TREE PRESERVATION ORDER APPLICATION

Recommendation: Refuse

Application: PL/2023/07304 – Yew tree at 1 Bishops Drive, Harnham, Wiltshire, SP2 8NZ
The application has been submitted by the owner of 4 Bishops Drive, whose garden backs on to the rear garden of 1 Bishops Drive.
The application originally requested to prune back overhanging branches but has since been amended to Reduce Yew tree as per annotated photograph.

Location: The tree is located in the rear garden of 1 Bishops Drive, to the northeast of the dwelling.

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

The tree is 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 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 tree appears to be in good health and is readily visible from Old Blandford Road.

The tree is one of many which provide a visual screen of the properties in Bishops Drive, when viewed from Blandford Road. The belt of trees is an attractive feature which enhance the character of the area.

The Yew tree has already been significantly reduced within the last 5 years. The tree has tolerated the reduction and is regenerating well.

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.

The reduction proposed involves cutting the canopy in a straight line, which is unsympathetic in that it does not consider appropriate pruning points, in accordance with best practice. It will also spoil the form of the tree and create a hedge like appearance. The tree has already been reduced significantly in recent years. It is important that it is now given the opportunity to regrow and recover its natural form.

The benefit to be gained by the proposal, in terms of increased light to the house and garden of number 4, is likely to be minimal, and is not considered to outweigh the negative impact on the tree's amenity value, which would be caused by the proposed reduction.

The application is therefore recommended for refusal.

Representations: No representations have been received.

Officer: Shane Verrion

Date of Decision: 25th October 2023