



Memo.

Date: 13th January 2010
To: Planning
Cc: -
From: Miriam Hill
Subject: S6/2009/2574/FP – Land at Hornbeam Lane (Spike Island), Brookmans Park

The application site is currently a partially constructed house with associated out buildings and surrounded by unkempt fields and grounds. It is located down an unmetalled, narrow, tree lined track. The surrounding area has a patchwork of fields and trees, many of the woods and trees are protected with Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's). There are three group TPOs (TPO3 G37, G38 and G39) and one woodland order (TPO3 W42) within the site.

Arboricultural Works

A tree survey was not included in the application documents although the trees are clearly labelled on some, but not all, of the drawings. At its minimum all the trees within falling distance of the working and delivery zone should be included.

Arboricultural Method Statement

Although the Management Plan is detailed, it does not give the details covered in an Arboricultural Method Statement. This should include;

- the method and location of the barriers to protect trees on site and on Hornbeam Lane
- ground protection for any areas of the root protection area which will fall outside of the protective fencing
- a method statement and diagrams showing how any new hard or gravel surfaces which fall inside the root protection areas are to be constructed

Burning on site

The Management Plan suggests controlled burning on site be allowed. I recommend designated areas be identified and bonfires be restricted to these areas. The sites should be located away from trees, scrub and hedges.

Woodland Planting

The woodland planting mix relies heavily on hawthorn. This is an unusual species choice for this area as it is not particularly found in local woods. I suggest this species choice be modified or diluted.

The planting mix adjacent to Kentish Lane does not feature any pine or cedar, even though they are present in the current stand of trees. It would give more variety to the planting if some evergreen trees be included in the mix.

Although the planting mix varies in each location, they are broadly the same. Sweet chestnut, mountain ash, birch and hornbeam are also commonly found woodland trees in this area.

Hedgerow and Field Plantings

The symbols for the specimen and hedgerow trees and the semi-mature specimen trees are virtually indistinguishable, making informed comments more tricky.

Within the Large Eastern Field, there is a proposal of four groups of hornbeam or wild cherry. I would like to see one English oak within each of these groups. This will give a more interesting height and longevity to the planting. Similarly the boundary between the Large Eastern Field and the barn and stables has a line of 20 (labelled 22) hornbeam. At least six of these trees could be English oak. As well as one English oak in the area planted with 3 field maple and 3 hornbeam to the east of the pond.

Hedgerow planting 'c', at the northern end of Western Field, are two proposed plantings of scrub. It would be preferable if these were two plantings of three English Oak.

Ornamental Planting

Within the field north-west of the house and in the vicinity of the house the planting becomes more ornamental. The symbols for the specimen and hedgerow trees and the semi-mature specimen trees are virtually indistinguishable, making informed comments more tricky. I was also unsure of the route of the driveway(s). The Landscape Proposal shows one running closely, parallel to the lane, whilst the Site Layout Replacement

Dwelling Garage and Garden Store plan has a second gravel driveway running directly to the front of the house.

The four Liriodendron planted along the driveway seem to have been spaced around a dead tree which is planned for removal. They also appear to have been positioned very closely to the driveway. It may be wise to respace them and give several metres of grass between driveway and the trees ultimate stature to avoid the constant need for crown lifting and benefit from ground level the full appeal of the unusual leaves and flowers once mature. A design using five trees would be more visually appealing.

The large dead oak to the front of the main property which is not currently planned for replacement. I think the loss of this focal point is a good opportunity to plant a new majestic, statement tree. This tree should be a one off species choice for this location e.g. wellingtonia, cedar of Lebanon or copper beech.

I would have expected a more interesting planting scheme near to the main building for a house of this stature.

Poplar Plantation

The Management Plan includes the removal of poplar and sycamore trees to facilitate native tree planting. This area of trees is covered by TPO3 W42. The debate over the usefulness, heritage or future of sycamore within the British landscape is hotly debated and not a point to mull over in this application. The Management Plan indicates that the trees to be felled are to be marked up before removal. I would suggest it would be appropriate for a Council representative to visit after they have been marked up to ensure the area is being thinned of poor quality trees rather than anything more untoward.

Summary

The points raised are not serious enough to refuse permission but I would suggest they be a condition of approval before work commences on site.

- A Tree Survey to be collated and includes the Poplar Plantation works, compliant with BS5837:2005, submitted for approval
- An Arboricultural Method Statement, compliant with BS5837:2005, submitted for approval
- Amendments to the landscape plan to vary the planting and enhance the site

I hope that these comments are clear and that if you need anything further then please contact me.