

PLANNING APPLICATION – 18/01634/OUT

Harwich Road, land north of, Great Bromley

6 Nov 2018

The application site is currently being used for the keeping or grazing of horses and the main body of the land does not contain any trees or other significant vegetation.

On the boundary with the highway there is an established hedgerow comprising primarily Hawthorn with a short section of Hazel. The hedgerow contains several large trees that make a significant positive contribution to the character of the area. There is also a large Oak on the western boundary of the application site that makes a positive contribution to the appearance of the area.

At the present time the site forms part of the open countryside and the boundary hedgerow and trees contribute to the rural character of the area. It would be desirable to retain the boundary hedgerow for its screening value and the trees are of such quality that they merit retention for their visual amenity.

It appears from the information provided that boundary trees are intended to be retained however the creation of a new footway would encroach into the Root Protection Areas (RPA's) of the trees in the boundary hedgerows. Consequently harm may result if the footway is constructed in the position shown on the site layout plan.

In order to show the potential impact of the development proposal on the trees the applicant will need to provide a Tree Survey and Report in accordance with *BS5837: 2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction: Recommendations*.

As the trees make a positive contribution to both the character and appearance of the area and their long term viability is potentially compromised by the development proposal the trees that meet the criteria to be formally legally protected have been included in a new Tendring District Council Tree Preservation Order (TPO). The TPO is *TPO/18/16 Harwich Road, land north of, Great Bromley* and afford formal legal protection to 4 Oaks and 1 Field Maple.

In terms of the impact of the development on the local landscape character the application site is situated within the Bromley Heaths Landscape Character Area (LCA) as defined in the Tendring District Landscape Character Assessment.

The Bromley Heaths LCA is an elevated plateau that extends from Colchester to Wix in the east and Thorrington in the south. It corresponds to the highest part of the district and has high grade agricultural land. The large scale, open plateau is dominated by large scale, geometric fields indicative of late enclosure that provide a strong pattern in field layout. The relatively intimate character of the immediate area within which the application site is set is not typical of the LCA type.

Notwithstanding the way that the application site relates to the LCA within which it sits it retains an intrinsic value with strongly rural features that are typical of its setting.

The Landscape Character Area Guidance Document states in paragraph 3 that the aim is to: 'maintain the dispersed historic settlement pattern of hamlets, scattered farmsteads, and distinct villages. Further incremental linear development along roads would disrupt this pattern. The identity of individual villages should be retained.'

The development proposal would if approved contribute to the linear spread of ribbon development in a location that would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area and set a precedent for similar applications both in the immediate vicinity and in the wider area. The proposed footway would contribute to the urbanisation of the countryside.

Clive Dawson
Tree and Landscape Officer