TREE PRESERVATION ORDER APPLICATION

Recommendation: Refuse

Application: PL/2023/07284 – 4 Bishops Drive, Harnham, Wilts, SP2 8NZ
Fell Hornbeam (Beech) and reduce Yew by 50%

Location: The trees are located in the rear garden of the above address, to the southeast of the dwelling.

Site History: The trees are protected by Salisbury TPO 80, which was made in March 1987. The order was confirmed, without modification, on 28th April 1987.

The trees are included within the area designation and would have been present at the time the order was made.

Several applications have been submitted to carry out tree work on, or adjacent to, the site in recent years. The relevant applications are detailed below:

2017 – 17/04642/TPO – reduce Yew by 50%

2018 – 18/04017/TPO – reduce 2 x Yews (in neighbouring garden at 1 Bishops Drive) by 20%

2019 – 19/09770/TPO – reduce Beech by 20% and fell 2 x Sycamore

2021 – 21/01196/TPO – fell Western Red Cedar and deadwood 2 x Pines

Assessment: The trees appear to be in good health, and although they are not particularly visible, individually, from Old Blandford Road, they do supplement the trees on the council owned open space to the east of the site, and reinforce the screening provided by the tree belt as a whole.

The application incorrectly identified the Hornbeam as a Beech, which has now been amended. The upper canopy of the tree is straggly because it originally formed around adjacent trees, which have since been removed. However, it still provides depth and density to the screening. A sympathetic reduction of the upper canopy could be beneficial in improving the shape of the tree, without detracting from the lower level screening it provides. This could be considered subject to the provision of a suitably worded application.

The Yew tree has been reduced by 50% within the last 6 years. The tree has tolerated the reduction and is regenerating well, however, it is important that its given time to recover between bouts of pruning. To reduce it again now, by a further 50%, would make it significantly smaller than after the first reduction, which would be potentially detrimental to its wellbeing. This tree is considered important because it provides lower level screening during the winter months when the adjacent deciduous trees are not in leaf.

The applicant has submitted numerous applications to reduce or remove trees in order to create more light in his house and garden. All previous applications have been approved, sometimes not necessarily in the best interest of the trees, to help this cause. However, the applicants need for light has to be weighed up against the health and wellbeing of the trees, and the amenity value they provide.

It is considered that the further reduction or removal of trees will be detrimental to their health and amenity value and will provide very little benefit in terms of increasing light levels at the rear of the property.

The application is therefore recommended for refusal.

Representations: No representations have been received.

Officer: Shane Verrion

Date of Decision: 20th October 2023