

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

APPLICATION No:	<u>S6/2014/0134/TP</u>
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DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:

Reduce 10 trees (9 hornbeam and 1 ash) to 11m in height due to alleged effect on garage.

HISTORY

S6/2007/1003/TP – Felling of 4 hornbeams, 4 ash trees, 1 oak tree and 1 cedar tree covered by W1 TPO072 (Split decision)

TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS:

None received

REPRESENTATIONS:

The application was advertised by means of neighbour notification and no representations were received.

DISCUSSION:

The area of trees is an undeveloped plot, between two houses, with a road to the front and a woodland along the rear. The trees are a variety of mixed broadleaf species (ash, oak, sycamore, birch, horse chestnut and hornbeam) and of a range of ages. The 10 trees within 10m of the garage include 9 hornbeams and 1 ash. The trees as a whole still have a high amenity value due to their stature and site adjacent to a busy road.

All of the hornbeams are semi-mature to mature and frequently multi-stem. They appear to be in good health and condition. Two of the hornbeam trees, at either end of the garage, have been previously crown reduced and have an amount of regrowth which is not long nor heavy but shows good vitality.

The ash is over mature and shows poor health and condition with a predominantly dead crown with pockets of decay from 6-12m. This ash tree is within falling distance of the road and even though other trees stand between it and the road, could reach it if it failed.

The proposal is to top the trees to 11m in height due to movement in an adjacent freestanding garage. A survey (by T Dawson, undated but with accompanying drawing dated January 2014) has been included in the application. The survey includes no details relating to; the plasticity of the soil; the soil-moisture deficit; the foundations on this relatively new building; or seasonal variation in the widths of the cracks. Although the report notes the large Leyland cypress hedge running along the boundary it makes no discussion about this. Overall, the survey has insufficient information to link cracking in the building with the adjacent trees.

The type of works proposed are not consistent with woodland improvement but are far more gentle than what could be proposed for woodland management. The ash tree is in a poor structural condition and topping it to 11m in height would reduce the

risk of the tree failing onto the road. Of the hornbeams; 2 have been previously cut to this height before; 2 are only a little taller than 11m in height; and 3 are drawn up due to the surrounding trees with little side branching. The affect on the amenity of these trees will be limited. The works are going to have most amenity impact on only 1 hornbeam tree, sited adjacent to the road and with a slightly broader crown. This tree appears to have reasonable vitality and is unlikely to be detrimentally affected by the works.

The proposed works are unlikely to have a detrimental effect on the amenity of the woodland or its long term management.

Deadwood is an important feature within woods as so much wildlife lives and thrives on it and in it. Caution should be taken with trees which have horizontal or vertical cracks greater than pencil thickness or with large plates of peeling bark, as these are ideal roosts for bats.

Informatives are attached to the permission advising the applicant on the best practice for works to trees and protection of wildlife.

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 shall not be started and completed other than in accordance with the approved plans and details: tree(s) location plan received and dated 28 January 2014 unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved drawings and any changes must be agreed in advance in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

3. 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.

Informative:

1. Deadwood is an important feature within woods as so much wildlife lives and thrives on it and in it. Caution should be taken with trees which have horizontal or vertical cracks greater than pencil thickness or with large plates of peeling bark, as these are ideal roosts for bats. Bats are a European Protected Species. Actions which would comprise an offence under Regulation 41 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 require consent from Natural England prior to any works being undertaken.

Author:

Date: ...16 April 2014...