

Consultee comments – SMDC Tree Officer

Summary: no objection in principle; illustrative site layout plan unlikely to be considered acceptable with regard to relationship with tree T1 at later detailed stage. No condition requested at this stage.

Tree T1 is a large mature Sycamore forming a notable feature on the skyline of Stanley village as viewed from Post Lane and the Caldon Canal, and also a very notable feature within the site and from nearby properties. It appears to be in good condition. There is no formal arboricultural report with the application; notwithstanding this I would judge that the indicated Root Protection Area for T1 is likely to be realistic and reasonably accurate, however I suspect that the southerly canopy spread (towards/over the application site) may in practice be a metre or two larger than indicated – perhaps more in alignment with the indicated RPA.

Tree T2 is not a Sycamore; it appears to be a Norway Maple (close relation and often assumed to be a Sycamore). Site photos on file appear to confirm the description at Paragraph 3.2 of the agent's statement, that the tree is of poor structural form/condition. I agree that loss of or other adverse impact on this tree would not appropriately be held as grounds for refusal nor, at a later stage, as a substantive constraint to the form/layout of any ensuing development.

I would take issue with the assertion at Paragraph 5.24 of the agent's statement that arboricultural impacts are (purely – my addition) matters for technical details stage; potentially, trees on/adjacent to any site could form an overriding constraint to its development, and it is therefore necessary even at outline/PIP stage to demonstrate that a proposed type and quantum of development could acceptably be accommodated with regard to any material arboricultural constraints. Notwithstanding this, in this instance and given that this application seeks only Permission in Principle, and that matters of layout, scale, appearance etc would be for subsequent detailed submission and assessment, it is evident that the site could accommodate a single dwelling and associated infrastructure without requiring the loss of T1, having adverse impact on T1, or creating unacceptable relationship with T1.

That said, although I therefore have no objection to the principle of development of a single dwelling on this site, it is worth raising at this stage that the indicative layout shown on the Revision 1 illustrative site plan is unlikely to be considered acceptable with regard to the dwelling's proximity to and relationship with the Sycamore T1. With the realistic outer extent of the canopy of such a large tree being perhaps within 2m of one of the (presumed) principal elevations of the proposed dwelling, T1 would have a

significant overbearing effect on the northerly outlook from the dwelling and its garden, overly dominating and inevitably leading to pressure for premature felling or unsympathetic substantial crown reduction.

The site is clearly large enough to re-position a dwelling significantly further from the tree to address these issues, although I acknowledge that this may then raise or exacerbate different planning issues such as space about dwellings and distances between dwellings etc. But these would be matters for later detailed design and assessment if PIP is granted at this stage.