

Officer Report

Case Reference: OTH/2026/0625
Location: ASHES FARM, ASHES LANE, MILNROW, ROCHDALE,
OL16 3TN
Proposal: Application for crown reduction work to one Sycamore (within
group G3) subject to Tree Preservation Order No 68
Recommendation: Approve with Conditions
Officer: Bob Melling

SITE

The application relates to Ashes Farm, Ashes Lane in Milnrow. The site is a farm complex consisting of a private dwelling and several operating barns. To the south, west, and north-west of the site is associated farmland. To the north and east, the site is surrounded by a residential estate comprising medium density, semi-detached houses. The subject tree lies north-west of the site, adjacent to No. 15 Weir Road.

PROPOSAL

Permission is sought to crown reduce a Sycamore within group G3 subject to Tree Preservation Order No. 68

RELEVANT POLICY

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (PfE)

Policy JP-G6 Urban Green Space

Policy JP-G7 Trees and Woodland

Policy JP-G8 A Net Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (CS):

G6 Enhancing green infrastructure

G7 Increasing the value of biodiversity and geodiversity

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

23/00974/WTTPO: Application to fell one Ash tree (suffering from Ash die back) subject to Tree Preservation Order No. 68 (Ashes Lane). Approved.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Tree Officer - No comments received at the time of writing.

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 amenity value of the protected tree

and whether the proposed extent of works is sufficiently limited so as not to adversely affect that amenity value.

Consent is sought to undertake a crown reduction to a mature Sycamore tree. The applicant states that the tree has previously been crown reduced and that a further reduction is required due to concerns regarding branch overhang and movement during periods of high wind, particularly above an area of garden used by children. The submitted annotated photographs indicate that the works are intended to reduce the crown broadly back towards previous pruning points.

The submitted photographs identify the proposed extent of the reduction and the location of previous pruning works.

Whilst there is no clear arboricultural evidence demonstrating that the tree is defective or that the proposed works are required on health and safety grounds, it is acknowledged that the tree has been managed previously and that some degree of cyclical pruning may be appropriate. The application does not specify the extent of the proposed reduction in percentage terms or metres, and the description of a "full crown reduction" is considered imprecise. However, having regard to the annotated photographs, it appears that a reduction of approximately 20% of the live crown would be proportionate and would broadly reflect the extent of works shown on the submitted plans.

It is considered that a crown reduction limited to 20% would not unduly affect the health, appearance or public amenity value of the tree. Accordingly, it is considered reasonable to grant consent subject to conditions restricting the extent of the reduction and requiring pruning to suitable growth points in accordance with good arboricultural practice.

The application proposal is therefore considered to accord with the relevant guidance contained within the National Planning Practice Guidance in relation to Tree Preservation Orders, and approval is recommended subject to appropriate conditions controlling the scope of the works.

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: Approve with Conditions

Condition(s) (2)

- 1 The consent hereby granted is valid for a period of two years from the date of this decision.
- 2 The approved works shall be limited to a crown reduction of no more than 20% of the live crown of the Sycamore tree identified within the application, pruning back to suitable growth points and retaining the natural form of the tree. All pruning shall be undertaken in accordance with British Standard 3998 (2010 – British Standard for Tree Work) and the relevant industry codes for safe practice produced by the Forestry & Arboriculture Safety &

Training Council (FASTCo). No works in excess of the approved 20% crown reduction shall be undertaken without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the works remain proportionate to the justification submitted, to safeguard the health and appearance of the protected tree, and to preserve the visual amenity that the tree provides to the locality.

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

- Location Plan
- Photographs showing extent of proposed works
- Statement of Tree Works