

ARBORICULTURAL ASSESSMENT:

Erection of 20 pre-fabricated glamping pods and associated footpaths, retrospective alterations to previously consented raised timber decking adjacent to driving range with addition of pergola and associated alterations, and erection of pergolas over clubhouse rear patio

Blacknest Golf & Country Club, Frith End Road, Blacknest, Alton, Hampshire, GU34 4QL

Applicant : 360 Beech Limited

Ref: 23-2675/FULPP/CF/AA/V3

Date: November 2022—revision A dated 15/02/2024



Figure 1: Aerial map showing areas of proposals, showing tipis erected, and a previous event using temporary camping 'tipis' for additional overnight accommodation —copyright Google Maps 2022



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This s73 application is to predominantly replace the cabin type with a different manufacturer, Nokken, retaining the cabins in similar locations to the original consent. The replacement cabins are slightly larger in size, however, there is considered no changes to the impact on trees.

The Arboricultural Assessment report by SMW (Tree) Consultancy Ltd, dated 29/11/2022, assesses the impact of the proposed glamping cabins on the existing trees in the copse, and the adjacent trees that wrap around to the South of the site.

Due to cabins remaining in similar locations and at similar distances from tree root protection areas, with similar root protection schemes with use of EasyPads above ground, an updated Arboricultural Assessment is not considered necessary.

Refer to separate Arboricultural Assessment and Appendices for the tree assessment for the 20 glamping cabins. The report concludes that with the appropriate mitigation in place, the proposals will not have a negative impact on the existing trees.

Driving range raised decking and pergola:

Previous planning consent for the driving range raised decking imposed a condition requiring the development to be carried out in accordance with the

approved Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Constraints plan prepared by Bright Green Environmental. There were no other conditions regarding trees.

Section 2.30 of Bright Green Environmental's AIA stated that within the area of works 'a group G5 of semi mature trees including prunus, birch, eucalyptus and oak and several shrubs. The existing tarmac of the car park extends into the RPA of this group with a maximum RPA of 3.1m'.

The previous proposals consisted of a suspended timber decked pathway supported on small pile foundations into the raised bank. The proposals are similar with use of small pile foundations along the edge with the car park, and supporting the other end on the driving range's existing foundations, which reduces impact on the trees as the pad footings are located further away from the trees.

Section 2.32 stated 'the trees are to be retained and protected, due to the constrained nature of this area of construction and the lightweight nature of the path, it is not considered necessary for tree protection fencing providing suitable care is taken. Ground protection matting to protect the RPAs if to be trafficked by machinery/drilling rigs, otherwise operated from the tarmac'.

These tree protection requirements were followed as part of the completed works.

As the works are retrospective and have less impact than the previous proposals, it is considered no further tree assessment report is required, nor does SMW's report needs to cover these completed works.

Glamping cabins, paths, services and foul drainage runs:

The proposed cabins are 'freestanding' and do not require formal concrete foundations or a concrete slab base.

The Nokken cabins do not have wheels and use helical screw piles or EasyPads to support their raised structural base. Helical screw piles do not structurally require a hardcore base. The EasyPads need to be installed over a small MOT or DOT compacted hardcore base, or over a concrete pad of 75mm depth (maximum 75mm surface scrape) as per the original proposals.

Outside of root protection areas the EasyPads should have a 40-200mm MOT or DOT hardcore base, depth to suit position of pad for a minimum total install depth at the underside of the hardcore of 200mm to prevent the impact of seasonal movement on the EasyPads.

The use of MOT or DOT hardcore provides a stable base and helps the cabins requiring EasyPads to be levelled through reinforcing the bearing strength of the ground, which does not change the underlying soil.

The use of a hardcore base under the whole cabin eases maintenance (no vegetation growing underneath) and improves natural infiltration of surface water which is transferred from the cabin roof via a downpipe into this permeable base that acts as a 'temporary store/catchment area' whilst the water naturally filtrates into the sublayers below.

