

F/25/99457 - 6 SEDGWICK ROAD, BISHOPSTOKE

Consultation on Revised Information Received 2nd July 2025

14/07/2025

Dear Clare,

We have now had a chance to review the revised arboricultural information submitted on the 2nd July.

Firstly, the applicant appears to have submitted the Tree Protection Plan associated with the previous layout of the site under application F/24/98399. We assume this is an error and the applicant wishes to work with the more recent layout for F/25/99457.

Secondly, the applicant has attempted to address the two principle issues we raised in our last response. However, it should be noted that they were not the *only* issues with this proposal -they were merely the *principle* ones that had to be resolved prior to the resolution of any minor ones.

Regardless of the two points, above, the following is our response to the revised arboricultural information.

Issue 1

We would not have expected the *entire* RPA to be shifted to the north. This is an improbable situation given the tree would require roots to the south to support it from the prevailing wind. The tree would have likely failed if there had been no roots to the south.

We have never claimed that there would be no roots in vicinity of Sedgwick Court, but rather that water percolation, gaseous exchange and nutrient availability would be significantly less than on the northern side, resulting in increased importance of the unsealed, lawn areas of the application site – in other words, the application site is more critical for the healthy functioning of T1 than a basic RPA would indicate. The report fails to justify why this extreme approach has been taken.

Issue 2

We do not subscribe to the argument, as put forward by the applicant, that the lawn is intercepting water and nutrients to the extent where removing the lawn and installing cellular confinement would improve the conditions for T1 via the removal of competition.

In addition, the calculated area of the RPA that is proposed to be sealed or otherwise influenced by the proposals, does not take into account the “shadow” to the north of the two proposed dwellings, which are now significantly within the RPA. The applicant has not suitably demonstrated that the installation for structures will not render the area behind those structures (i.e. to the north) unusable for rooting.

Unfortunately following the review of the revised arboricultural information, we are still not in a position to support this application as it stands.

we do not consider that the applicant has suitably demonstrated that the proposal can be achieved without negative impact on the tree's health. We consider that the proposal, as it stands, is contrary to policy DM1 and guidance contained within the Trees and Development SPD.

Previous Comments

24/06/2025

As this is the second full planning application for this site, we have summarised the background (Pre-App Comments and F/24/98399 Comments) before commenting on this current application (F/25/99457).

Pre-App Comments

At Pre-App, no arboricultural information was provided, which limited the detail we could provide in the feedback. Despite that, we were clear that the site presented some significant challenges regarding the single arboricultural feature – the oak tree identified as “T1.”

At Pre-App we stated:

“The area around the tree appears to be shown as new hardstanding, which would be a point of objection at full planning because it could cause impacts on the rooting system of the tree. Further, it is probably that the southern unit would be within the root protection area of the tree resulting in impacts. Finally, the position of the southern unit in relation to the tree would likely result in a dominance issue, which would also be a point of objection.”

“We would refer the applicant to British Standard 5837:2012 and guidance contained within the Trees and Development SPD. Any use of special technology to attempt to overcome any of the tree issues must be site-specifically demonstrated (rather than just generically). However, we are concerned that some of the points raised may be too significant to overcome.”

F/24/98399 Comments

With submission of the full planning application, the applicant submitted arboricultural information, which was welcomed. However, as we stated at Pre-App, we were concerned that some of the issues would simply be too significant to overcome. We stated the following:

“The RPA has not been modified to take into account the hard surfacing to the south. The garden of the application property is, therefore, currently likely to provide a greater rooting volume than the tree protection plan suggests.

Further, the unsealed nature of the garden further increases its significance for water percolation and gaseous exchange, as well as nutrient availability.

Regardless, the hard surfacing is being laid over a significant proportion of the RPA. While it is accepted that engineered solutions may be applicable – as stated in the report – these solutions are not without impact. The area being covered is greater than we are comfortable with, even before we consider the elevated importance of the garden for the root system.

Finally, the report has not demonstrated that engineered solutions can be achieved on this specific site.

Other issues that we highlighted at pre-app are still valid: the proposed dwellings are within the RPA – which may be significantly larger than that shown in the tree protection plan – and both units would be dominated and shaded by the tree, which lies to the south.

Therefore, as it stands, we cannot support this application. The applicant has not suitably demonstrated that the proposal would not impact the arboricultural features of the site. The proposal is, therefore contrary to policy DM1 and information contained within the Trees and Development SPD.”

Following refusal of F/24/98399, we provided very basic feedback to the applicant stating that we would be more supporting of a proposal that only included 1 unit. This was not because the two unit proposal was problematic in itself – it is beyond our remit to comment on such matters – but rather because of the amount of parking required for two units. Reducing the proposal to one unit would result in a reduction of the number of car parking spaces required under policy, which in turn would reduce the area of the RPA impacted by new surfacing.

