

48/2003/066T

MR N R GIBBONS

APPLICATION TO FELL TWO ASH TREES INCLUDED IN TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH (WEST MONKTON NO. 2) TREE PRESERVATION ORDER (2003) AT 6 THORNASH CLOSE, MONKTON HEATHFIELD, AT THE REAR OF THE PROPERTY ON THE BOUNDARY (TD945)

2554/2686 FELLING OF TREE(S) COVERED BY TREE PRESERVATION ORDER

PROPOSAL

The application proposes to fell two out of a group of three ash trees growing on the boundary between 6 Thornash Close and the block of flats Nos 9- 11 School Road, Monkton Heathfield. The trees are part of an old hedgerow. The trees cast considerable shade on to the garden at 6 Thornash Close and the applicant wishes to allow more light into the garden.

The trees were protected with a Tree Preservation Order earlier this year following local concern that they were likely to be felled. An appeal was made against the order but this was rejected by members. Mr. Gibbons made a recent application to reduce the crowns of the trees in order to gain more light, but was advised by officers, following site inspection, to withdraw the application and to resubmit with a proposal to thin the group to leave the best stem. This is the current application.

CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

TWO letters of objection have been received, (one letter having four signatories) from residents of the neighbouring flats, to the felling of the trees. The objectors do not want to see the trees felled but are happy for the trees to be lopped. In a telephone conversation one objector raised concern that removal of trees would make it easier for neighbours to see into each others properties.

POLICY CONTEXT

N/A

ASSESSMENT

The trees are out grown limbs of the former hedge. The group have an upright habit, two stems have distorted trunks with very few low branches, the third stem is straight and breaks at a lower point. The trees are important and are justified in being protected because they are tall and can be seen over a wide area. The application to remove the two distorted stems will have very little effect on the amenity of the group. The height will be retained and the tree will continue to be seen from neighbouring areas. The remaining tree will benefit from the removal of the two competing stems and will expand to take up the increased light. The removal of the two stems will in the short term greatly increase the amount of light in the gardens of numbers 5 and 6 Thornash Close. In time,

as the tree grows, the problem of shade cast by the tree will return. Reducing the crown and retaining a good shape will be more possible with the single lower branching stem. In the long term the management of the very large trees in this location is difficult, however, by selecting some of the regenerating growth from the hedge, a succession of medium sized trees could be maintained on the site. Regarding the possible increase in intervisibility between neighbours, the loss of the two stems will make it easier to see between the properties in the short term but the hedge and the remaining tree should soon regenerate to block low level views.

RECOMMENDATION

Permission be GRANTED subject to the condition that that the stumps are not removed or damaged and that any regenerating growth from the stumps or other parts of the hedge is retained. In the future, stems will need to be selected to become the new hedgerow tree(s)

In preparing this report the Planning Officer has considered fully the implications and requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998.

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NOTES: