

DELEGATED DECISION CHECKLIST AND REPORT

APPLICATION NO.	CASE OFFICER	DATE
23/01031/WTTPO	Chelsea Petrillo	2 nd February 2024

Address: 8 Lower Beechwood Rochdale OL11 4LY

Proposal: T1- Willow- Fell due to poor form and lack of space to grow. T2- Oak- 2-3m reduction to the south side of the tree to reduce end weight and create clearance for the buildings. T3- Oak- 2-3m reduction to the south side of the tree to reduce end weight and create clearance for the buildings. T4- Beech- Fell- A very large and dominant beech tree located to the rear garden

PUBLICITY	Weekly list expired?	N/A	Site notice expired?	N/A
	Neighbour letters expired?	N/A	Press Notice expired?	N/A

DELEGATION	Significant departure from local plan?	N	Contrary to national policy?	N
	Applicant a Council Member or officer?	N	Contrary to previous decision?	N
	Major with 10 or more objections and recommending approval?	N	Called in or Planning Panel objection?	N

COMMENTS	Planning Panel comments received?	N
	Neighbour comments received?	N

EIA	Screening opinion completed and saved to Onbase?	N
-----	--	---

CONDITIONS	Pre-commencement conditions proposed?	N
	Pre-commencement conditions agreed (or notification period expired)?	N/A

RECOMMENDATION	GRANT Subject to Standard Conditions
----------------	--------------------------------------

CHECKED AND SIGNED OFF BY: TH

DATE: 07.02.2024

SITE

The application relates to four trees located in the rear garden of 8 Lower Beechwood which forms the edge of a dense woodland within the Bamford ward of Rochdale.

PROPOSAL

The proposal seeks consent for works to four mature trees. The works are as follows;

- T1 Willow – Fell due to lack of space and light
- T2 & T3 Oak – 2-3m reduction to prolong lifespan and create clearance of building
- T4 Beech – Fell due to close proximity to house before failure. Tree showing signs of stress in canopy including wounds in numerous places up the stem

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (CS):

G7 – Increasing the value of biodiversity and geodiversity

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

None applicable.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Tree Officer

Thank you for consulting the Ecology Unit on the above application. I have now had the opportunity to visit the site.

The garden of the property forms a part of a dense mixed broadleaved woodland supporting beech, oak, willow and sycamore trees. The woodland runs down an embankment to the rear of the properties towards Mandale Park to the North. When the trees are in full leaf the canopy must be very dense, suppressing light levels to rear gardens and the rear of the target property and adjacent properties. There is encroachment over the property, and nearby properties, by tree branches from Oaks and Sycamores, in addition to a large Beech.

Of most concern is a very large old Beech tree (referred to as T4 in the plan provided with the application) . This very old, large tree is within 5m of the property. The tree has been extensively pruned in the past, with a number of major old wounds evident. The main stems are bifurcated relatively low down, at some 1.5m. There are significant lesions in the tree, with bark loss in places. Old pruning wounds are exhibiting fungal decay. The tree is showing external signs of both *phytophthora sp.* and honey fungus. I viewed the tree in January when it was not in leaf, but I am mindful of the report of the arborist who inspected the tree when it was in leaf and who reports that the tree was showing signs of stress in the canopy with reduced leaf cover. Beech do less well in wet areas and heavy soils and can be more susceptible to fungal decay in these areas. Given the proximity of this tree to the property, the age of the tree, significant signs of stress and fungal decay, and the potential high risks involved if it were to fail, I believe that it would be prudent to accept that the tree has reached the end of its useful life in this high-risk location and would agree to the removal of the tree.

The dismantling of the Beech will be a very significant undertaking and will leave a very significant gap in the overall tree cover in the area. Works must be undertaken

by a suitably qualified and insured arborist, and in accord with British Standard BS5837:2012. The removal of this tree will substantively reduce light competition with other nearby trees and therefore a degree of compensation for the loss may occur naturally. However, replanting is also recommended with more suitable understorey tree species such as Holly.

In terms of the other proposed works –

T1 – Willow. This minor tree has been heavily pruned in the past, has poor form and offers little to the local treescape. There is limited space for this tree to grow in future. I would raise no objection to the removal of this tree. Compensatory replanting would be inappropriate at this location because of a lack of space.

T2 and T3 – Pruning back of these mature Oaks by 2m to create clearance for the nearby residential properties, and to reduce weight (and therefore risk to property) on the south side of the trees, is justified. The trees could withstand this pruning.

Recommendation – Approve the application

Further advice - Other nearby trees, notably Sycamore, have relatively high levels of dead wood in lower canopies. There were notable amounts of fallen deadwood in rear gardens, probably a result of a recent run of high winds. This could be because of suppression of adjacent trees by the dense canopies of the nearby Beech and Oak, but I would advise that these trees are further inspected for health later in the year when they are in leaf.

REPRESENTATIONS

In accordance with council policy on neighbour notification for this type of application, no letters of notification were sent to neighbouring properties.

ANALYSIS

In considering applications for works to protected trees, Government advice in paragraph 90 of the NPPG states:

“When considering an application the authority is advised to:

- assess the amenity value of the tree or woodland and the likely impact of the proposal on the amenity of the area;*
- consider, in the light of this assessment, whether or not the proposal is justified, having regard to the reasons and additional information put forward in support of it;*
- consider whether any loss or damage is likely to arise if consent is refused or granted subject to conditions;*
- consider whether any requirements apply in regard to protected species;*
- consider other material considerations, including development plan policies where relevant; and*
- ensure that appropriate expertise informs its decision.”*

In considering whether there has to be an arboricultural need for proposed works to a TPO, paragraph 91 of the NPPG states:

“In general terms, it follows that the higher the amenity value of the tree or woodland and the greater any negative impact of proposed works on amenity, the stronger the reasons needed before consent is granted. However, if the amenity value is lower and the impact is likely to be negligible, it may be appropriate to grant consent even if the authority believes there is no particular arboricultural need for the work.”

With regard to the above, the main considerations in respect of this application are whether the proposal for works to the tree is justified in light of the assessment of the amenity value of the tree and whether the reasons for works are of sufficient standing to warrant the granting of consent.

To assess the acceptability of the proposal against the above considerations, the Council’s Tree Officer has been consulted. The Officer raised no objections to the application on Arboriculture grounds however, did state the loss of the Beech tree is considered to leave a significant gap and therefore impact upon the landscape. In accommodating a compensation, replanting details have been provided with the recommended species, Holly.

The work is justified in the interest of safety and good arboriculture practice. The works are also justified on the grounds of avoidance of harm to 8 Lower Beechwood and in the interest of good arboriculture practice.

The application proposal is therefore considered to be compliant with the guidance contained within the NPPG noted above, and the application is recommended for approval

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT Subject to Standard Conditions

Notes for Applicant:

For the avoidance of doubt, this Decision Notice relates to the following drawings / document(s):-

- Location Plan
- Tree Photographs / Tree Risk Assessment (Email dated 01-10-2023)
- Replanting details (Received on email dated 30-01-2024)
- Aftercare Details (Received on email dated 03-01-2024)

Report Author Chelsea Petrillo