

PLANNING APPLICATION NUMBER:P06/1306

Type of approval sought	Tree Preservation Order
Ward	Sedgley
Applicant	Mr M J Parker
Location:	91, NORTHWAY, DUDLEY, DY3 3PU
Proposal	FELL 1 SILVER BIRCH TREE
Recommendation Summary:	REFUSE

TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NO: D 689 (2002) – T19

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

1. The birch tree subject to this application is situated in the front garden of a residential property. The property is located close to a heavily trafficked road, and as such the tree provides a high amount of amenity to the surrounding area.

PROPOSAL

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

HISTORY

4. There have been two previous Tree Preservation Order applications on this site.

<i>Site History</i>		
Application No	P05/1339	16/06/05
Proposal	Fell Silver Birch	Refused
Application No	P05/2197	21/11/05
Proposal	Lift and Thin 1 Silver Birch tree	Approved subject to conditions

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

5. One letter of support was received from a neighbour of the applicant, stating that approval should be granted for the removal of the tree as the honeydew from the tree requires him to polish his cars frequently, the honey dew from the tree gets walked into the house on the bottom of peoples shoes, and that in the autumn the leaves make the drive slippery. A copy of the letter is attached.

ASSESSMENT

Tree(s) Appraisal

6.

Criteria	Tree 1
Species	Silver Birch
Height	9m
Spread	5m
Diameter	200mm
Form	Good
Vigour	Good
Approx Age	Early Mature
Pests / Diseases	None evident.
Canopy	Good
% Deadwood	1%
Cavities	None Evident
Bark	Good
Roots	Good – Slight cracking of driveway
Overall Health	Good
Visibility	High
Amenity Value	Moderate / High
Ecological Value	

Further Assessment

7. The tree subject to this subject is an early mature silver birch. The tree is located close to the boundary between the property and the adjoining road.
8. The tree appears to be in reasonable health, with no significant defects that would suggest that the tree may be unstable. Due to the trees high visibility and good condition it currently provides a good amount of amenity to the surrounding area.

9. The applicant would like to fell the tree because of the honeydew that is being falling from the tree onto his car. The honeydew is obscuring the windows of his car, which can lead to impaired visibility if it is not washed of the windscreen on a regular basis. Mr Parker also states that the honeydew is causing damage to the rubber seals around the doors and windows and the wiper blades of his car.
10. In his application Mr Parker refers to a recent occurrence where the honeydew on the rear windscreen of his car restricted the visibility and almost caused a collision.
11. Mr Parker states that as it only take twenty minutes for the car to get covered in Honeydew, if he were to wash the windows of the car every time he went out it would take a too much time and cost too much as he is on a water metre.
12. The honeydew in question was evident on the tree, driveway and car during the officer's inspection. The amount of honeydew present on the leaves of the birch tree was severe and there was substantial coverage on the driveway and car. The extent of the honeydew is worse than would normally be expected from a birch tree and more akin to the honeydew that normally falls from lime trees.
13. Honeydew is produced when aphids, adelgids, coccids or other sap sucking insects feed on the sap in the leaves of the tree, remove certain amino acids and pass the rest of the sap solution through their system. Due to the life cycle patterns of the insects honeydew can only occur during the late spring, summer and early autumn (depending on the temperature), as such it is considered to be a seasonal inconvenience rather than a significant nuisance.
14. The tree provides a moderate to high amount of amenity to the area and its removal would be detrimental to the area. However due to the relatively small size of the tree a large replacement (a larger specimen from a specialist tree supplier) could go some way to minimising the impact of the removal of the tree, but it would still be some years until the lost amenity is fully replaced.

15. On balance it is considered that whilst the honeydew is a real problem, and that the honeydew is being produced in higher levels than would normally be expected of a birch tree, the removal of honeydew from property by washing on a regular basis is considered to be a reasonable part of property maintenance, and that this will only be a requirement during late spring and summer. As such the problems caused by honeydew are not considered to be sufficient to justify the removal of the tree and subsequent loss of public amenity.

CONCLUSION

16. The birch tree subject to this application is a healthy tree with no significant defects. The tree is situated close to a busy road, and has high visibility and amenity.
17. The tree is currently producing a significant amount of honeydew, above that of what would normally be expected from a birch tree. The applicant is claiming that the honeydew from the tree is causing damage to the rubber seals and wiper blades on his car and that the honeydew significantly impairs visibility through the windscreen of the car if it is not washed off every time the car is taken out.
18. Whilst it is appreciated that the honeydew is causing the applicant a real problem, the problem will only occur in late spring and summer and it is considered that that washing of the car windscreens and the less frequent washing of the whole of the car forms part of routine property maintenance and therefore not sufficient justification for the removal of the tree or the subsequent loss of public amenity.

RECOMMENDATION

19. It is recommended that application is refused for to the reason set out below.

Conditions and/or reasons:

1. The tree provides a moderate to high amount of amenity to the surrounding area and users of the Northway. The problems stated in support of the application are considered to be seasonal inconveniences, remediable through reasonable property maintenance, and are therefore not considered sufficient justification for the removal of this tree or the subsequent loss of public amenity.