

Report to Area Plans Sub-Committee 'B'

Date of meeting: 3 May 2005.

**Subject: Confirmation Of Tree Preservation Order EPF/24/04
at 5 Coopersale Common, Coopersale, Epping.**



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Democratic Service Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992 – 56 4470).

Recommendations:

That Tree Preservation Order EPF/24/04 be confirmed.

Background:

1. Tree Preservation Order EPF/24/04 was made to protect 4 trees at 5 Coopersale Common, Coopersale, Epping. The trees protected are: T1 Blue Atlas cedar; T2 Cherry; T3 Birch; and T4 Plum.
2. The Tree Preservation Order was made as a result of a planning application to develop this plot that placed these trees under threat. They are considered important landscape features both as a group and as healthy individuals at a prominent corner within the village streetscene. They contribute greatly to greening the area and provide interesting seasonal colour.

Objection to the Tree Preservation Order:

3. An objection to the Order has been made by the owners of the site. The grounds of the objection are as follows:
 - (a) T1 is not native to Britain and therefore should not be considered as a character element of an English country village;
 - (b) the trees T2, 3 & 4 are said to be sporadic and therefore do not create any continuous enclosure, which would generate character value;
 - (c) trees T2, 3 & 4 are said to be very young and immature and hence are not large enough to offer a framing effect to the street scene and therefore offer little visual interest in this way;
 - (d) it is asserted that the plum (T4) and cherry tree (T3) have been grown in the past for fruit and have not been sufficiently maintained. Thus, they have grown to considerable proportions to which they would not normally exist. These are simple fruit trees, of no importance, not inspiring and characterful oaks or horse chestnuts;
 - (e) T2,3 &4 are garden trees, which do not create any character value to warrant a TPO;
 - (f) they have been grown for the amenity of 5 Coopersale Common and not for the benefit of the village; and
 - (g) their loss would have little impact on the local environment and the public amenity, due to their insignificance in character terms and the wooded character of the locality.

Response of the Head of Planning and Economic Development:

4. Cedars have become established and widely enjoyed as outstanding landmark trees in prominent positions within British country villages for many centuries. This specimen is of good form, interesting colour and has the potential to develop into a significant landscape feature. Being non-native in no way detracts from the amenity value of this tree.
5. The growing habits of T2, cherry and T4, plum are spreading in nature. They are both important screening trees, which significantly enclose the site. Moreover, the mixed planting produces interest and character directly contrary to the assertion raised in the objection.
6. T2,3 and 4 are not immature and are of a reasonable mature size offering both framing and visual amenity to the street scene at this prominent corner plot.
7. Whether or not these trees have been grown and managed for fruit is secondary to their current amenity value. Having asserted previously that these trees are immature and of little visual significance it appears contradictory to claim that they have grown to 'considerable proportions'. Simple fruit trees can display considerable character and can often be inspiring. Both trees are typical of such a village setting and are therefore of high amenity value and important in this context.
8. In the case of the birch, in particular, such a garden tree has ample character to warrant protection.
9. The fact that T2,3 and 4 are clearly visible from the main thoroughfare makes them an important village landscape feature, irrespective of whether or not they were planted with this intention. Such thoughtful and attractive garden planting benefits the local environment and public.
10. The loss of these trees would have a significant impact on this area because the woodland referred to is separated from this plot by some distance and is of a different forest character.

Conclusions:

11. All points made in the objection have been addressed. The trees protected by this order are healthy and attractive specimens, forming a highly visible established public amenity. Landscaping policy requires that adequate provision be made for the retention of trees in these situations. These trees are under threat from the planning proposal and therefore deserve protection. Confirmation of the order is recommended.