



PLANNING REF: 3875/22/TPO

DESCRIPTION: T71: Ash - Fell leaving 1.5 metres of stem base due to potential habitat, T75.1: Ash - Removal of stems on All sides and retain coppice stool due to overhead cables to East within striking distance, T76: Sycamore - Crown lift by 3 metres on North & West side removing secondary branches only, branches to be no more than 100mm in diameter at final pruning points, W78 (Hazel, Wild Cherry, Common Oak, Ash, Elm, Walnut, Sweet Chestnut, Field Maple, Hornbeam & Holly) – Coppice Hazel, Thin group of trees by 20% removing dying and squirrel damaged ash tree and/ or other minor stems, Coppice Holly to ground level from group level, T88: Ash - Remove & Retain for safety management, W89: Hawthorn – Fell all Ash, including dead trees, squirrel damage throughout group, G90: Ash (3 trees & 6 stems) – Remove tree due to OH cables within crown South Crown, T76: Sycamore - Crown lift by 3 metres on North & West side removing secondary branches only, branches to be no more than 100mm in diameter at final pruning points and W91: Hazel, Wild Cherry, Common Oak, Ash, Elm, Walnut, Sweet Chestnut, Field Maple, Hornbeam & Holly - Coppice hazel to open up light levels to ground, Thin group by 20% removing dying and squirrel damaged ash trees and / or other minor stems (less than 75mm in diameter) where needed to provide even cover and favour larger trees in group.

ADDRESS: Rectory Barn, East Portlemouth, TQ8 8PA

LETTER OF OBJECTION FROM THE SOUTH HAMS SOCIETY

The South Hams Society interest

For the last 60 years, the South Hams Society has been stimulating public interest and care for the beauty, history and character of the South Hams. We encourage high standards of planning and architecture that respect the character of the area. We aim to secure the protection and improvement of the landscape, features of historic interest and public amenity and to promote the conservation of the South Hams as a living, working environment. We take the South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty very seriously and work hard to increase people's knowledge and appreciation of our precious environment. We support the right development - in the right places - and oppose inappropriate development.

Our Objection

With any application to fell protected trees, a balancing exercise needs to be undertaken.

The essential need for the works applied for must be weighed against the resultant loss to the amenity of the area.

In this case the extent of the proposed felling, thinning and coppicing will be detrimental to the character and appearance of the area and, for this reason, the South Hams Society wishes to object to this application.

The Society recognises that the applicant has a responsibility of managing ash trees that might pose a danger to the public, and the appointed agent Aspect Tree Consultancy has identified a number of trees which, in their opinion, require felling in order to comply with this responsibility.

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Were the Council Tree Officer to approve the removal of these ash trees, the Society would wish to see appropriate succession replanting conditioned.

The Aspect Tree Consultancy Arboricultural Survey and Tree Risk Assessment Report states:

‘where possible retention of ash trees will be advised, in accordance with Forestry Commission advice, in the hope that resistant trees will develop’.

This statement conflicts with the submitted information that proposes the removal of all ash trees within Tree Groups W 78, W 89 & W 91.

Forestry Commission Guidance is clear that:

‘some ash trees may have genetic tolerance to ash dieback, meaning they may survive and reproduce to create the next generation of ash trees. Therefore, it is important to retain ash trees where they stand out as being healthier than those around them and it is safe to do so. Retaining a portion of dead, dying or felled trees will provide dead wood habitat and be beneficial for biodiversity’.

Consequently the Society is of the opinion that the proposed removal of all ash trees within the three Tree Groups is excessive and contrary to the Forestry Commission Guidance.

We acknowledge that some of the trees with advanced ash dieback will need to be removed on public safety grounds but the trees that present negligible risk should be retained. These trees may not be considered exceptional specimens but their combined attributes are beneficial to both wildlife and the public visual amenity that the woodland provides in this Sylvan location.

The application also proposes the removal of squirrel damaged trees.

These trees are protected by a Woodland Order and, within a woodland setting, defects caused by squirrels such as torn bark and cavities are seen as niche ecological attributes to be retained while, ordinarily, trees would be felled in a different setting.

For more than 30 years British Forestry Commission research has revealed the statistically low impact of squirrels on tree health and has shown that, in non commercial woodlands, the incidental damage caused by squirrels is beneficial ecologically. The damaged places become sites of development for many fungi and invertebrates that comprise the main food source for many species of wild birds.

More pertinently, the Arboricultural Assessment supplied by Aspect Tree Consultancy does not specifically quantify the extent and severity of squirrel damage that exists within the woodland.

The Society is of the belief that in order to fulfil the provisions and objectives of the Woodland Order, and maintain the ecological benefits as set out in the FC research, only those trees with the severest damage and resulting poor structure should be considered for removal. Thinning as proposed would reduce the amenity value of the woodland, adversely impacting the tree cover and Sylvan nature of the area.

A key factor in maintaining the integrity and purpose of the Woodland Order is the essential requirement of natural regeneration and the Society believes that the tree management proposals within the application fail to meet this requirement.

The South Hams Society respectfully request that the application is refused.

For and on behalf of the South Hams Society.

Richard Howell,
Chairman.

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