



Emmbrook Residents' Association

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ONE VOICE

REPRESENTING EMMBROOK RESIDENTS

30th April 2020

Development Management,
Wokingham Borough Council,
Shute End,
Wokingham,
RG40 1WR

Dear Sirs,

Planning Application No. 200871

Site Location: NDR on Toutley Road and west of Old Forest Road

Proposal: Discharge of Conditions 5, 7 and 16 of Planning Consent 190198

I am writing to comment on the Arboricultural Method Statement dated March 2020 (AMS) and the Construction Environmental Plan (CEMP) submitted for approval in this application.

Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS)

Section 2.4

Table 2-1 in this section states that tree T77, which was previously listed as retained, is now to be removed. This statement is confirmed by the Tree Protection Plan (Arboricultural Features to be Removed) 70032502-TPP-EV-005 Issue P02 which shows it to be removed as part of tree group G134. As can be seen from the attached photographs this tree stands within the recently opened parkland and is well clear of the NDR construction zone; consequently, **permission to remove this category A tree should be refused as the applicant offers no satisfactory reason for this reversal of the decision to retain it.**

The table also lists the two category B trees T49 and T50 as to be removed; however, it is noted that **they have already been felled and removed!**

Table 2-2 states that the length of removal of tree group G134 is to be extended, presumably as shown by the Tree Protection Plan (Arboricultural Features to be Removed). The original intention was to remove just the south eastern section of this group that was within the NDR construction zone, as specified in the AMS for the Enabling Works Phase 2 WMHP-BB-WOFTR-PLN-PM-002. The current situation is that this section has been removed as previously specified and a gap has been cut through the group in the parkland to the north east of Tree T77 to accommodate a pathway. **As what purpose removing more of this tree group would serve is not clear, permission to do so should be withheld without an acceptable explanation from the applicant.**

Section 4

It is gratifying to see the efforts detailed here to retain oak tree T33. Although it may be considered of low value it is the sole surviving tree of any stature along this section of Toutley Road and as such is worth retaining.

Section 5

This section refers to a number of un-surveyed trees present on land to the south-east of Old Forest Road and north-east of numbers 41, 43 and 45 Ashton Road. These trees are referred to as Group A and Group B on Tree Protection Plan 70032502-TPP-EV-009. **It is noted that four of the trees in Group B have already been cut down for no obvious reason** other than perhaps they were regarded as of low value. The Plan shows them to be near to the proposed alignment of the flood bund, however the bund could have been realigned to avoid them as has been done for the Group A trees.

Section 6

This section deals with the weeping willow tree T11 that would be “adversely impacted” by the proposed re-alignment of the stream and construction of the flood bund. It suggests either moving these two features to the north west to avoid the tree’s root protection area or pruning the tree. Clearly, moving the two features is by far the preferred option if at all feasible.

CEMP

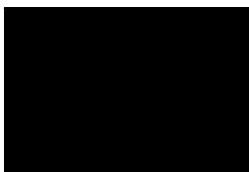
Section 4.2 concerning noise and vibration concentrates mainly on noise and its mitigation but has little to say on vibration. As recent events have shown, when dwellings on Ashton Road were subjected to such high levels of vibration that the residents were forced to complain, vibration from onsite activities can have just as severe an impact, if not worse, as noise on adjacent “sensitive receptors”. This issue needs to be addressed.

Summary

The comments on the Arboricultural Method Statement shows that there is some confusion over which trees are to be removed, which could lead to some of them being removed unnecessarily. They also highlight that some have been removed without formal approval. It should be noted that the observations were obviously made on those areas of the site that are visible from the public domain and that the situation on those areas that are not could not be assessed.

Regarding the comments on the CEMP, the ERA has consistently urged both the Borough’s project team and Balfour Beatty’s representatives to keep the site’s neighbours informed of impending activities, particularly if they are going to be controversial or intrusive. Although this has been well received at the time it clearly has not been acted upon, as the recent issues caused by the removal of trees along the Old Forest Road and the deployment of plant causing high levels of noise and vibration demonstrate. It is therefore suggested that a procedure should be written into the CEMP that requires that the site management should advise local residents prior to the commencement of such activities and be prepared to be open to any reasonable suggestions that would alleviate the impact the activity would have on them.

Yours faithfully



Paul Gallagher
Chairman
Emmbrook Residents Association

Attachment

Views of the NDR alignment and tree T77 and remaining section of G134

Attachments



View westward showing relationship of the NDR alignment to tree T77



View eastward of Tree T77 and remaining part of south eastern section of Group G134