Differences between F/24/98399 and F/25/99457

With the submission of this current application, we note that the applicant has made some positive changes.

Unit D2 position has moved to the north, which has reduced its overall encroachment into the RPA of T1 by an unknown amount (the arboricultural report has not quantified the amount). Unit D1 has also been redesigned to reduce the encroachment.

The area of new surfacing within the RPA of T1 has been reduced. Again, the arboricultural information has not quantified the amount, so it is not possible to accurately assess the impacts – either impacts based on this submission or comparatively against the previous submission.

F/25/99457 Comments

Despite the above changes, we retain a number of concerns regarding this proposal.

Issue 1 - We do not consider that the applicant has accurately assessed the impact of the proposed development because the arboricultural information has not taken into account the site conditions, namely adjustment of the RPA due to existing hardstanding to the south.

The bulk of the proposed development site – the existing rear gardens of no. 6 and no. 8 Sedgwick Road – is currently lawn, save for a small amount of paving. We consider this area a suitable rooting environment and it is likely that water percolation, gaseous exchange and nutrient availability are positive attributes in this area.

To the immediate south of the proposed development site is a 1980s-constructed development of 12 flats and associated car parking – Sedgwick Court. We consider this area largely unsuitable for rooting due to the sealed surfacing and building foundations. Certainly water percolation, gaseous exchange and nutrient availability would be significantly less than on the northern side.

T1 is a significant oak tree located on the boundary between the proposed development site and Sedgwick Court. This tree is protected by a Tree Preservation Order and has been assessed as a category A tree (“high quality” trees “that are particularly good examples of their species...”).

The position of the tree, and the varying site conditions, is well demonstrated in two photographs included in the arboricultural information: “Photo 1” showing the site conditions in Sedgwick Court and “Photo 3” showing site conditions in the proposed development site. The calculated Root Protection Area (RPA), as prescribed by British Standard 5837:2012 (BS5837), would occur approximately equally to the north (in the proposed development site) and to the south (in Sedgwick Court). This is the accepted starting point for impact assessment. British Standard 5837:2012 states:

“The RPA for each tree should initially be plotted as a circle centred on the base of the stem.” (4.6.2.)

The applicant has followed these recommendations. However, it then goes on to state:

“Where pre-existing site conditions or other factors indicate that rooting has occurred asymmetrically, a polygon of equivalent area should be produced. Modifications to the shape of the RPA should reflect a soundly based arboricultural assessment of likely root distribution.” (4.6.2.)

And:

“Any deviation in the RPA from the original circular plot should take account of the following factors whilst still providing adequate protection for the root system:

a) the morphology and disposition of the roots, when influenced by past or existing site conditions (e.g. the presence of roads, structures and underground apparatus)...”

(4.6.3.)

We consider the above guidance to be important in the context of this proposal because of the site conditions in Sedgwick Court. However, the applicant, in their arboricultural information, has argued that: *“Creating an asymmetrical RPA for T1 that all parties would be happy with is very difficult.”* We would respond that the point of guidance is not that all parties are “happy” but rather the impacts are more accurately assessed and, thus, all parties will have a better understanding of what mitigation is required to reduce any impacts.

Issue 2 – We do not consider that the applicant has suitably demonstrated that the amount of new surfacing within the RPA of T1 can be achieved without negative impact on the tree’s health, and thus the amenity it provides.

Regardless of the RPA adjustment (Issue 1, above) the applicant has not suitably demonstrated that the proposal will not impact the tree. Obviously, when factoring in the RPA adjustment, this issue becomes more significant.

BS5837 recommends that: *“New permanent hard surfacing should not exceed 20% of any existing unsurfaced ground within the RPA.”* (7.4.2.3.) The Use of Cellular Confinement Systems Near Trees: A Guide to Good Practice, published by the Arboricultural Association, does caution that the 20% figure should not be used as an absolute limit, especially when discussing permeable, cellular confinement systems, but also states that there is inevitably an impact associated with the installation of cellular confinement as it constitutes development over roots.

The application documents do not state the area that the new surfacing/structures will cover and, thus, again we cannot believe that the issue has been accurately assessed. It appears that it will be 40+ percent of the existing, unsealed area. With these proposals, the total area of T1’s RPA covered in surfacing (permeable or otherwise) would reach 65-70% of the RPA, which we feel is unacceptable.

Further, if the guidelines in BS5837 were followed, the area of new surfacing and structures within T1’s RPA would inevitably increase.

Conclusion

Whilst we acknowledge that the applicant has made some changes to the proposal, we are still not in a position to support this application as it stands.

The two principle issues from an arboricultural perspective are that: 1) we do not consider that the applicant has accurately assessed the impact of the proposed development; and 2) we do not consider that the applicant has suitably demonstrated that the amount of new surfacing within the RPA of T1 can be achieved without negative impact on the tree’s health.