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| <b>DELEGATED FILE NOTE</b> |
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**CASE OFFICER:** ...Francis Mabbett.....

| APPLICATION<br>REFERENCE | BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF<br>DEVELOPMENT                                                                                                                                                                                                      | APPLICATION SITE                                                                                   |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 26/02220/TPO             | T6: Horse Chestnut, T7: Fir, T8, T9:<br>Hornbeam - Crown lift over car park to a<br>height of 6m cutting back to the nearest<br>suitable growth point or remove whole<br>branch if theres is no growth point to<br>avoid leaving stumps. | Benslow Music Trust<br>Little Benslow Hills<br>Ibberson Way<br>Hitchin<br>Hertfordshire<br>SG4 9RB |

**Submitted Plan Nos**

Location plan

## 2.0 **Site History**

Various tree works applications at the site the most recent:

22/02523/TPO - T1 Group of Cupressus glabra - Overall reduction of 40%. – Conditional Consent

22/02873/TPO - T1-T4 - T1-T4 - Cedar x 4 - Fell to ground level - Conditional Consent

26/01479/5DN Emergency safety works that need to be carried out as soon as possible on a Black Mulberry tree.

26/02206/5DN Mulberry Tree

## 3.0 **Representations**

None received.

## 4.0 **Planning Considerations**

### 4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

T6: Horse Chestnut, T7: Fir, T8, T9: Hornbeam (applicants plan) are located on the North boundary of the site adjacent to Benslow Lane. The site is not within a Conservation Area, but the trees are protected by A3 of TPO/013.

### 4.2 **Proposal & Reason**

T6: Horse Chestnut, T7: Fir, T8, T9 2x Hornbeam- Crown lift over car park to a height of 6m cutting back to the nearest suitable growth point or remove whole branch if there is no growth point to avoid leaving stumps.

The reason provided in previous email of 2/09/2026 is access required for new MRI Unit to be delivered on 20<sup>th</sup> September.

### 4.3 **Key Issues**

The key issue for consideration is whether the reason provided justifies proposed works and the appropriateness of these given that the tree is protected by a Tree Preservation Order.

- 4.3.1 All trees appear to have an existing crown height of approx. 4m and should require minimal pruning to allow access for the MRI unit. The crown of T6 has minimal intrusion over Benslow Lane and pruning of this tree is expected to be light. T7 identified as a Larch will require the cut back or removal (if a suitable growth point cannot be found) of an over long branch that extends out over the road. This will have minimal effect on the tree's appearance and may also serve to improve its form.

- 4.3.2 T8 Hornbeam is a mature tree and showing signs of a thin crown and early leaf fall, which may be a result of the long dry summer, but also symptoms of other underlying issues. Trees of low vitality are less able to cope with pruning particularly if heavy, however there appears to be only one significant limb on this tree that requires attention and this again should have minimal impact on the tree's health and amenity. T9 Hornbeam likely requires the most work to facilitate the access which may entail a cut back or reduction of most of the North side of the crown. This tree is not expressing the same stressed signs of the other Hornbeam and is therefore in a healthier state to cope with this level of pruning. Hornbeam has a durable heartwood that is dense and decays slowly and the works should therefore not be detrimental to the long-term health of the tree provided they are carried out to the appropriate standard.

#### 4.4 **Conclusion**

- 4.4.1 The proposed works to TPO trees appears reasonable and necessary to allow for access of a significant piece of medical apparatus. The impact to the trees is considered low with the effect on visual appearance anticipated to be minimal and short-term, therefore refusal would be hard to justify.

#### 4.5 **Alternative Options**

- 4.5.1 None applicable

#### 4.6 **Pre-Commencement Conditions**

- 4.6.1 None applicable

#### 5.0 **Recommendation**

- 5.1 That planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:-

1. The works shall be carried out to conform to British Standard 3998 - Recommendations for Tree Work and in a manner so as to ensure that the natural and aesthetic appearance of the trees are maintained to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In order to ensure that the works are undertaken to an acceptable standard which will not harm the health of the tree(s).

2. The works shall be undertaken only by a competent and suitably qualified arboricultural contractor or tree surgeon as capable of carrying them out to an acceptable standard.

Reason: In order that the works are undertaken by a suitably qualified contractor.

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| <p>Signed</p>  <p>Ben Glover</p> | <p>Development Management<br/>North Hertfordshire District Council<br/>Council Offices<br/>Gernon Road<br/>Letchworth<br/>Herts<br/>SG6 3JF</p> |
| <p>Determining Officer</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 9 September 2026</p>                                                   |                                                                                                                                                 |