



SUNNINGDALE PARISH COUNCIL

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Clerk: Ruth Davies

Shelley Clark
Planning Officer
RBWM

By email

26 March 2021

Dear Shelley

21/00767 – Oakwood Broomfield Park Sunningdale Ascot SL5 0JS

Part single, part two storey side extension with ground floor front bay window and alterations to fenestration

The Parish Council reviewed this application on the 23 March 2021 and has several concerns about this application.

The main reason stated for refusal of the previous application 20/03539 concerned the offsite TPO oak tree.

1. Piling into the roots

The revised arboricultural report accompanying 21/00767 states:

'A piled foundation will be designed to limit excavation within the RPA.'

'Pile locations will be determined by trial excavations so that significant roots may be retained.'

Hence, it is evident that the planned building extension requires excavations within the oak tree RPA to determine where the piles will be located and furthermore these trial excavations must somehow avoid significant roots.

The Sunningdale Tree Report, Arboricultural Method Statement under Manual Excavation states that:

'The soil is to be loosened with the aid of a fork or pickaxe and then cleared with the aid of an Air-spade, Air-vac and or shovel.' *'Any roots found with a diameter of less than 25mm shall be cleanly severed by the Project Arboriculturist. Any roots of 25mm and above shall be excavated around without damaging them.'*

Despite the detailed methodology described to ensure compliance the Parish Council are unsure how excavation would continue if a root of say 27mm diameter was in a critical position for the proposed foundations.

Differentiating significant roots from not significant roots for example based on their diameter and the realistic and effective management of such operations on site is unlikely to be straightforward.

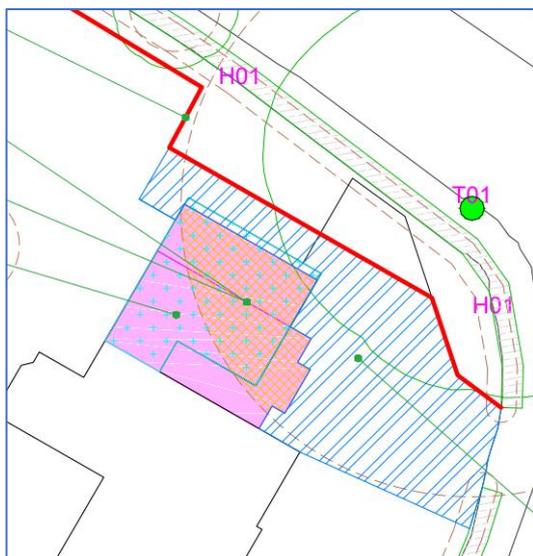
2. Removal of the Garage

Demolition of the existing garage is required for the extension. The Sunningdale Tree Report, states that

'The removal of the existing foundations within the RPA of retained trees are to be undertaken using a handheld pneumatic breaker, hand tools ...to break up and remove the debris out of the RPA. In some situations, and only at

the discretion of the arborist it may be possible to use an excavator using a hydraulic breaker and a suitably sized toothless grading bucket.'

Demolition of the existing garage beneath the canopies and within the RPA of tree T01 is shown on the chart below with the turquoise 'Cross' hatching. The Parish Council would appreciate comment from the Tree Officer as the proposed methodology appears to be potentially harmful to a considerable area of the RPA.



3. Less invasive root investigation methods (Air Spade) refused by RBWM

A useful comparison can be made with the planning applications listed below for **Wellington House, Rise Road, Sunningdale**. These applications required works for a proposed house extension that encroached the RPA of a large oak tree which is highly visible and contributes positively to the area's character.

The applicant submitted four separate applications all of which were refused by RBWM with the fourth (19/01579) being refused at Appeal. These are listed below.

Application	Description	Decision
17/00013/FULL	FULL Single storey rear/side extension with basement and alterations to garage door.	Refused
17/02713/TPO	(T7) Oak - Root investigation. (TPO 50 of 2006)	Refused
18/02492/TPO	(T7) Oak T7 - Extra Over mature - Air Spade Root investigation and root analysis of soil area within the proposed foundation area to establish what root activity is present and its species. (TPO 50 of 2006)	Refused
19/01579/FULL	Single storey side/rear extension.	Refused at Appeal Ref: APP/T0355/D/19/3239932

This Appeal decision was dated 10 March 2020 and specifically concerned the impact of the extension on an oak tree.

The Appeal decision:

1. questioned the efficacy of piling regarding impact on the RPA (Section 12)
2. concluded that insufficient evidence was provided to demonstrate that the extension would not cause harm to the health and longevity of the protected tree and subsequently protect the character and appearance of the area. (Section 13)
3. commented that part of the site of the extension was currently covered by impermeable paving and the patio retaining wall but the necessity to provide greater support and more substantial foundations for the extensions will potentially cause increased disturbance to any roots below the existing patio area and wall. (Section 8)

Hence, the comparisons with Oakwood are very relevant. Also, the earlier applications at Wellington House had specifically referenced ‘Air Spade Investigation’ of tree roots. These were **refused by RBWM**. As mentioned above, Air-spade clearing is proposed as an option following fork or pickaxe digging at Oakwood House. Following the rationale as concluded by RBWM for Wellington House, there must therefore be the possibility of damaging the tree roots using this proposed methodology under 21/00767 at Oakwood House.

