



Team: Trees Service (Planning)
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Surrey Heath Borough Council
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Date: 28/02/2023

TPO number: TPO/11/22

**Location: 54 Church Road
Bagshot**

Dear Mr Woods

The initial notification (S211) was received on the 11th November 2022 for the proposed removal of the Beech, The tree is located within Bagshot Conservation area. When a notification of intended works (a S211 Notice) is submitted to the Council, the Authority can only respond in one of two ways, it cannot refuse such a notification per se, the only options for the Local Authority is to have no objection and allow the work to proceed or to hold an objection to it, with the only recourse to serve a TPO (Tree Preservation Order), in this instance the Council objects to the loss of this tree and has served a TPO. This is in line with S211 of the Town and Country Planning act 1990 (as amended 2012).

Grounds of objection.

Within your objection dated 9th December 2022, your reasons for objecting to the order is that the tree has 'structural deformities and decay' and that its removal is now the only appropriate recourse.

Trees Officers comments to Objection.

The Beech is a substantial tree in both size and age and is considered veteran and/or ancient due to both the size, the substantial age and the associated features of the tree.

The Council are not contesting that the tree has structural deformities or decay, for a tree considered Veteran or Ancient then it is entirely expected that both of these features are present and forms part of what defines a veteran or ancient tree and it is almost a certainty

that trees of significant age will have both decay and defects. What the Council is contesting is whether the tree remains in a safe and practicable fashion. We would not wish to retain a tree that could no longer be considered safe, but adversely would not want to see trees of historical and ecological importance removed without significant justification.

The Beech is a substantial tree of both size and history and most likely pre-dates the current property, aptly named 'Beech Cottage' in recognition of the tree, one would assume. A report from K Gifford Arboricultural Consultancy was submitted as part of a previous S211 notice in 2021 with a recommendation of a crown reduction but did not recommend the trees removal, the Council did not object to this proposal and a crown reduction was carried out as per the original specification from K Gifford.

The tree shows good signs of vitality and has responded well to the previous reduction work carried out under the previous S211 notification, our ref: 21/0011. This is recognised in the submitted Writtle report.

When the latest S211 notice was received the information provided did not include any further specific diagnostic information which adequately quantified all aspects relating to the condition of the tree, following my site visit and inspection it was not apparent from ground level that the tree was in a condition that warranted its removal and we served a TPO (TPO/11/22) to ensure its retention and allow enough time to provide further diagnostic information in order to provide the evidence for the trees removal, if indeed the case.

Subsequent to the TPO being served, Writtle Arboricultural Consultancy, carried out further diagnostic testing and the report from them provided by yourselves in support of the objection to the TPO.

It should be noted that the report results from Writtle is broadly reflective of the single PICUS test completed by K Gifford on 2021 for which the reduction was agreed.

It appears that the trees condition has not significantly changed since the previous testing and the crown reduction will have significantly increased the safety factor of the tree and is in line with arboricultural standards as a means of reducing structural weakness's. The reduction carried out equated to near 30% of the overall crown volume of the tree, effectively reducing said risk and creating a tree with a smaller more compact canopy and reducing the overall sail effect.

Although the tree does have decay/dysfunction the report does not corroborate the view that the tree now needs to be removed or the decay so extensive that it poses a significant risk to future occupiers of the property.

The conclusion to the report is that the tree is of moderate risk and is only slightly elevated due to its size, age and condition, but no tree can ever be considered 'inherently safe' it should also be noted that Church Road is a relatively quiet back road with limited traffic either pedestrian or vehicular which reduces the risk posed to nearby residents and road users.

The report does not include recommendations as to management, which is unusual for a professional report, however, there seems scope within the tree to carry out moderate further selective reduction work in the future and allow the management of the canopy in future years, to maintain the tree in its height and spread, it is also advised that the tree is monitored annually to ensure that the condition remains in a safe and practicable fashion.

The Council retains the view that following the reduction work, that this would have increased the overall safety factor of the tree and the detailed investigation within the Writtle report results show, that the tree does not pose a significantly elevated risk of failure, the report does not convince me that the tree now needs to be removed and with careful management can be safely retained.

If the above has overcome your reasons for objection please do let me know and we will confirm the Tree Preservation Order as served, if you wish to maintain your objection please let me know in writing, the proposed confirmation of the TPO will be presented to elected members to decide at the next available meeting.

Please confirm in writing within the next 10 days as to whether you wish or do not wish to withdraw your objection.

Please let me know if you have any questions regarding this matter.

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