

5 TREE PRESERVATION ORDER 507 AT UN-ADOPTED OPEN SPACE TO THE REAR OF DORCHESTER WAY, BELMONT

Report By: Head of Planning Services

Wards Affected

Belmont Ward

1 Purpose

- 1.1 To consider the representations made in relation to a Tree Preservation Order on oak trees to the rear of Dorchester Way, Belmont, Hereford, and to determine whether to confirm the Order.

2 Order Description and Details

- 2.1 County of Herefordshire Tree Preservation Order 507 (Un-adopted Open Space to the rear of Dorchester Way, Belmont, Herefordshire) concerns one individual oak tree (T1) and a group of four oak trees (G1). The trees are situated along the northern boundary of open space awaiting adoption by Herefordshire Council on the south side and to the rear of properties along Dorchester Way, Belmont. The trees within the order were shown as retained within the most recent planning application for the site as a whole.

3 Policies

- 3.1 South Herefordshire District Local Plan trees and management Policy C.17 states: -
"PARTICULARLY WITHIN SETTLEMENTS AND WHERE PROPOSALS FOR DEVELOPMENT ARE ADVANCED, THE COUNCIL WILL SUPPORT THE INCREASE AND PROTECTION OF THE STOCK OF TREES IN THE PLAN AREA IN THE INTERESTS OF AMENITY BY:
(i) CONTINUING TO SERVE TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS, IN APPROPRIATE CIRCUMSTANCES, WHERE THERE IS A DANGER TO THE AMENITY OF THE AREA BY THE LOSS OF TREES:
(ii)"

4 Representations

- 4.1 The TPO was placed on the trees following representations made by Belmont Rural Parish Council.
- 4.2 A letter of support for the TPO has been received from C. Bird of 105 Dorchester Way.
- 4.3 One letter of objection has been received, from Mr. and Mrs. R. Harris of 103 Dorchester Way who have the group of oak trees sited a few metres from their southern boundary. The objection is on the grounds that one of the trees is double trunked and they consider this is possibly unsafe and sways badly in bad weather moving 6-8 ft. The objector indicates "*I have had two Tree surgeons have a look at*

the trees to give me their opinion on whether they are safe or not. Obviously they could only give an opinion as I believe they are not insured to give me a written report but basically they have both informed me that there is a possible crack appearing in the base of one of the trunks with possible decay". There was no objection to the protection of the remaining trees within the group or the individual oak tree.

5 Officer Appraisal

- 5.1 Although no representations question the amenity value of the trees, Members are advised that they were assessed using the tree evaluation rating being utilised by the Council. The individual oak tree scored 20 points and the group of oaks scored 19. The benchmark rating for making a TPO is 15, and the individual tree and group of trees scored well in most categories on the rating form.
- 5.2 Following receipt of the representations, Herefordshire Council's Arboricultural advisers visited the trees once again and they agree that the tree, whose health is questioned, is in good to fair condition and is not of questionable structural stability. With regard to the alleged cracking none was visible to your officers who tested the tree for soundness and structural weaknesses. None were apparent on the day of inspection.
- 5.3 Trees that have low branch unions sometimes crack between the two stems as a result of excessive wind loading that forces the two stems apart. Trees that have the twin stems very close to each other in a 'V' shape can compress and trap bark between the stems creating a potential weak spot. Defective trees such as these are at greater risk of breaking in extreme weather conditions, compared to trees that have a more open 'U' shaped union.
- 5.3 The tree in question has a strong 'U' shaped union rather than a tight 'V' shaped union. No other characteristics that might indicate a possible defect were noted. Thinning the tree by 10-15% would reduce the trees sail area to prevailing wind and thus the risk of future problems/concerns. Permission for such works carried out to the appropriate British Standard would not be withheld should an application be made.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT:

- (a) Tree Preservation Order no. 507 be confirmed without modification.**