

**WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL  
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (PLANNING)**

**DELEGATED APPLICATION**

**Application No:** 6/2023/0001/TPO  
**Location:** 56 Bell Lane Hatfield AL9 7AY  
**Proposal:** T1 – Ash – height 12m / spread 3m. Failed at base, fallen, and now laying across further trees and near a footpath. To remove tree.

T2 – Ash – height 14m / spread 10m. Slight sign of ash die back on the right hand side of large trunk which forks over footpath.

To remove leaning trunk with fork over footpath. Reduce remaining by 3m (height 14-11 & span 10-7), due to safety issue as stem leaning over footpath and first signs of ash die back.

T3 – Ash – height 16m / spread 5m. Set in a cluster of other Ash trees and has first sign of ash die back. To remove tree due to footpath and road construction for short term access. Re-planting will take place.

T4 – Ash – height 16m / spread 8m, has first signs of ash die back. To reduce crown by 3m all over (height 16-13 & span 8-5). and remove epicormic growth at base, due to size, health and location for trees, a reduction is advisable.

TPO 14 A1

**Officer:** Mr James Hare

**Recommendation:** Granted

6/2023/0001/TPO

<b>Context</b>	
<b>Site description</b>	56 Bell Lane, Hatfield, AL9 7AY
<b>Relevant history</b>	None
<b>Main Issues</b>	
<b>Appropriateness of the works in relation to the tree(s)</b>	Two Arboricultural Surveys have been carried of varying degree and of opposing opinions due to one being carried out by the agent of the applicant and the other on behalf of an objector to the works. In arboriculture it is common to have opposing considerations as the interpretation of a trees situation can come from differing viewpoints, the agent of the applicant assessing the tree with a greater leniency towards safety, while the survey on behalf of the objector has been carried out with the view of Arboricultural treecare. The treeworks detailed in the application have been assessed according to the effect on public amenity and the appropriateness of the work for maintaining trees in a safe condition according to their environment. There has been no consideration made to the affect that the treeworks detailed in the application will have on any extraneous circumstances, namely to facilitate or

block proposed development in the local area.

Largely the reason that is attributed to the requirement for work is Ash Dieback (ADB). Summer is the most appropriate time for assessing ADB while this application is being assessed through the winter. ADB signs have been determined by branch tips with regressing buds and adventitious growth over the primary and secondary branches which is signatory of a tree under stress and ADB. There was no sign during site visits of fungal fruiting body (fresh or remnant) of *Armillaria* spp. or *Inonotus hispidus* which act as secondary agents to ADB and present a greater risk to safety. Where ADB exists, it is recommended by the Arboricultural Association and the Tree Council that retention is preferred wherever appropriate in order to allow ADB tolerant specimens to reproduce. The greater the dieback, the less likely that the surveyed specimen is ADB tolerant. This has been interpreted into; trees that show 100-50% crown remaining should be retained (unless for other reasons), trees that show 50-25% dieback should be regularly assessed, trees that show 25-0% dieback should be felled.

T1 is approximately 10m tall with a radial spread of 3m, there is a significant lean towards the east with the tree resting in at least 1 but potentially 2 trees. It has high visibility to the public and a moderate amenity value individually. There is a large deformation (diameter of approx. 20cm) present at the base of the tree on the western side, likely from a previous failure and likely the reason the tree currently rests in adjacent tree(s). It would be reasonable to believe that over time the weight of this tree increasing will lead to failure and removal of not only this tree but also 2-3 adjacent trees. The tree appears to be suffering from ADB with approximately 75% remaining crown and does not likely pose as an individual that is ADB tolerant. The "target" (what would be damaged if it were to fail) is a small access track from bell lane to what appears to be a work yard. The works detailed for T1 in this application are justified and should be granted.

T2 is approximately 15m tall with a radial spread of 6m. The tree has high visibility and moderate amenity value individually. The tree is multi stemmed and ivy clad. There is no evidence of the structural weakness that would foreseeably lead to failure. The tree has 75-100% remaining crown indicating minor ADB. The base of the tree has historically had barbed wire attached to it, which has now been absorbed into the newly developed wood, indicating a structural weakness. This feature has a probability of failure that increases from potentially for the more upright trunk to foreseeable for the trunk that has a significant lean. The targets for the tree is the public footpath that runs east-west on the southerly side of the tree and may reach the garden fence of the neighbouring property if it were to fall in the right direction. While reduction work could act to encourage the onset of ADB, the safety concern would override the need to act in the trees best interest.

T3 is approximately 14m tall with a radial spread of <3m. It has high visibility and a low amenity value individually. It is significantly suppressed by adjacent trees and looks to have 50-25% remaining crown with the target being both the small access track to the south and the public footpath to the north. Removal of T3 is acceptable as a reasonable action to a foreseeable failure.

T4 is approximately 16m tall with a radial spread of 6m. It has high visibility with moderate amenity value. The tree is weighted significantly to the west due to the suppression from the adjacent trees to the east. Remaining crown is 100-75%. There

	<p>are no visible signs of structural weakness which suggest that tree failure is imminent or foreseeable, however, the western trunk is significantly leant over the access track. It is reasonable to say that a reduction would ensure the longer term stability of the tree. The treeworks detailed for the tree are considered reasonable according to a low risk threshold and the amenity of the tree and area will not be negatively affected, therefore works should be granted.</p> <p>The trees detailed in the application are part of a woodland and the TPO applies to the woodland as a whole. Therefore consideration should be made to how the amenity of the woodland will be affected by the proposed treeworks. The area of the woodland that will be affected is a small spit located between an access track and public footpath. The trees that are present in this spit number approximately 10 ash trees. They are relatively densely populated. Removal of the 2 trees and 1 trunk detailed in the application would improve the amenity of the woodland by thinning it out, allowing more light in and allowing space for adjacent trees to grow. None of the treeworks detailed in the application would negatively affect the public amenity.</p>
<p><b>Conclusion</b></p>	
<p>The treeworks detailed in this application have been assessed according to the effect on public amenity with no consideration being made to the potential facilitation or blocking of nearby development.</p> <p>T1, T2 and T3 treeworks that are detailed in the application are reasonable treeworks to be carried out to ensure the health and safety of the access track and public footpath. T4 treeworks are a response to a minor structural weakness but it is arguable that they are necessary. All treeworks detailed in the application will not negatively affect the public amenity of the woodland and should be granted.</p>	

**Conditions:**

1. 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.

2. The works hereby permitted must only be carried out during winter (November to February, inclusive) or high summer (July to August inclusive) and at no other time.

REASON: To maintain the character and appearance of the area in accordance with Policies GBSP2, D1, D2, D8 and R17 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

**DRAWING NUMBERS**

3. The development/works shall not be started and completed other than in accordance with the approved plans and details:

<b>Plan</b>	<b>Revision</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Received Date</b>
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**Number**

**Number**

Sketch Map

3 January 2023

REASON: To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans and details.

**Informatives:**

1. It is advised that a thorough inspection of the tree is undertaken before works commence to check for active birds' nests. Nesting birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the intentional disturbance and destruction of nests is a criminal offence. Nesting season runs from mid-February to October.

**Determined By:**

Mr Oliver Waring  
27 February 2023