

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

CASE OFFICER: ...Francis Mabbett.....

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
26/00630/TPO	T1: Horse Chestnut - Pollard to historical points. T2: Horse Chestnut - Pollard to historical points and remove dead limb.	23 High Street
		Whitwell
		Hitchin
	T3: Horse Chestnut - Fell. T1, T2, T3: Yew - Reduce height 3/4m and 2/3m from lateral limbs to balance crown. T2: Yew - Reduce height 1.5/2m and 2/3m from lateral limbs to balance crown.	Hertfordshire SG4 8AJ

Submitted Plan Nos

1.0 Policies

2.0 **Site History**

98/01322/1TPO Pollarding of 6 Chestnut trees to side boundary and reduction of canopy by 25% to Horse Chestnut tree to front boundary. **Conditional Consent**

12/00123/1TCA Pollard 1 Chestnut tree **No objection**

3.0 **Representations**

None received.

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

T1 Horse Chestnut (applicant's plan) subject of this application is located at the NE corner of the site adjacent to High Street while T2-T3 Horse Chestnut are located in the rear garden of the property on the East boundary. T1-T4 Yew trees are located to the north of the site also adjacent to the High Street. All trees are visible to the public realm. The site is within Whitwell Conservation Area and T1-T3 Horse Chestnuts are protected by a tree preservation order A1 of TPO/012.

4.2 **Proposal & Reason**

T1: Horse Chestnut - Pollard to historical points. To ensure it can be retained safely and continue providing amenity value, it requires cyclical management at the historic pollard points to avoid branch strike by large vehicles. T2: Horse Chestnut - Pollard to historical points and remove dead limb as is showing signs of physiological decline, including a dead limb and reduced vigour. T3: Horse Chestnut – Fell as has become disproportionately large, causes significant overshadowing, and generates heavy leaf fall that is impractical to manage.

T1, T2, T3: Yew - Reduce height 3/4m and 2/3m from lateral limbs to balance crown. T2: Yew - Reduce height 1.5/2m and 2/3m from lateral limbs to balance crown.

4.3 **Key Issues**

The key issues for consideration is whether the reason provided in additional email of 23/03/2026 justifies proposed works and the appropriateness of these where the trees are protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) and the impact that the proposed works would have on the character, appearance and amenity of the Conservation Area.

4.3.1 T1 -T3 3x Yew are located within the Conservation Area, but are not protected by a TPO and are highly visible to the public realm, being located on raised ground abutting the

pavement, with crowns that spread over the highway. The trees appear in normal health with some thinning in the crowns due to competition from ivy that has been recently severed or removed. The proposed works will have a negative impact on the amenity of the trees, but will mitigate the potential for obstruction of the pavement. The Yew reductions are considered to be reasonable and are unlikely to be detrimental to the health of the trees. Yew has a high resistance to decay and regularly responds well, as it has the ability to return to a juvenile state of growth when pruned. The impact on the amenity of the area should be short-term.

4.3.2 T1 Horse Chestnut is a medium sized, prominent tree and highly visible to the public realm located on the edge of the High Street. Re-growth from previous pollarding operation is extensive showing the tree has good vigour and has coped well with previous works. This regrowth is now of a size that pollarding is an appropriate course of action, as large stems are more prone to failure, which could result in irreversible damage to the bole of the tree and danger to users of the highway. Horse Chestnut contain a core of largely unresponsive and non-durable wood and leaving channels of functioning tissue between roots and shoots by retaining some small branches or shoots is desirable and increases potential for successful response. The works will have short-term negative impact on the amenity of this tree, but minimises the size of dysfunctional wood resulting from pruning operations and is in-line with the previous management of this tree.

4.3.3 T2 and T3 2x Horse Chestnuts have been pollarded more recently with smaller growth present and are what appear to be the only survivors of a line of Horse Chestnuts that once existed. They are set back from the road where public visibility is limited and mainly from a footpath. The re-pollarding of T2 is unlikely to be detrimental to the tree given the size of material to be removed, is normal arboricultural practice and in accord with previous works. Dead wood is exempt and does not need consent from the LPA to be removed. The proposal to remove T3 and replant due to its size, shadowing, leaf fall and impracticality to manage can, in the main, be mitigated by the operation of pollarding. However this tree no longer possesses the high amenity value it once had and was most likely afforded this as a member of the line of Horse Chestnuts that have mostly been removed. It is not highly visible to the public, with its long-term retention questionable and its replacement by a new native tree will provide a far greater long-term public benefit to the amenity and character of the area.

4.4 **Conclusion**

4.4.1 The proposed works are unlikely to be detrimental to the health of the trees and in most cases does not exceed previous consented works. T3 Horse Chestnut's contribution to the amenity of the area is now only moderate and its long-term retention and benefits limited. Therefore the proposed works are justified and a replacement tree for T3 should be secured by condition.

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. Following the felling of T3 Horse Chestnut hereby permitted being carried out, a replacement standard Field Maple tree with a stem girth of minimum 10 to 12cm shall be planted within the same vicinity of the removed tree. The replacement tree planting shall be carried out in the first full planting season following the felling. Any trees which within a period of 5 years from planting die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with another of a similar size and species. For the purpose of this condition the planting season shall mean the period from November - February
Reason: In order to enhance the amenity of the Conservation Area and safeguard the longevity of the Area Tree Preservation Order.

2. 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).

3. 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.

Signed <i>S. Kasparian</i> Sarah Kasparian	Development Management North Hertfordshire District Council Council Offices Gernon Road Letchworth Herts SG6 3JF
Determining Officer Date: 16 April 2026	