

Application Number & Location:23-0328 Former Lakeside School

Proposal: Consultation application from Surrey County Council for the outline application for the erection of part single and part 3 storey building for extra care accommodation to provide self-contained apartments, with staff and communal spaces and associated car parking with access from Caroline Way (landscaping and appearance reserved)

Date: 04/05/23

Terminology:

Tree preservation order (TPO), root protection radius (RPR), root protection area (RPA), tree protection fencing (TPF), ground protection (GP), construction exclusion zone (CEZ), arboricultural impact assessment (AIA), tree constraints plan (TCP), arboricultural method statement (AMS), tree protection plan (TPP). National Joint Utilities Group (NJUG). British Standard 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations (BS5837:2012). Cellular Confinement System (CCS).

The application is for a care home on an old school field site along Catherines road and Field Lane.

- The land is not flat and slopes upwards from north to south, the majority of the adjacent trees are protected by a tree preservation order or are outside of the development site.
- The only trees of note are on the northern and eastern boundary consisting of trees of significant size and age and reflective of the previous land use being Mostly mature Oaks set within the hedgeline.
- The tree protection plan ref: 2005-KC-XX-YTREE-TPP01Rev0 has not included the RPA of the trees on site as part of the survey and so it is not possible to fully ascertain the likely impacts of the proposal, this would need to be added to ensure compliance with the most recent BS:5837 standard.
- There are few trees of note on the southern and western boundary and anything along these aspects I have no objection too.
- The RPA of the trees needs to accurately reflect the likely ground conditions, e.g. T8 is more likely weighted within the site due to the presence of an asphalt pathway, a man made barrier to root development.

The aspect on the north east and eastern boundary will have an impact on the retained and protected trees. The survey from Keen and associated shows minor incursions into the RPA of these trees, however, because of the changes in land the development is shown to be built on level ground form, which means that a retaining structure is required. This is likely to require a larger area of development than is shown and incur more heavily into the RPA of T17 and potentially T19. Cross section diagrams of the building have been shown but it has not accounted for the foundation footfall or that of the retaining wall. It is likely that once adequately shown will incur significantly into the RPA of this tree, the ground to the east of this tree is heavily compacted through use and the tree is more likely to be exploiting the soft ground of the field site, the default position remains that all structures including landscaping remains outside of the RPA of retained trees, these trees are of an age where they are less likely to adapt to significant changes in its minimum RPA and decline as a result. The canopy will also tower over the open landscaping giving rise to concerns over its general safety and leading to applications to adversely prune or fell the tree, the canopy will also sit within close proximity to the build itself adding further pressure.

The South eastern most unit along with the associated landscaping should be removed from the scheme and the area left as soft ground, this would overcome any further objection on this aspect.

T8,9 and T10 Northeast Corner and aspect.

The trees on this corner would have the same associated issues post development in terms of the fear of over dominance and shading of the landscaped/terraced area, the land would also be excavated to create a level surface for the development which will sit within the RPA of the retained trees, further to this a pathway of no dig is proposed around the corner further incurring into what is likely to be the RPA. The RPA of these trees have not been offset to account for the likely root distribution, it should be accurately modelled on the TPP, the same for 17 and 19.

Overall the project intrudes into the RPA of the retained trees but it is not possible to accurately see what that likely incursion is but the need to excavate for the level surface and the need for paths and retaining features along with the required space for substantial footings, which I have to assume will be the case as no other engineered solutions have been provided or proposed. Overall the proposal will impact on important retained trees, the proposal should look to scale back to sit outside the RPA and the plans accurately plot the likely root distribution and the foundational footprint.

At this point I could not support the scheme as proposed due to the impacts on the eastern boundary trees.

Alastair Barnes
Arboricultural Officer
Alastair.Barnes@Surreyheath.gov.uk