4. Less incursion into RPA than proposed at Oakwood refused at Appeal

The applicant states that the proposed new building would result in a 6% incursion into the RPA. This is stated by the applicant and supported by the chart shown below. The chart is a little misleading as both the 3.2% and 2.8% need to be added together.

Table 4: Impacts upon the RPAs of retained trees.

Tree Number	Species	Structure	RPA (m ²)	Incursion	
				(m ²)	(%)
T01	Common Oak	New two storey extension	608.7	19.2	3.2
		Replacement single storey structure		17.3	2.8

The applicant is therefore of the opinion that this 6% incursion into the RPA will not compromise the longevity or harm the TPO oak tree.

However, in a comparable application- **19/03547, Land at Lady Margaret Cottage, Charters Road, Sunningdale SL5 9QD** - building works were similarly proposed within the tree RPA. This application was submitted for **Appeal (Appeal Ref: APP/T0355/W/20/3257723)** and was **refused by the Inspector**. What is relevant to this application is that the Inspector commented that the proposed 5% incursion into the tree RPA (referred to as RPZ) was deemed unacceptable. So, a 1% less incursion into a mature TPO tree than proposed at Oakwood was refused by the Inspector. Presumably, this represents the Planning Inspectorate’s current interpretation of impact on RPZ’s as the refusal decision was made on 23 March 2021. The Inspector’s comments are as follows:

‘Whilst the development would only incur into 5% of the area of the RPZ, this is a mature beech tree which is likely to be particularly susceptible to root damage. Clearly, the potential impacts on root protection areas could harm the tree’s future health. I am not satisfied that the construction of the dwelling can be done a manner that would not detrimentally affect the health of this protected tree.’

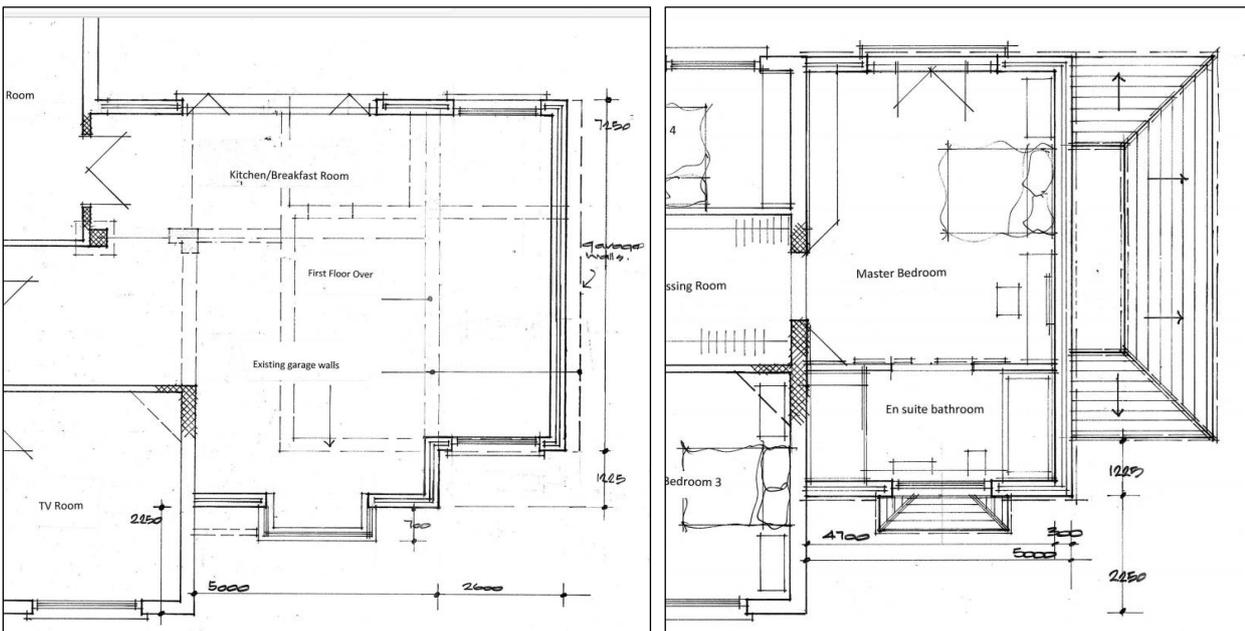
5. Tree in full public view

The applicant does not include a photograph of the oak tree which is unfortunate. A photograph taken in March 2021 from Broomfield Park road can be seen below. Even without any leaves it is readily apparent that this is a fine mature specimen oak tree that is in full public view, on its own and within the verge area and off site of the Oakwood property.



