

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

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

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
26/01110/TPO	T59: Ash - Cut back by 1-2m. T60: Silver Birch - Cut back by 1-2m. T61: Ash - Reduce all around by 2-3m to maintain shape and size for the area. T65: Crack Willow - Fell.	Hitchin Boys School Grammar School Walk Hitchin Hertfordshire SG5 1JB

Submitted Plan Nos

Location plan

1.0 Policies

2.0 Site History

09/01406/1TPO - Crown lift over footpath by approximately 15% 1 Horse Chestnut tree (T8) and 1 Silver Birch tree(T6); crown lift by approximately 15%, remove deadwood and limb overhanging tennis court of 1 Ash tree (T7) - Conditional Consent

12/01662/1TPO - Reduce crown by 25% to one Horse Chestnut tree (T1); Reduce crown by 25% to one Ash tree (T2); reduce crown by 25% to one Silver Birch tree (T3) - Conditional Consent

14/01699/1TPO - Fell 1 Horse Chestnut Tree (T191) - Conditional Consent

25/02577/5DN - T65: Crack Willow - Re-pollard at 5m

3.0 **Representations**

None received.

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

T59: Ash, T60: Silver Birch, T61: Ash and T65: Crack Willow (applicant's plan) subject of this application are located in the vicinity of the tennis/ hockey pitches on the west side of the footpath leading south from Fishponds Rd through the centre of the site. The trees are visible to students and staff and partly visible the public realm. The site is within Hitchin Conservation Area and the trees are protected by a tree preservation order TPO/171.

4.2 **Proposal & Reason**

T59: Ash - Cut back by 1-2m. T60: Silver Birch - Cut back by 1-2m. T61: Ash - Reduce all around by 2-3m to maintain shape and size for the area. T65: Crack Willow - Fell.

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 T59: Ash and T60: Silver Birch are mature trees located close to the tennis courts with the crowns partially encroaching over the courts. The trees appear to have been pruned previously and so a cut back by 1-2m should not be detrimental to their health provided previous reduction points are not exceeded unnecessarily. The works will prevent interference with the enjoyment and function of the tennis courts.

4.3.2 T61 Ash is a mature tree with a spreading crown that is encroaching over the gym building and footpath. The tree needs cutting back to prevent direct damage to the building and an overall reduction will maintain the trees size, shape and future amenity, while at the same time mitigating the issues of its close proximity to the structure.

4.3.3 T65 Crack Willow was once a large tree as indicated by its broad trunk, but it has been reduced to approx. 5m stump. Since the works of the 5 Day Notice at the end of the previous season were undertaken., the tree is showing signs of life, all be it limited, with early regrowth present, but only on part of the remaining timbers. There is signs of extensive decay and cavities in the central trunk and although a useful habitat resource, it has lost its amenity value. Its close proximity to a footpath that sees a high

footfall of students and staff means it is no longer conducive to further retention as any extensive regrowth will increase the risk of tree failure. Removal is therefore justified with replanting of a suitable replacement to mitigate its loss.

4.4 **Conclusion**

- 4.4.1 The proposed works are in accord with previous works and are necessary to maintain the trees at a size where they do not interfere with the facilities of the site. The Willow has extensive decay with minimal amenity value and retention is no longer appropriate.
- 4.4.2 A replacement tree should be planted within or close to the same vicinity of the Willow tree post felling.

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 hereby permitted being carried out, a replacement heavy standard Oak tree with a stem girth of 12 to 14cm 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 to prevent a net loss of tree cover caused by natural decline.

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  Naomi Reynard	Development Management North Hertfordshire District Council Council Offices Gernon Road Letchworth Herts SG6 3JF
Determining Officer Date: 11 June 2026	