



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 August 2008.

by **Jim Unwin** BSCFor MICFor FArborA CEnv.

an Arboricultural Inspector appointed by the Secretary
of State for Communities and Local Government

The Planning Inspectorate
4/09 Kite Wing
Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Temple Quay
Bristol BS1 6PN
☎ 0117 372 6372
e-mail: enquiries@planning-inspectorate.gsi.gov.uk

Date:

- 6 JAN 2009

Appeal Ref: APP/TPO/GO/59

No 8 Champion Way, Bewdley, Worcestershire, DY12 1HW.

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant consent to undertake work to two lime trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order.
- The appeal is made by Mrs C Lewis against the decision of Wyre Forest District Council.
- The application Ref: 08/0061/TREE, dated 28 January 2008, was refused by notice dated 17 March 2008.
- The work proposed is pollarding of two lime trees within A1 of the TPO.
- The relevant Tree Preservation Order (TPO) is the *County of Worcester (Bewdley No 2) Tree Preservation Order*, which was confirmed on 7 September 1966.

Decision

1. I dismiss the appeal to pollard two lime trees.

Preliminary Matters

2. The site visit was attended by a representative of Wyre Forest District Council and two neighbours representing the appellant. One of the neighbours left halfway through the site visit.

Main Issues

3. I consider the main issues in this appeal are:
 - whether the reasons given for pollarding the limes are sufficient to justify that course of action;
 - the impact of pollarding on the health of the appeal trees; and
 - the impact the proposals would have on the appearance of the appeal trees, and the character of the locality.

Reasons

Whether the reasons given for pollarding the limes are sufficient to justify that course of action.

4. Most species of lime tree, including small-leaved lime *Tilia cordata*, large-leaved lime *T. platyphyllos* and common lime *T. x europea*, are host to aphids which suck sap from leaves, and excrete sugary 'honeydew'. This material is sugary water which drops onto surfaces under a tree, and can also be blown some metres away from a tree. This material is typically colonised by sooty moulds which discolours the affected surfaces including paths and glazing. Once infected, honeydew sets in a hard dirty deposit.
5. The appeal trees are one of the species of lime attractive to honeydew. The rear garden of No 8 Campion Way is medium-sized at about 15m wide by up to 17m long. The appeal trees stand 5.5m apart in the rear (north-east) third of the garden, but their crowns extend south west to within 4-4.5m of the single-storey rear of the house. Therefore, I fully appreciate that honeydew will fall, or be blown, over most of the rear garden, including the small greenhouse, herbaceous and vegetable beds, and paved paths. I am sympathetic to the high vulnerability of No 8's rear garden to honeydew deposition. However, about half the rear garden is gravel, which would not be adversely affected by honeydew.
6. If the appeal limes were pollarded, honeydew deposition would be significantly reduced, but only for a few years until the appeal trees grew new crowns. Even if the appeal limes were pollarded, adjacent limes in neighbouring gardens located about 8m east, 6m west, and 1-2m north east of No 8's garden fence would still deposit some honeydew onto some of No 8's rear garden.
7. For the reasons discussed above, I consider that pollarding the appeal limes would be a drastic measure to reduce honeydew deposition in No 8's rear garden.

The impact of pollarding on the health of the appeal trees.

8. The appeal trees are mature, with stem diameters of 50cm and 51cm measured at 1.5m height, heights of about 15m, and crown radial spreads of 4m to 6.7m. Both trees have forks at 3-4m height, and upper stems divide again higher up. However, no evidence has been presented to the appeal, nor did I see any at the site visit, to suggest the appeal trees have been heavily pruned previously. To pollard trees which have never been pollarded, or to resume pollarding after a long lapse, is not good arboricultural practice, for two reasons.
9. On the appeal trees, pollarding would result in large end-grain pruning wounds, with exposed heartwood. The trees would have no way of defending this exposed heartwood from infection by decay fungi (either by chemical changes which can only happen in active sapwood, or by occluding the wound with new woody growth). New shoots would develop from adventitious buds in cambium around these cut ends, but in time their anchorage would be weakened as the parent stems decayed.

10. Severe pruning could also lead to depletion of the appeal trees' energy reserves. Therefore I consider there is a significant risk that pollarding would reduce the trees' ability to resist attack by pathogenic fungi, and infection by decay fungi.
11. I place great weight on the deleterious impact on health which could result from pollarding the appeal limes.

The impact the proposals would have on the appearance of the appeal trees, and the character of the locality.

Individual visual amenity

12. The appeal trees have dense and broad crowns, and together form a combined canopy about 18m in a north-west to south-easterly direction, and about 10m wide in a south-west to north-easterly direction. They are located on the eastern edge of a belt of limes.
13. The appeal limes grow together, and also grow with other trees on three sides because they are located on the inner edge of a long belt of similar trees (mostly limes) which grew along Warstone House's drive. The two appeal trees are not prominently seen from any location except from within the rear gardens of Nos 6, 8 & 10 Champion Way. Their upper parts are seen from Champion Way, and from Habberley Road. Most of the eastern tree is seen from one place along Habberley Road. Therefore, as a pair, the appeal trees do not have high visual prominence.

Character of the locality

14. However, the large group of trees on the eastern end of the Warstone House development, comprising the lime belt along the old drive, and lime and pine copse running along the Trimpley Road frontage, is the dominant local arboreal feature, providing very significant amenity value to the north-eastern part of Bewdley. Its amenity value is visual, and also cultural, because the feature is a relic of the former Warstone House parkland. This group provides Champion Way and Anton Close residential development with a very significant landscape feature, and instant maturity to an otherwise brand-new residential development.

Impact of pollarding

15. A particularly attractive feature of this group of limes and pines in the Warstone House development is the relatively-natural growth habit of almost all of its trees, with a minimum of recent pruning. The heaviest pruning seen at my site inspection of the lime and pine group was crown lifting and crown thinning.
16. The appeal trees are edge trees within this large group dominated by limes. I consider that pollarding the appeal trees, by removing all major limbs down to a tall trunk with stubs, would cause significant erosion of the southern edge of the group. It would significantly reduce the overall integrity of the group, and therefore its amenity value.

Conclusions

17. I consider the proposed pollarding of the two appeal limes hard to justify on the solitary ground presented to this appeal.
18. The proposed pollarding of the two lime trees to end honeydew deposition in No 8's rear garden would not sufficiently justify the proposed works.
19. Pollarding the two appeal limes would adversely impact the landscape character of the Warstone House development, and the visual amenity of the tree belt behind Campion Way.
20. For these reasons I dismiss the appeal.

Jim Unwin

Arboricultural Inspector.