

DELEGATED DECISION CHECKLIST AND REPORT

APPLICATION NO.	CASE OFFICER	DATE
25/00245/WTTPO	Bob Melling	24 March 2025

Address: Old Rectory, Mellalieu Street, Middleton, M24 5DN

Proposal: Application for works to one Willow tree (T5) subject to Tree Preservation Order TPO177 - to crown reduce by 4-5 meters

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/A

EIA	Screening opinion completed and saved to Onbase?	N/A
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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: RK

DATE: 16/04/2025

SITE

The application relates to one Willow (T5) to the rear of the Old Rectory, a Grade II Listed Building located in the Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area.

PROPOSAL

Consent is sought to crown reduce T5 by 4-5 metres.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

N/A

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Tree Officer – Although the proposed pruning to this Willow is relatively drastic, it is justified given the structural condition of the tree and its location in a residential garden. Willows are capable of regeneration even when subject to heavy pruning, and the planned pruning offers a reasonable alternative to the removal of the tree.

I would therefore offer no objections to the application, justified in the interests of good arboricultural management and for mitigating safety risks.

Work should be undertaken by a suitably qualified and insured arborist, in accord with BS 3998.

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 proposed works are justified in light of the assessment of the amenity value of the trees and whether the reasons for works are of sufficient standing to warrant the granting of consent.

Although the proposed crown reduction is substantial, the Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU) raised no objections, explaining that Willows are capable of regeneration even when subject to heavy pruning. The Officer considers the proposed works to be justified given the structural condition of the tree and the pruning represents an appropriate alternative to felling the tree.

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 subject to conditions.

GMEU standing advice on tree works and protected species will be attached to the decision notice and therefore the obligations in respect of protected species will have been met.

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT subject to two standard conditions.

Notes for Applicant:

INFORMATIVES

1. For the avoidance of doubt, this Decision Notice relates to the following drawings / document(s):-
 - Location plan
 - Tree report dated 12th March 2025
 - Photographs of T5

Report Author Bob Melling