

Officer Report

Case Reference: OTH/2026/0619
Location: FORMER NORDEN LIBRARY, EDENFIELD ROAD,
ROCHDALE, OL11 5XE
Proposal: Request to remove 1 no. Sycamore Tree referenced as T2
under TPO 236 to assist with the redevelopment of the
neighboring Streamline Taxis site.
Recommendation: Refuse
Officer: Luke Rigby

SITE

The application relates to 1No. sycamore tree within the curtilage of the Former Norden Library in Rochdale; the tree is denoted T2 and covered by Tree Preservation Order 236 which was sealed in 2004.

PROPOSAL

The application seeks permission to fell 1No. sycamore tree, denoted T2 in order to assist with the redevelopment of the neighbouring application site.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Local Guidance

Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy

G7- Increasing the value of biodiversity and geodiversity

Legislation

The Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation) (England) Regulations 2012

PUBLICITY

Site Notice: N/A

Press Notice: N/A

Neighbour notification letters: In accordance with the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement, no letters of notification were sent for this application.

ASSESSMENT

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 tree covered by way of 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.'*

To assess the acceptability of the proposal against the above considerations, the Council's Tree Officer has been consulted, however no response has been received at the time of writing this report.

Notwithstanding the above, T2 is a large and mature tree which is highly visible from along Edenfield Road and from public viewpoints by virtue of its siting and contributes to the verdant character of the street scene. Officers therefore consider that the tree contributes positively to the character of the street scene and therefore has a high amenity value. The tree is also protected by TPO 236 which provides further evidence that the tree is of high amenity value.

The application submission includes no justification for the loss of the tree other than to assist with the redevelopment of the neighbouring site. No reports have been submitted which determine that the development of the neighbouring site cannot proceed without removal of the tree, and no mitigation following the loss of the tree has been proposed.

Having regard to the above, in the absence of any arboricultural assessment (or other justification) demonstrating that the tree is in poor physical or structural condition (which may diminish its amenity value), or any evidence that the development cannot feasibly occur without the removal of the tree (or any evidence that such has been explored by the applicant), the Local Planning Authority must prioritise the retention of trees which are of high amenity value.

Officers therefore consider that the proposal would be contrary to the guidance contained within the NPPG and would cause undue harm to the amenities of the area. It is therefore recommended that permission to fell the tree be refused.

Recommendation: Refuse

Refusal(s) (2)

- 1 The proposed felling of Tree T2, which is protected by Tree Preservation Order No. 236, would result in the unjustified loss of a prominent mature tree which makes a significant contribution to the visual amenities and verdant character of the street scene along Edenfield Road and the wider locality. Insufficient information has been submitted to demonstrate that the tree is in poor physical or structural condition, or that the proposed redevelopment of the adjoining site cannot reasonably proceed whilst retaining the tree. In the absence of adequate justification, the proposed works are contrary to the guidance set out within Paragraphs 90 and 91 of the National Planning Practice Guidance (Tree Preservation Orders and Trees in Conservation Areas) and would result in unacceptable harm to the amenity of the area.
 - 2 The application fails to provide any mitigation measures to compensate for the loss of Tree T2, including the provision of replacement tree planting or any other landscape enhancements. Given the high amenity value of the protected tree, the absence of replacement planting would result in a permanent reduction in tree cover and an adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the area. The Local Planning Authority is not satisfied that adequate measures have been proposed to offset the loss of the protected tree, and the proposal is therefore contrary to the objectives of the National Planning Practice Guidance relating to the retention and replacement of trees which contribute positively to local amenity
- 1 For the avoidance of doubt this decision relates to the following plans/documents:
- Location Plan
 - Image of T2