

APPLICATION NUMBER: 23/00349/WTCA

DELEGATED DECISION CHECKLIST AND REPORT

APPLICATION NO.	CASE OFFICER	DATE
23/00349/WTCA	Sam Yuen	16 May 2023

Address: 3 Green Clough, Todmorden Road, Littleborough, Rochdale, OL15 9PN

Proposal: Application to remove 2 Norway Spruce Trees (T1 and T2) and for works to 1 Crack Willow (T3) to be pruned back to old pollard cuts to stimulate growth, within Rock Nook Conservation Area

RECOMMENDATION	NO OBJECTION
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CHECKED AND SIGNED OFF BY: RK

DATE: 17/05/2023

SITE

The application relates to two Norway Spruce trees and one Crack Willow tree sited to the north-east of no. 3 Green Clough in Littleborough. The trees are located within the Rock Nook Conservation Area.

PROPOSAL

The application seeks to remove two Norway Spruce trees by sectioned down. Two replacement native trees would be planted in a suitable location within the curtilage of the host dwelling.

In addition, the Crack Willow tree would be pruned back to old pollard cuts in order to simulate new growth.

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
- P2 Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

N/A

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Tree Officer

The Spruce trees do not make a substantive contribution to the conservation area, and given the potential harm to the buildings which they may cause, they are better replaced with broadleaved tree species in a better location.

The Willow will recover quickly from the proposed pruning.

The tree officer raises no objections to this application.

Conservation Officer

As the proposed tree works are within Rock Nook Conservation, the provisions of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 apply. This requires a local planning authority to endeavour to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of conservation areas as a whole. Trees include the character of these areas, thus works to trees should be considered carefully in this context. It also requires that applicants give at least six weeks' notice before undertaking works to any trees in a conservation area.

Additionally, NPPF Paragraph 190 states that the local authority should promote conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment whilst sustaining and enhancing the significance of historic assets.

The adopted Rochdale Core Strategy Policy P2 states that the borough will endeavour to conserve, enhance and promote key heritage assets, including consideration of their wider settings.

The application is within Rock Nook Conservation Area, which is a designated heritage asset of special local significance. Trees are a feature of significance, as remarked in the Draft Conservation Area Appraisal held by the LPA.

As seen in the 1909 OS map, the application site, close to what is labelled as "Green Clough" is adjacent to what is labelled "Stansfield Meadows". This indicates that the area has historically been quite green and the home of many indigenous trees and vegetation.

The proposed works are to remove 2 no. Norway Spruce trees (T1 & 2) and replace them with trees of a native species, to be sited in suitable locations within the curtilage of no. 3 Green Clough; additionally to trim back the Crack Willow tree (T3) back to its historical pollard cuts in order to stimulate new growth.

The Spruce trees are evidently not a native species and do not contribute to the setting or character of the conservation area. Therefore the conservation officer raises no objection to the proposed works and would request the specification of the species of the replacement trees to ensure they are broadleaved native species.

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 trees in a Conservation Area that are not protected by a Tree Preservation Order, Government advice in paragraph 116 of the NPPG states:

“Trees in a conservation area that are not protected by an Order are protected by the provisions in section 211 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. These provisions require people to notify the local planning authority, using a ‘section 211 notice’, six weeks before carrying out certain work on such trees, unless an exception applies. The work may go ahead before the end of the six week period if the local planning authority gives consent. This notice period gives the authority an opportunity to consider whether to make a Tree Preservation Order on the tree.”

With regard to the above, the main considerations in respect of this application are whether the trees are deemed worthy of being placed under a Tree Preservation Order or whether the Local Planning Authority is satisfied the works can go ahead without further intervention.

To assist with the assessment of the proposal against the above considerations, the tree officer and conservation officer were consulted on this application. As assessed by the consultees, the Spruce trees are not a native species and do not make a substantive contribution to the setting or character of the conservation area. Given the Spruce trees have outgrown their location and the potential harm of the trees to the adjacent buildings, it is recommended that they are replaced with broadleaved tree species in a more suitable location.

It is considered the Willow tree will recover quickly from the proposed pruning and raises no concern from the tree officer.

Taken as a whole, the tree officer and conservation officer raise no objection to the proposed works.

In terms of environmental protection as a result of the proposals, 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.

In light of the above assessment, the proposal is therefore considered to be compliant with the guidance contained within the NPPG and the LPA accordingly raises no objection.

RECOMMENDATION: NO OBJECTION

Notes for Applicant:

INFORMATIVE

1. For the avoidance of doubt, this Decision Notice relates to the following drawings / document(s):-
 - Tree Location Plan
 - Annotated photos of trees and proposed works

Report Author Sam Yuen