

Report to Area Plans Sub-Committee West



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Date of meeting: 4 June 2014

**Subject: CONFIRMATION OF TREE PRESERVATION ORDER
TPO/EPF/31/13 – Picks Farm, Sewardstone Road, Chingford**

**Officer contact for further information: Melinda Barham (Ext 4120)
Democratic Services: Rebecca Perrin**

Recommendation(s):

That tree preservation order TPO/EPF/31/13 is confirmed without modification.

Background

1. This Tree Preservation Order was made following an outline planning application for the demolition of Picks Farm and the adjacent Mulberry House to allow for the construction of a school, 308 dwellings, a village hall and a public meadow with two lakes. No tree survey was submitted with the application, however a topographical survey identified the trees on the two sites. The indicative layout drawings did not show which trees were to be retained and which were to be removed, they were therefore all considered to be under threat of being felled for development purposes. Two separate Tree Preservation Orders were made, one on Picks Farm and one on Mulberry House. Objections have been received to both orders and a separate report on this agenda deals with the objection on Mulberry House.

2. This order on Picks Farm protects a number of individual trees throughout the farm complex and surrounding farm land.

3. The outline planning application (EPF/2097/13) is yet to be determined.

Objections / Representations

4. The owner of the property raised an objection to the order for the following reasons;

a) T1 and T2 are located adjacent to the farm house which has previously had a history of subsidence due to tree roots. The trees were pollarded at the time to prevent further damage, but it may become necessary to remove them in future should the damage become worse.

b) T6 is wrongly plotted and is on the adjoining property, Pick Cottage.

c) T7 and T8 are already dying back and prior to the making of this order he had been considering removing them for health and safety reasons.

d) the other remaining trees may require dead wooding in the future.

The Director of Planning and Economic Development comments

5. These trees are considered to be under a direct threat of being felled as a result of the planning application. The trees selected for inclusion in the order are the significant specimens throughout the site. The importance of the trees is not contested by the owner. Taking each of the objections in turn;

a) T1 and T2 are a pair of lime trees to the front right hand side of the farm house. The owner advises that there were originally three limes here, but one closest to the property was removed as a result of subsidence. The owner also advises that the insurance company have recommended that these trees are retained as pollards, although no correspondence has been provided to support these comments. The trees are already in a cycle of regular pollarding; as such any application to repollard to previous pruning points is likely to receive consent. In terms of any future need to fell the trees due to subsidence, this can be dealt with as an application supported by evidence demonstrating that the trees are implicated.

b) The oak (T6) stands on a field boundary of the two properties. The location of the tree is shown on the plan as a circle. The circle is not intended to show the crown spread of the tree, nor does it imply that the stem of the tree falls at the centre of the circle. The guidance is that the circle must give a clear indication of the position of the tree. In this instance the stem of the tree does fall within the circle, and given that there are no other trees within the immediate vicinity for there to be any confusion as to what it is intended to be protected, the plotting of this tree is considered correct.

c) T7 and T8 are both veteran oaks. One of the characteristics of veteran oaks is that they do die back within the crown, but that the large sized deadwood often remains safely attached for many years. An inspection of the trees has not highlighted any significant defects which would warrant the removal of these trees for health and safety reasons – particularly given that the trees are situated within a paddock for horse grazing. However, it is acknowledged that some dead wooding may be appropriate.

d) the dead wooding of trees is exempt the requirement for formal permission, and therefore should not impact on whether these trees are protected or not.

Conclusion

6. This order was made as a result of a planning application where the trees were considered under threat of being removed to allow for a large scale development on the land. The objections to the order can all be managed either via applications to undertake work to the trees or are exempt the requirement for an application. In confirming the order it will ensure that careful consideration is given prior to any tree works being undertaken and that such works are undertaken for good arboricultural reasons. It is therefore recommended that the order is confirmed without modification.