

93.2967 ~ 93.2968

24/10/1994

of the proposed houses, and these are clearly small scale schemes. I have concluded that neither scheme would be out of scale or character with its surroundings or have a harmful impact on the character of the surrounding residential area.

8. Turning to the second main issue, Policy H2 also requires the privacy and amenities of adjoining properties to be adequately safeguarded. The proposed houses in the grounds of the appeal property would be some 10m or more from the boundary of the site, and about 15m from the flank wall of the property to the rear. While distances from side boundaries would be rather less, all of the proposed houses would be at least as well separated from surrounding properties, and these separation distances are comparable with many of those found elsewhere in the area. The site is in general well screened by mature trees and hedges, and a landscaping condition could be imposed to ensure that this screening remained, and was enhanced where necessary. While any development of this nature may have some impact on the amenities of nearby residents, I have concluded that, in both cases, the level of impact would not be likely to be so great as to be unacceptable.

9. The final issue relates to the impact of the proposed development on trees protected by a preservation order. There are three trees in question. One is a yew, which is located in the hedgerow along Southborough Road, near to the position of the proposed new access. This is one of a number of trees in this hedgerow, and it is not particularly prominent. I consider that any loss of trees in this hedgerow is more likely to be caused by a proposed highway improvement to which the proposed access is linked.

10. The other two protected trees are a cedar and redwood in the grounds of the existing property. These are both fine and very prominent specimens, some 20-30m in height. I have taken account of the fact that they are apparently further back on the site than the positions shown on the plan annexed to the preservation order, but I remain concerned that they are relatively close to one of the proposed houses which is common to both schemes. Even if the trees are outside the proposed footprint of the building itself, I would expect them to have an extensive root system, and while I have noted your comment about the spread of their foliage, no expert evidence has been provided about the possible effects of construction work, particularly the digging of foundations and service trenches. I am also concerned that the proximity of trees of this size to houses is likely to give rise to fears about subsidence and to cause other inconvenience to their residents, and that this may lead in due course to pressure for the trees to be felled. I have concluded that there is a significant risk that the redevelopment of the site in the particular ways that have been proposed would lead to the eventual loss of these trees, and I regard this risk as unacceptable because of their importance to the local environment.