

PLANNING APPLICATION NUMBER:P07/0401

Type of approval sought	Full Planning Permission
Ward	Belle Vale
Applicant	Mr M. Wilkins
Location:	16, LINNET CLOSE, HALESOWEN, B62 8TW
Proposal	FELL 9 SYCAMORE TREES
Recommendation Summary:	REFUSE

TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NO: D139 (1983) – W1

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

1. The trees subject to this application are a group of nine sycamore trees that are located on the embankment of a disused railway the borders the property of 16 Linnet Close.
2. The property forms part of a small residential estate that was built on the site of a previous iron foundry. The trees are growing on the north-eastern side of the railway, and are elevated from the ground level of the house.
3. The embankment has a number of other trees along its length, that range from small scrubby growth of elderberry, goat willow and hawthorn; to larger ash and sycamore trees.

PROPOSAL

4. Summary of proposals for the works as written on application form is as follows:
 - Fell 9 Sycamore trees.
5. The trees have been marked on the attached plan.

HISTORY

6. There has been one previous Tree Preservation Order application on this site.

<i>Site History</i>		
Application No	94/50227	16/02/94
Proposal	Fell and replacement of 6 sycamore trees	Withdrawn

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

7. No public representations have been received.

ASSESSMENT

Tree(s) Appraisal

Criteria	Trees 1 - 9
TPO No	W1
Species	Sycamore
Height	13m
Spread	7m
Diameter	400mm
Form	Moderate – Tightly grouped. Form a whole canopy
Vigour	Good
Approx Age	Mature
Pests / Diseases	None evident.
Canopy	Moderate – 9 trees from 1 canopy
% Deadwood	1%
Cavities	None evident
Bark	Good
Roots	Good
Overall Health	Moderate
Visibility	Moderate
Amenity Value	Moderate / High

Further Assessment

8. The trees subject to this application are a group of 9 mature sycamore trees that are situated on a railway embankment adjacent to 16 Linnet Close, Halesowen. The trees are prominent in the background at the head of the Linnet Close cul-de-sac, and are visible from the adjacent Coombs Road.
9. The trees form part of a wooded area that covers the embankments of the abandoned railway. The trees in this area range from smaller elderberry, goat willow and hawthorn to larger sycamore and ash trees.

10. The applicant would like to fell the trees as they are concerned about the safety of the trees, in terms of their overall stability and the threat of branches falling from the tree into the garden.
11. On inspection the trees were found to be in a good state of health with no substantial defects present. There was some evidence of past branch loss, but there was no evidence to suggest that this branch loss would be repeated throughout the crowns of the trees.
12. The applicant is concerned that the trees may fall onto his house during high winds; and tree failure during gale force winds cannot be ruled out for even perfectly healthy trees; it is unreasonable to fell all trees that would cause damage if they fell. As such approval should only be granted where there are problems / defects within the trees that would suggest that there is a higher than normal chance of the tree failing during unsettled weather. As such it is not considered that approval should be granted for the felling of these trees on the basis of potential wind throw.
13. The applicant has also raised concerns over some of the roots of the trees, as they have become exposed. On inspection these roots were found to be a small fraction of the total rooting network, and their exposure will not have any impact on the stability of the tree.
14. As the trees currently provide a high to moderate amount of amenity to the surrounding area, government guidance requires the justification for their removal need to be appropriately strong. As no supporting evidence has been submitted, nor could any be observed from site, to support the applicant's claims that the trees are potentially hazardous it is not considered that sufficient justification has been provided.

CONCLUSION

15. The trees subject to this application are 9 mature sycamore trees that are situated on the embankment of a disused railway adjacent to 16 Linnet Close. On inspection the trees were all found to be in a reasonable state of health and provide a moderate to high amount of amenity to the surrounding area.
16. The applicant has requested that the trees be felled as they are concerned about the stability of the trees and the threat of branches falling into their garden.
17. On inspection no evidence could be found to suggest that the trees will be predisposed to fail during unsettled weather, and whilst there was evidence of some branch loss, there was no evidence to suggest that branch failure would be a regular occurrence.
18. Due to the amenity value that these trees provide, there needs to be substantial justification for their felling. As no supporting evidence has been submitted, and no further evidence was found during the site visit, it is considered that sufficient justification has not been provided and as such it is recommended that this application is refused.

RECOMMENDATION

19. It is recommended that this application is refused for the season set out below.

Conditions and/or reasons:

1. The reasons for the application and the supporting information do not sufficiently justify the detrimental affect on the local amenity that would result from the proposed felling.