

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

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

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
26/00650/TPO	T1: Ash - Fell. T2: 2x Blue Atlas Cedars (amended) - Reduce canopy by approx 20% T3: Horse Chestnut - Fell	23 Pirton Road Hitchin Hertfordshire SG5 2BQ

Submitted Plan Nos

1.0 Policies

2.0 **Site History**

Various tree works applications at the site with the most relevant below:

11/02547/1TPO - Reduce and reshape crowns by maximum of 2.5 metres to 2 Blue Atlas Cedar trees
Conditional Consent

19/02157/TPO- Two Blue Atlas Cedar trees - crown reduction by approx 15% and removal of major deadwood (as clarified by email received 22 July 2020) **Conditional Consent**

3.0 **Representations**

None received.

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

T1 Ash and T3 Horse Chestnut (applicant's plan) subject of this application are located in the rear garden of the property while T2 2x Cypress (applicant's plan) amended to 2x Blue Atlas Cedars are located at the front of the property adjacent to Pirton Road and are all protected by a tree preservation order A1 of TPO/072. The site is not within a Conservation Area. The trees are highly or partly visible to the public realm and are visible to surrounding properties.

4.2 **Proposal & Reason**

T1: Ash - Fell. Die back in ash to rear (south) of property. Recommended urgent felling by 2 different arborists. Urgent as close to being too dangerous to climb.

T2: 2x Cypress (amended to 2x Blue Atlas Cedars) - Reduce canopy by approx 20% Causing severe damage to drive, public pathway, neighbouring driveways and public lighting and over head cables.

T3: Horse Chestnut - Fell due to boundary impact.

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 T1 Ash is located in the rear garden at the bottom of a steep incline where it is part of a group of trees that occupy the rear gardens of a number of dwellings. It is not highly visible to the public realm on its own, but the group can be seen from surrounding properties and at a distance from the A505. The Ash has a small crown high up on a long, branchless stem. It is showing signs of decline in the crown with deadwood and die back present. There appears to be a deep cavity between approx. 8-10m above ground level on the East side of the stem from an old pruning wound. The tree is likely to continue to decline, therefore removal and replanting with a species that reaches a similar size in maturity is the most proactive approach.

- 4.3.2 The 2x Cypress were identified as 2x Blue Atlas Cedars that dominate the frontage of the property and are highly visible to the public. Large deadwood is present in the very top of the crowns where previous reduction works has resulted in the final cuts not being made at suitable growth points. The remainder of the crowns have put on reasonable regrowth since the last reduction and are of a size now where a repeat operation is required to maintain their size. The proposed 20% reduction should not be detrimental to health of the trees provided branches are pruned back to suitable live growth points and in accord with BS5837:2010.
- 4.3.3 T3 Horse Chestnut is a small tree previously topped at approx. 2.5m with approx. 4m regrowth present. The tree is small and not visible to the public realm contributing little in the way of amenity. The tree is also young and may not have existed when the TPO was served making its protection hard to confirm. The impact of its removal on the TPO and the amenity to the surrounding will be negligible.

4.4 **Conclusion**

- 4.4.1 The Ash tree is in obvious decline and a replacement tree should be sought to maintain future canopy cover. The proposal is unlikely to be detrimental to the health of the 2x Cedar and does not exceed previous consented works, while the Horse Chestnut is of little amenity value. Therefore, refusal of the proposed works 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. Following the felling of T1 Ash hereby permitted being carried out, a replacement standard Oak 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 amenity 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  Paul Chaston Determining Officer	Development Management North Hertfordshire District Council Council Offices Gernon Road Letchworth Herts SG6 3JF
Date: 10 April 2026	