

PLANNING APPLICATION NUMBER:P12/1574

Type of approval sought	Tree Preservation Order
Ward	Sedgley
Applicant	Mr Kenneth Whittaker
Location:	22, WESTCROFT ROAD, SEDGLEY, DUDLEY, DY3 3QP
Proposal	FELL 1 PINE TREE
Recommendation Summary:	APPROVE SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

1. The tree subject to this application is an early mature pine tree that is located in the front garden of 22 Westcroft Road, Sedgley. The tree is located on the corner of Westcroft Road and Greenslade Road and is prominently visible in the street scene. It is considered that the tree provides a moderate to high amount of public amenity to the surrounding area.
2. The tree is listed as T19 in TPO 687 which was served in 2002.

PROPOSAL

3. Summary of proposals for the works as written on application form is as follows:
 - Fell 1 Pine Tree.
4. The tree has been marked on the attached plan.

HISTORY

5. There has been one previous tree preservation order application on the site.

Application No	Proposal	Decision	Date
P06/1926	Fell 1 Pine Tree	Refused	14/11/06

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

6. Four letters of support have been received from local residents. They support the application on the grounds that the needles that fall from the tree make the road and path slippery; the fallen needles block the drain; the tree is too large for its location and the tree is potentially dangerous and would cause significant damage if it were to fail.

ASSESSMENT

Tree(s) Appraisal

<i>Tree Structure</i>	Tree 1
Species	Pine
Height (m)	12
Spread (m)	8
DBH (mm)	450
Canopy Architecture	Moderate - lost leader in past now developing as multi-stem from approx 7 metres
Overall Form	Moderate
Age Class <i>Yng / EM / M / OM / V</i>	Early Mature

Structural Assessment

Trunk / Root Collar	Good	
Scaffold Limbs	Moderate - large limbs emanating from point of lost leader	
Secondary Branches	Good	
% Deadwood	3%	
Root Defects	None Evident	
Root Disturbance	None Evident	
Other		
Failure Foreseeable <i>Imm / Likely / Possible / No</i>	Whole No	Whole Possible - from re-growth point

Vigour Assessment

Vascular Defects	None evident
Foliage Defects	None Evident
Leaf Size	Good
Foliage Density	Good
Other	

Overall Assessment

Structure	Moderate
Vigour	Good
Overall Health	Moderate / Good

Other Issues

Light Obstruction	Yes
Physical Damage	None Evident
Surface Disruption	Slight lifting of adjacent block paving and tarmac foot path
Debris	Yes - needles blocking road drains

Amenity

Assessment

Visible	Yes
Prominence	High
Part of Wider Feature?	No
Characteristic of Area	No
Amenity Value	Moderate to High

Further Assessment

7. The applicant has proposed to fell the tree due to the amount of needles that fall from the tree; the damage to the adjacent hard surfaces caused by the roots of the tree; the bird mess from birds roosting in the tree and as to keep pruning the tree would require significant financial resources that the tree owner cannot afford.

8. On inspection the tree was found to be in a reasonable condition with no major defects present. However it was noted that the tree has lost its leading stem at a height of approx 7 metres in the past and the crown has now developed so that the

lateral branches below this point have started to grow vertically to assume the apical dominance.

9. Whilst at the moment there are no structural problems with this growth, it is considered that if left to grow such an arrangement of branches is potentially liable to fail. As such it is considered that in order to be retained safely the tree would need to be restricted to a height not far above what it currently stands at. Obviously, given the growth potential of this tree, this would require relatively frequent pruning.
10. The loss of the leading stem has effectively spoilt the appearance of the tree, and means that the tree must now be routinely pruned in order to keep it in a safe condition.
11. It is accepted that there will be an ongoing financial cost to the owner of the tree in order for them to retain the tree in a relatively safe condition.
12. It was noted during my initial site visit that there was a significant amount of needle debris that has fallen from the tree. This had spread beyond the tree and was considered unsightly in the area. The applicant has stated that during wets and frosty weather the needles become slippery to pedestrians walking on the pavement underneath the tree.
13. Whilst normally needle drop would not be considered sufficient grounds to fell a tree that provides a useful amount of amenity to the surrounding area, it should be noted that this needle drop was relatively excessive and is considered to have a slight detrimental impact on the amenity of the area in its own right.
14. It was noted that there were some pronounced root traces in the adjacent tarmac foot path, and some slight lifting of the adjacent block paving. Whilst this is not considered overly significant at this time, if the tree is to remain it will get works and would be likely to become a significant problem in the future.

15. It is not considered that bird mess from birds that sit in the tree is a major issue and as such it is not considered that the felling of the tree should be approved for this reason.
16. In determining whether to approve the application, the impact on the amenity of the area must be considered. Whilst it is accepted that the felling of the tree would have a detrimental impact on the amenity of the area; given the trees poor form and its need to be regularly pruned in order to be retained, it is considered that the long term amenity of the area might be better served by the felling and replacement of the tree.
17. It is considered that in this case in order to mitigate against the loss of the tree an appropriate specimen tree could be required, that would start to provide amenity to the area almost immediately by virtue of autumn colour or conspicuous flowers or fruit.
18. Overall, and on balance it is considered that, due to the trees impaired form, and the ongoing pruning that will inevitably have to be undertaken to the tree, it is considered that the felling of the tree is just about justified, and as such it is recommended that the application is approved.

CONCLUSION

19. The pine tree subject to this application has lost its leading shoot a number of years ago. This has resulted in a tree with impaired form that will need regular pruning in the future in order to keep it in a relatively safe condition.
20. It was noted that the tree drops a significant amount of debris that builds up in the guttering of the street and presents an unsightly appearance in the street scene.
21. Overall, and on balance it is considered that, due to the trees impaired form, and the ongoing pruning that will inevitably have to be undertaken to the tree, it is considered that the felling and appropriate replacement of the tree is just about justified, and as such it is recommended that the application is approved.

RECOMMENDATION

22. It is recommended that application is approved subject to the stated conditions.

Reason for Approval

It is considered that the long term amenity of the area would be best served by the felling and replacement of the tree.

Conditions and/or reasons:

1. The tree works subject of this consent shall be carried out in accordance with British Standard BS 3998:2010 'Recommendations for Tree Work'.
2. A replacement *Pyrus calleryana* 'Chanticleer' tree shall be planted between the beginning of November and the end of March, within 1 year of felling (and replanted if necessary) and maintained until satisfactorily established. The size of the tree at planting shall be 14-16 cms girth (as measured at 1 metres above ground) and the location of the replacement tree shall be within 2 metres to the location of the pine tree subject to this order. The replacement tree shall be planted in accordance with the above details unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