The hardcore base for all the proposed footpaths are for reinforcement to increase the bearing strength of the ground with no changes to the underlying soil, which remains permeable underneath.

Both the hardcore bases and access footpaths are to be formed using permeable materials to avoid increase of impermeable areas.

The SuDs consultant who provided the assessment for previously consented application SDNP/18/03009/FUL, did not have any concerns of a risk of increased surface water run off as a result of these revised proposals as they mimic the original consent, and did not deem any calculations or report as necessary as the cabins are raised, do not require concrete foundations and have a permeable base, and paths are permeable in construction.

The Arboricultural Assessment by SMW (Tree) Consultancy Ltd sets out the method of mitigation and installation of the pods' hardcore bases, shallow concrete pad footings, services and drainage runs.

All 20 pods require electricity, drainage and fresh water supplies, which have to be supplied underground for health & safety and practical reasons. Refer to Arboricultural Assessment and drawing 20-2487-PX-02 for further information on locations of services.

All the services trenches are located outside of the RPA of the trees, and where possible located under proposed/existing paths to reduce dig depths and excavation.

2 Category C trees are proposed to be removed to allow 2 cabins to be located within the tree copse, and the service trench runs for electricity and foul waste to run outside of the remaining tree's RPAs, to assist with the 'woodland' experience,

METHOD STATEMENT FOR DIGGING WITHIN RPAS & IF TREE ROOTS FOUND DURING WORKS:

Only where absolutely necessary should services be run underground through RPAs, and to be located at the mid point between 2 trees to reduce likelihood of uncovering larger roots.

- All trenches within RPAs to be hand dug being careful of root activity, and kept to the smallest size trench possible. Use a fork to loosen the soil and help locate any substantial roots. This includes use of spades, forks and trowels.
- All soil removal in areas near trees to be undertaken with care to minimise the disturbance of roots beyond the immediate area of excavation. Where possible, flexible clumps of smaller roots, including fibrous roots, should be retained if they can be displaced temporarily beyond the excavation without damage.
- Roots temporarily exposed must be protected from direct sunlight, drying out and extremes of temperatures by appropriate covering, ie. Wet hessian sacking.
- If roots are found, the trowel should be used to clear the soil away from them without damaging the bark. Exposed roots to be removed should be cut cleanly with a sharp saw or secateurs 10-20cm behind the final face of the excavation for those under 25mm in diameter.
- Roots greater than 2.5cm in diameter should be retained where possible. Roots 2.5-10cm in diameter should only be cut in exceptional circumstances. Roots greater than 10cm in diameter should only be cut after consultation with the appropriate supervisory officer.
- In the highly unlikely event of roots over this size, 10cm, being revealed, then the works must cease, and an arboriculturist consultant is to be contacted for their advice on retention and a revised trench construction submitted to the Tree Officer for consideration. No works involving digging will continue until this has been approved.

NO DIG CONSTRUCTION:

- Remove top layer of grass by hand;
- Install timber retaining boards above ground level with timber spikes to restrain;

- Install geotextile membrane within path footprint to prevent fines contamination, then fill with a load spreading confinement system and clean gravel or stone fill

TREE PROTECTION SCHEME:

TREE PROTECTION —Driving range raised decking and pergola:

These works have been completed.

The intrusive construction works that involved machinery was completed with due care and attention taken to protect the 3 retained trees, with machinery located on the tarmac of the car park, and all cutting and mixing works taking place outside of RPAs within the car park.

There was no space nor was it practical to install fencing around the 3 trees due to the nature of the works that surrounded the trees and the slope of the land.

TREE PROTECTION —Glamping pods and paths:

Refer to SMW (Tree) Consultancy Ltd's Arboricultural Assessment for the proposed tree protection and mitigation requirements for the 20 cabins and associated footpaths, which are to be installed in phases.

CONCLUSION:

The proposed works for the cabins and pathways are not considered to negatively impact existing trees, and the simple protection techniques set out in SMW's Arboricultural Assessment can be used during construction to ensure that the health and quality of the trees are not impacted by these proposals.

END