

**WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL – DEVELOPMENT CONTROL
WORKS TO TPO TREES DELEGATED REPORT**

APPLICATION No:	<u>S6/2011/1038/TP</u>
LOCATION:	19 Tolmers Avenue, Cuffley
PROPOSAL:	<u>Crown thin by 30% and crown lift to 4m oak covered by TPO 283.</u>

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL: Crown thin by 30% and crown lift to 4m oak covered by TPO 283 – no reasons given on application form.

SUMMARY OF DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES:

National Policy

East of England Plan 2008

Hertfordshire Structure Plan Review 1991 – 2011

None

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005

GBSP2: Towns and specified settlements

R17: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows

D2: Character and Context

D8: Landscaping

PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS:

None received

REPRESENTATIONS:

The application was advertised by means of neighbour notification and one representation was received.

The representation is from an adjacent neighbour and is in favour of the proposed works.

DISCUSSION:

The oak tree in question is a mature English oak. It is sited on the rear boundary of 19 Tolmers Avenue, Cuffley. The property is on a slope and the base of the stem is much higher than the building.

The tree appears to be in reasonable health and condition, with good vitality. A full ground inspection was not undertaken due to adjacent vegetation and property boundary. Minor deadwood can be seen within the crown. As this is internal tertiary growth it is not significant for a tree of this age and species. The tree has previously had some pruning and some stubs can be seen on the stem.

The application form gave no indication as to the reasons for pruning. Through on site discussion with the property owner and clarification with the agent, the desire is to allow more light into a vegetable garden which has been installed under the tree. This works operation will produce a temporary fix to the issue of garden shading. It is unfortunate that the vegetable garden has been located under the oak tree. No request had been included to crown lift the tree but this has been rectified through further clarification with the agent. The tree grows in close proximity to 6b Hill Rise but is not physically touching the property.

Thinning has the simple objective to remove some of the secondary and tertiary branches to remove the density or thickness of the crown. It is frequently done poorly by tree surgeons who remove larger diameter branches thinking that this achieves the objective. Poorly thinned trees are more difficult to manage in future years and can increase the likelihood of branch failure if a gappy crown is created. The most recent British Standard address this issue and clearly defines the expectation of the operation. An abridged version of the crown thinning section has been included as an informative.

Condition 3 of the approval gives two periods within the year when this work can be carried out. Trees use most of their stored or potential energy to leaf out. This energy is then recouped quickly over the following weeks. Crown reducing a tree immediately before leaf out (when the sap is rising), during leaf out or immediately after leaf out, leaves the tree with little reserves of energy to react to the pruning, both in terms of making more leaves and compartmentalising the wounds. A similar situation occurs in the time before, during and immediately after leaf fall. (*Shigo, Modern Arboriculture 1991*)

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS

CONDITIONS

- 1 The works hereby approved shall be undertaken within three years of the date of this notice.

REASON: To ensure that works to trees are undertaken within an appropriate time scale, after which time reconsideration of their suitability should take place

- 2 The works hereby approved shall be undertaken in accordance with the British Standard 3998:2010 (Tree Work) and by an appropriately qualified person

REASON: To ensure that any works undertaken comply with arboricultural best practice.

- 3 The works hereby permitted shall only be carried out during winter (November to February, inclusive) or high summer (June to September, inclusive) and at no other time.

REASON: To minimise the impact on the tree.

REASON FOR APPROVAL: The proposal has been considered against development plan policies (i.e. National Policy, East of England Plan 2008, Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 GBSP2, R17, D2, D8), in addition to the Human Rights Act 1998, which indicate that the proposal should be approved. Material planning considerations do not justify a decision contrary to the Development Plan (see Officer's report which can be inspected at these offices).

DRAWING NUMBERS: Location plan received and dated 27th May 2011.

Informative:

1. Following crown thinning, an even density of foliage should be retained throughout a well-spaced and balanced branch structure, which could, if required, provide an adequate framework for a possible future crown reduction. Material should be removed systematically from throughout the tree rather than from the inner crown only. Cutting branches back to the main stem should be avoided, although structurally weak or hazardous branches should be removed if there is no alternative. Uneven thinning or over-thinning increases the probability of branch failure, either by creating gaps in the crown, or by removing shoots and secondary branches from the proximal parts of a branch and leaving twigs and foliage at the tip (this is known as lion-tailing). (*BS 3998:2010 Tree Work – Recommendations section 7.5*)

Author:.....

Date:.....