6. Proposed plans

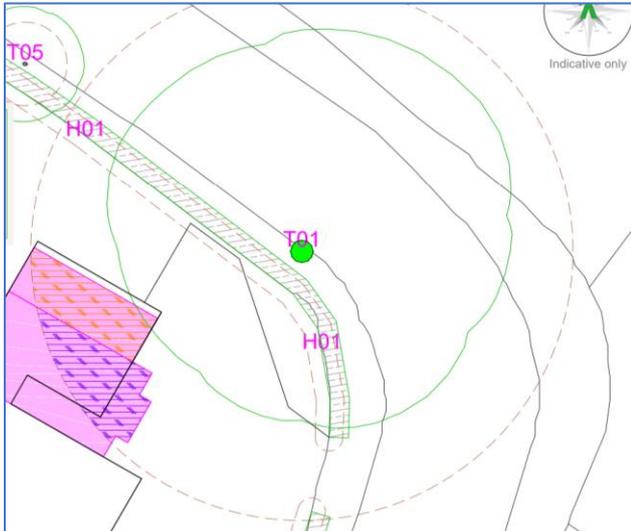
The ground floor room plans submitted under 21/00767 shown below (and 20/03539) do not seem to include detailed descriptions for their intended use. An additional bedroom is shown on the 1st floor but the description for the ground floor states Kitchen/ Breakfast room for the complete area although *existing garage walls* and *first floor over* are indicated.



As the only additional new incremental space created by the extension is one bedroom then the Parish Council would be of the view that the possible compromise of a TPO tree for such minimal gain is questionable.

7. Impact of the tree canopy and RPA on the proposed extension

The diagram below submitted with the application clearly shows the impact of the proposed extension on the RPA of the tree. Also, the dotted circular line indicating the tree canopy shows that this extends to a significant degree over the new extension which is likely to lead to future pressure to prune the tree. We would ask for the Tree Officers comments especially as the radius shown for the RPA would appear to be a much shorter length from the oak tree trunk to Oakwood house than it is drawn in the opposite direction.



8. Discrepancy with pruning the lower branches of the oak tree

The earlier application on this site, **20/03385, Works to Trees Covered by TPO** specifically applies to this oak tree, T1. Unfortunately, this application is not listed under the Property History for 21/00767 even though the works are being undertaken solely to give additional clearance over the property at Oakwood. The location for 20/03385 is listed as: Verge Adjacent to Oakwood Broomfield Park Sunningdale Ascot.

20/03385 was approved and the application clearly stated: **prune lower branches on SW side over the garage to allow a 1.5m clearance of garage. (TPO 51 of 2006).**

The Parish Council was surprised to see on page 10 of the Sunningdale Tree Report, Method Statement for **21/00767** reference to pruning the same tree as specified under 20/03385. What was more surprising is that the proposed works to the tree (approved under 20/03385) have now been modified in 21/00767. The applicant is now **requesting a crown lift to 2 metres**- rather than the 1.5 metres as approved. Although a 0.5 metre difference may not seem significant this represents a 33% increase over the approved scheme. Given the very public location of the tree this is likely to result in a noticeable difference from a visual perspective.

20/03385 was submitted solely for the pruning of this one tree so this was therefore deemed important by the applicant. Furthermore, as both 20/03385 and 21/00767 were submitted by the same applicant it should have been known that crown lift to 1.5 metres was requested and approved. We would request clarification from the RBWM Tree Officer on this discrepancy.

As proposed under 21/00767, the garage is now proposed for demolition. Therefore, the reason stated for crown lift to 1.5 metres- to give clearance over the garage - under 20/03385 must be questioned. The relevant extracts are shown below.

Tree Works

For reasons of public safety, all tree works referred to herein must be carried out before any site personnel commencing works or any building materials being delivered.

Table 8: Summary of Tree Works.

No.	Species	Works	Category
T01	Common Oak	Prune: crown lift to 5m to achieve 2m clearance to the existing garage. The pruning will be limited to the removal of second order (or further subordinate) branches only.	A12

21/00767- Sunningdale Tree Report, Method Statement

OFFICER DELEGATED REPORT

Reference No.: 20/03385 **Works To Trees Covered by TPO**
Proposal: T1 Oak - prune lower branches on SW side over the garage to allow a 1.5m clearance of garage. (TPO 51 of 2006)
Location: Verge Adjacent To Oakwood Broomfield Park Sunningdale Ascot
Applicant: Mr Gale
Agent: Mr Peter Goddard
Date Received: 14 December 2020
Case Officer: Paul Cross
Recommendation: Application Permitted
Parish/Ward: Sunningdale ParishSunningdale And Cheapside

20/03385 Planning Application

The health of existing trees of amenity value must be preserved and it is important to protect their contribution to the character and appearance of the locality. **The proposed works are contrary to saved Policy N6 of the Local Plan and Policies NP/EN2.1, NP/EN2.2 and NP/EN3 of the Neighbourhood Plan.**

The Parish Council request this application is REFUSED.

Yours sincerely,

Yvonne Jacklin and Michael Burn
Co-Chairs of the Planning Committee