

Location Leecroft Road Adjacent To Hertswood Court Hillside Gardens
Barnet EN5 4AU

Reference: TPP/0243/22 Received: 26th April 2022
Accepted: 26th April 2022

Ward: Underhill Expiry 21st June 2022

Case Officer: Yaseen Esprit

Applicant: Mr Gary Meadowcroft

Proposal: 2 x Pine (applicants ref. T20, T21) - A maximum of 2.5m sub lateral reduction (as per submitted photograph) to address the overhang (this reduction still leaves some overhang, but addresses the residents concerns) to suitable growing points. The canopies of these trees are asymmetric and have grown laterally and prototropically due to the adjacent trees. Standing in Area A1 of Tree Preservation Order. Amended description

OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

Trees: Approve subject to conditions

AND the Committee grants delegated authority to the Service Director – Planning and Building Control to make any minor alterations, additions or deletions to the recommended conditions/obligations or reasons for refusal as set out in this report and addendum provided this authority shall be exercised after consultation with the Chair (or in their absence the Vice-Chair) of the Committee (who may request that such alterations, additions or deletions be first approved by the Committee)

1. The branches shall be pruned in accordance with the recommendations in British Standard BS3998:2010 (Recommendations for Tree work). The proposed reduction shall be implemented in accordance with the submitted photograph showing the extent of pruning as part of this application. In any event the lateral reduction shall not exceed 2.5m.

Reason: To safeguard the health of existing trees which represent an important amenity feature.

Informative(s):

- 1 Any and all works carried out in pursuance of this consent / notice will be subject to the duties, obligations and criminal offences contained in the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Failure to comply with the provisions of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) may result in a criminal prosecution.

1. OFFICER'S ASSESSMENT

Consultation

Date of Site Notice:

05.05.2022

Consultees:

44 neighbours were notified.

Representations:

The planning authority has received 15 objection comments from the public to this application. All the objectors raised similar concerns which have been summarised as:

- Impact of work on tree health
- Loss of habitat
- Impact of tree works on a historic road
- Loss of public tree amenity
- Ownership of trees
- Unauthorised tree works have already taken place

2. RELEVANT PREVIOUS PLANNING HISTORY

N12932/01/TRE_B - 2x Pinus - Light thin and deadwood.

Several Sycamore, Lime, Prunus - Cut back from boundary, thin canopy by 20%, deadwood.

N12932A/02/TRE_B - Tilia Spp x 3 - reduce crown by 30%.

TCP/0018/16 - 5 x Lime (applicant's ref. T1 - T5) - Reduce by 1.5m (25%) and remove split branches.

TCM/0421/18 - 1 x Pine - (Deadwood), Prune back overhang to chain link fence (approx. 2.5 - 3 metres) (1 x Pine - Deadwood) Several saplings - Remove 1 x Lime - Prune back overhang by 2 metres.

TPP/0626/21 1 x Pine - Reduce branches overhanging Hertswood Court Hillside Gardens by 1.5M. Standing in Area A1 of Tree Preservation Order (Pending consideration) Due to staff shortages this application did not proceed to decision.

3. APPRAISAL

Appearance / Amenity Value

The two pine trees subject to this application stand within a row of mature trees on the eastern side of Leecroft Road, which consists of scots pine, cherry and maples.

On the western side of the road, there is a row of larger trees, consisting of corsican pine and lime trees. These trees are visible from Wood Street from over the rooftop of Hertswood Court and are significantly taller than the subject trees

Leecroft Road is a private unpaved road with protect trees either. The trees are the preeminent feature of the street making it very verdant character. Which complements the character of the wider Wood Street Conservation Area.

The trees are protected by an area order designation made in 2018, reference 18/TPO/037 - A1.

The trees predate the construction of Hertswood Court, which was erected in the 1980s. The trees provide a dense canopy over the road and screen Hertswood Court on the eastern side from the properties on Leecroft Road. The road leads to The Watson Thomas Cottage Homes, a gated community with no public access.

Condition

These trees are in good condition with no apparent signs of defect that would require remedial tree works. Taller faster-growing trees have suppressed the upper crown of these trees. As a result, the growth has been directed out towards Hertswood Court. This growth is now 2m to 3m from the building line.

Justification

The applicant provided the following justification for the works:-

"The proposed works seek to reduce the lateral growth towards the Hertswood Court by 2.5m see below specification.

T20 Pine, 2.5m sub-lateral reduction to address the overhang (this reduction still leaves some overhang but addresses the resident's concerns) to suitable growing points.

T21 Pine, 2.5m sub lateral reduction to address the overhang (this reduction still leaves some overhang but addresses the residents' concerns) to suitable growing points.

The canopies of these trees are asymmetric and have grown laterally and prototropically due to the adjacent trees."

The proposed works would reduce the extent of the overhanging canopy towards Hertswood Court allowing more natural day light into the older persons home.

The subject pine trees (T20 & T21 applicants plan) have a small level of public amenity, being visible from Wood Street just above the roof line of Hertswood Court. The primary amenity these trees have is to the residents of Hertswood Court, The canopy of the pine trees cannot be seen from Leecroft Road.

The impact on public visual amenity is minimal as the trees are only just visible above the roof line of building. The view from Wood Street is primarily Hertswood Court and a line of much taller trees not subject to this application.

The extent of tree pruning works is shown on the submitted photograph. The application was delayed due the long wait for the applicant to provide this image.

Following the submission of the photograph showing the extent of the lateral crown reduction the description of the tree works was amended to include reference to the photograph. This was agreed by the agent on 25th November 2022 along with the withdrawal of an early application.

4. COMMENTS ON THE GROUNDS OF OBJECTION

15 letters of objection have been submitted against allowing the pine trees to be pruned the reasons for the objections have been summarised as; impact of work on tree health, loss of habitat, impact of tree works on a historic road, Loss of public tree amenity, Ownership of trees and unauthorised tree works have already taken place

The proposed tree works removes some branches, leading stems, subdominant branches will become the dominant leader as the tree develops a new canopy. This is unlikely to have significant long-term impact on tree health.

The removal of the lateral growth will not have a significant impact on wildlife habitat as the proposed branches to be removed do not have many habitat niches and majority of the remaining trees are unaffected.

Loss public tree amenity and impact of tree works on a historic road The branches proposed for removal are not visible from Leecroft Road. They are barely visible from over the rooftop from Wood Street. Behind these two trees is the bank of trees on the western side of Leecroft Road.

Ownership of trees, common law allows branches to be pruned back to boundary line, the proposed works would be considered acceptable under common law.

Unauthorised tree works have already taken place, during the summer months the planning authority were alerted to tree pruning being undertaken from Hertswood Court. Officers have investigated these incidents and issued an informal caution to the resident undertaking the breaches. No further breaches have occurred and there was no significant impact on public visual amenity.

5 EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) came into force in April 2011. The general duty on public bodies requires the Council to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and promote equality in relation to those with protected characteristics such as race, disability,

and gender including gender reassignment, religion or belief, sex, pregnancy or maternity and foster good relations between different groups when discharging its functions. The Council have considered the Act but do not believe that the application would have a significant impact on any of the groups as noted in the Act.

6 CONCLUSION

The proposed tree works will have a minimal impact on the visual amenity value of the trees on Leecroft road because the proposed branches are not visible from Leecroft road as the branches grow out laterally towards and over Hertswood Court.

The trees are just visible from Wood Street and are part of the large group of trees meaning that loss of these branches would have an insignificant on the conservation area and character of the local area.

The redline shows the location of where the branches will be pruned back to.



