and unacceptable.

On this latest application the applicant has now stated that areas or groups of trees hatched orange on the plan only require the removal of understorey shrubs such as rhododendron and cherry laurel and saplings with a diameter less than 75mm and not felling of the trees. However, groups of trees within areas of grey shading would still all be felled.

The Parish Council had identified a total of **1,483 rhododendron trees** under 20/00861 within 7 large groups that were due to be felled. Given the classification of these rhododendron trees under this application as 'understorey shrubs' this therefore allows them all to be completely removed anywhere where there is either grey (where they would be felled anyway) or orange shading. The Tree Team had argued that the proposed extensive crown lifting and pruning of trees was undesirable **'as they are important in contributing to the sylvan character for the site, for biodiversity and for softening the impact of development when viewed from adjacent roads etc.'** Surely the retention of rhododendron trees also helps contribute towards the sylvan nature of the site.

Comparing the former plan 180927-P-11 (20/00861) with the new revised 180927-P-11a plan (20/01619) there are some areas for example, North of Northcote House which were previously solid grey shading- showing complete felling. They have been now been substituted with orange shading, showing removal of understorey shrubs. But overall the areas of grey shading on the site that specify complete removal of groups of trees for removal are very, very extensive. Yet, there is still no real update given about the content of these groups.

In responding to the RBWM Tree Team comments under Item 3 about the removal of large groups of trees the applicant now states in the arboricultural accompanying note that **'Given the number and density of trees and shrubs within these groups it is not possible to identify or plot each one individually, therefore the best way for us to accurately represent the works we are carrying out is through highlighting specific areas of the plotted group.'**

The Parish Council find this latest statement from the applicant note extremely hard to comprehend.

**The conclusion from this statement is that the applicant is requesting individual trees to be authorised for felling even if they cannot be identified. This would seem to directly contradict one of the legal requirements of this site as the entire area is subject to a Tree Preservation Order, TPO 015/2017.**

Furthermore, the original arboricultural report accompanying the approved scheme (18/00356) prepared by Ruskins Tree Consultancy included a Tree Removals Plan (Revision 4) that identified by number all the trees scheduled for removal. So, if it was possible to identify all trees scheduled for removal before the scheme was approved why isn't it possible now?

Also, if it is not possible for the arboricultural experts to identify individual trees for felling at this stage then this must surely raise questions about the management of which trees are to remain and which trees are to be felled

when the tree surgeons are on site. How will the personnel on site who are undertaking tree and under storey shrub removal know where the boundary is between an orange shaded area and a grey shaded area if the arboricultural experts cannot even identify individual trees within a Group? This must be an unsatisfactory management control mechanism for controlling which TPO trees remain and which are felled.

In summary, the report accompanying this latest application:

- proposes the removal of extensive numbers of significant and specimen trees often for little more than landscape improvement.
- identifies exactly the same number of individual trees to be felled as proposed on the previously refused application.
- fails to identify individual trees within groups of trees that are scheduled for felling even though they are subject to TPO status and the number of trees for felling is so immense.
- Indicates orange shading areas to designate removal of understorey shrubs but the boundaries between grey and orange shaded areas are open to interpretation. Removal of such understorey shrubs also harmful to the sylvan nature of the site.

The Parish Council **STRONGLY OBJECT** to this application and request it is **REFUSED**.

Yours sincerely

Michael Burn and Yvonne Jacklin

Co-Chairs of Planning