

DECISION CHECKLIST AND REPORT

APPLICATION NO.	CASE OFFICER	DATE
24/00934/WTTPO	Bob Melling	21 st November 2024

Address: 4 The Harridge, Rochdale, OL12 7UX

Proposal: Application to remove one Sycamore Tree within Group 3 of Tree Preservation Order 012 due to the tree proposing risk of damage and injury.

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

RECOMMENDATION	GRANT SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS
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CHECKED AND SIGNED OFF BY: RC

DATE: 25.11.24

SITE

The application relates to a Sycamore Tree (within group G3) which is located within the curtilage of no. 4 The Harridge.

PROPOSAL

The proposal seeks consent for the removal of one Sycamore Tree (within group G3) subject to Tree Preservation Order no. 12.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – December 2023
National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (CS):

G7- Increasing the value of biodiversity and geodiversity

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

22/00617/WTTPPO: Application to remove one Sycamore tree (within group G3) of Tree Preservation Order No 12 - Approved

15/00855/WTTPPO: Application to fell Tree 3 Sycamore tree also Tree 4 (sycamore) crown to be lifted covered by Tree Preservation Order TPO 012 – Approved

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Tree Officer

- ☐ The tree does show some signs of systemic decay and stress, and there is a lean towards the properties,
- ☐ The previous crown lifting works have left the tree misshapen to the extent that it is no longer an attractive part of the local tree scape, its amenity value is now somewhat limited,
- ☐ The evident epicormic growth appears to be a sign of stress rather than a sign that the crown is recovering from previous pruning,
- ☐ Further pruning to mitigate risk to property would be detrimental, further reducing the amenity value of the tree,
- ☐ I would not consider that the crown of the tree will recover to any substantive degree such that the amenity value of the tree would improve significantly.

Taking all the above into account, I would agree that the best course of action would be to remove the tree and replace it. Removal is justified in the interests of good arboricultural management and to mitigate risks to property.

I would advise replacement with Silver Birch.

Advice – approve the application to remove, require replacement

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:

- ② assess the amenity value of the tree or woodland and the likely impact of the proposal on the amenity of the area;*
- ② 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;*
- ② consider whether any loss or damage is likely to arise if consent is refused or granted subject to conditions;*
- ② consider whether any requirements apply in regard to protected species;*
- ② consider other material considerations, including development plan policies where relevant; and*
- ② 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 are 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 confirmed that the tree is showing signs of systemic decay and stress, and there is a lean towards neighbouring properties. The previous crown lifting works have left the tree misshapen to the extent that it is no longer an attractive part of the local tree scape and its amenity value is now somewhat limited.

The Officer considers that further pruning to mitigate risk to property would be detrimental, further reducing the amenity value of the tree. Moreover, it is unlikely that the crown of the tree would recover to any substantive degree following further pruning.

Therefore, given the risk of main stem failure and the resulting risk to life and property, it is considered that the reasons to remove the tree would outweigh its amenity value. Further mitigation to the lost amenity value can be achieved via replacement planting. The works must also be carried out by a suitably qualified and insured Arborist.

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT Subject to Four Standard Conditions and the following additional condition:

5. Within the next planting season after the felling of the tree hereby approved, a minimum of one replacement tree shall be planted within the site in accordance with details that have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. If the replacement tree is removed, dies, becomes severely damaged or seriously diseased within three years of planting, it will be replaced by a tree of a similar size and species.

Reason: To mitigate for the loss of the existing tree and to protect the visual amenity of the area.

Notes for Applicant:

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

- Covering letter dated 12/09/2024
- Sketch plan
- Tree photograph
- Planning application form

Report Author Bob Melling