

ADDENDUM REPORT PLANNING COMMITTEE 29 July 2010

Item: 4

Site: Torr Home, The Drive, Hartley, PL3 5SY

Ref: 10/00555/FUL

Applicant: Torr Home

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This addendum report updates on the condition of Tree 101 which is scheduled for removal as part of the proposal. At the time of writing the main report, your officers had requested further information from the applicant to support their findings on the condition of this landmark tree which is visible from a number of locations in the surrounding area.

The second tree report that was submitted by the applicant from Evolve Consultancy stated that “the risks associated with this tree would be minimal if it were not for the extensive decay within the stem and the associated sparse crown indicating considerable dysfunction within the roots.”

Further testing has now been carried out and this does not support the initial conclusions that there is extensive decay within the stem. Evolve Consultancy carried out a detailed and invasive inspection on 27 July 2010 in the presence of Jane Turner, Tree Officer for the Council, when seven drillings were made using a Resistograph F300. The findings of this testing indicate that generally there is no decay of the stem, although at 1.5 metres on the southern side some limited decay was present. There was certainly no evidence of extensive decay as previously suggested.

Evolve Consultancy believes that the crown thinning is a much more significant issue and indicative of a decline in biological function most likely attributable to root disturbance. However, no evidence has been submitted to support these conclusions, i.e. presence of decay fungi, ground disturbance or visible root decay. In the opinion of your officers, the crown thinning is the likely result of exposure to the prevailing winds and this is supported by the condition of other trees on site. In addition, the dry conditions that have been experienced this year are also likely to have contributed to the sparse appearance of the crown.

As a result of the further information submitted, the application is now recommended for refusal of permission. Tree 101 is a tall, landmark tree which provides amenity value to the surrounding neighbourhood and will continue to do so for many years to come. There may be alternative locations for an Elderly Mentally Infirm (EMI) Unit within the site, which would allow for the retention of Tree 101, and these other options should be explored in a fresh application. The loss of Tree 101 would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the area and the application is therefore recommended for refusal for the following reason:

LOSS OF IMPORTANT TREE

(1) The Local Planning Authority considers that the proposed building, by virtue of its position, would result in the removal of a landmark protected tree which would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the area. The tree is a large, mature beech tree on the western side of the lawn which, due to its height, is visible from a number of locations outside the application site, thus contributing to the character and visual quality of the area. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies CS18 and CS34 of the adopted City of Plymouth Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2006-2021) 2007.

Relevant Policies

The following (a) policies of the Plymouth Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2006-2021) 2007 and supporting Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents (the status of these documents is set out within the City of Plymouth Local Development Scheme) and the Regional Spatial Strategy, and (b) relevant Government Policy Statements and Government Circulars, were taken into account in determining this application:

(List as in original recommendation)