

**TREE PRESERVATION ORDER 523, CARFAX HOUSE,
AYLESTONE HILL, HEREFORD****Report By: Head of Planning Services****Wards Affected**

Aylestone

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To consider the representations made in relation to the making of a provisional Tree Preservation Order upon trees in the grounds of Carfax House, Aylestone Hill, Hereford, and determine whether to confirm the order.

2. Order Description and Details

- 2.1 This Order concerns 4 individual trees and 5 groups of various species of trees within the grounds of Carfax House. They are as follows:
T1 – Atlas cedar
T2 – Giant redwood
T3 – Yew
T4 – Cedar
G1 – Honey Locust, Silver Birch, Yew
G2 – 1 Atlas Cedar, 1 Holm Oak, 4 Yews, 2 Irish Yews, 3 Incense Cedars, 1 Flowering Cherry, 1 Oak, 1 Beech, 1 Spruce, 1 Douglas Fir, 2 Variegated Holly, 1 Laburnum, 1 Ginkgo, 2 Cotinus Coggia, 1 Cedar.
G3 – 1 Ash, 1 Holly, 1 Sycamore
G4 – 2 Ash, 7 Hawthorns
G5 – 1 Sweet Chestnut, 2 Purple Crabs, 1 Variegated Holly, 1 Chinese Thuja, 1 Beech.
- 2.2 The Order was made on 16th August, 2005
- 2.3 The Council's tree amenity valuation rating scored these individual trees and groups with values between 15 and 20 (the benchmark rating for inclusion within a TPO is 15). Their particular characteristics included – their maturity, form, prominent position in a well frequented Conservation Area and their contribution to the overall composition of Aylestone Hill.
- 2.4 The importance of tree planting in this area is enhanced by the fact that Carfax house is situated near the busy roundabouts where Venn's Lane and Folly Lane meet Aylestone Hill. Aylestone Hill is a busy main road that connects Hereford city centre, via Commercial Road, to the A465 (Bromyard, Worcester and Roman Road). The site is next to Hereford 6th Form college, and opposite both Wye Valley Nuffield Hospital and the large, extensively tree covered public open space of the Church Hill Gardens. The site is located within Aylestone Hill Conservation Area along its eastern boundary.

- 2.5 The grounds are thought to have been laid out as domestic gardens when Carfax House was built. Many of the larger trees appear to date back to that period, although there are also specimens in middle age as well as several that have been planted over the last five years. Although the site is visually dominated by the three oldest and largest trees (two Atlas Cedars and a Giant Redwood) there is quite a good age distribution overall. The grounds also contain a good variety of species providing a range of tree size, form and texture. The grounds appear to have been well managed and the great majority of trees are in good condition.
- 2.6 The site is in the northern part of the city at an elevated position and its largest trees and collectively some of the smaller trees are notable over a wide area beyond the confines of the site. The mature treescape of Carfax House visually links with other prominently treed features such as the Churchill gardens to the west, Wye Valley Nuffield Hospital to the north, Aylestone Hill school, the lime avenue on Aylestone Hill and the Aylestone Hill Conservation Area in general.
- 2.7 This prominent site was the subject of a planning application CE05/2356/F to demolish the existing buildings and redevelop the site for residential development, retaining many of the trees. The application was refused on 21st September, 2005 because Members considered that Carfax House and cottage had intrinsic architectural and historic interest and made a prominent and positive contribution to the Aylestone Hill Conservation Area.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Council was alerted to the possible threat to the trees by proposed development works. The Order was made under emergency procedures in accordance with section 198 of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act.

4. Policies

- 4.1 City of Hereford Local Plan states:-

“Policy CON21

The City Council will use its statutory powers to ensure that important elements in townscape and landscape including trees and hedgerows are protected and maintained, and will resist the unnecessary felling of trees”

5. Representations

- 5.1 A letter of objection has been received from Mr. T. Evans of IE Developments Ltd. who has submitted an application to develop the site. The objection relates only to three trees within G5. They comprise a variegated Holly, a Chinese Thuja and a Beech. The grounds of objection are that they are all poor specimens with a limited life expectancy and that their screening value will be lost when the portakabins that they are partially screening are removed in the near future.

6. Officer Appraisal

- 6.1 The procedure for making a Tree Preservation Order is one where early action can be taken to provide protection followed by a period for objection and more detailed consideration of the merits of each tree. Following the receipt of this objection, a

further site inspection was made in relation to the three trees to which objection has been made.

- 6.2 The original appraisal had noted that these three trees were of low retention status but were included initially to comprehensively protect all the trees on the site. They could be replaced with more suitable species within a landscaping scheme for the site in association with an acceptable development scheme. The three individual trees are of poor form and, being co-dependant upon each other, cannot be removed independently. As a group they do not significantly contribute to the amenity of the Conservation Area. The remaining trees in the group are in separate ownership and there has been no objection to including them in the TPO. The beech tree might have had the potential to develop into a notable tree but this specimen is suppressed by the other trees and will never become a good specimen. Furthermore, the holly and the thuja are shorter lived and when they die the beech will also have to be removed.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Tree Preservation Order no.523 at Carfax House, Aylestone Hill, Hereford be confirmed with the following modification:

- a) Remove reference to 1 variegated Holly, 1 Chinese Thuja and 1 Beech tree in group G5.**