



COUNCIL OF THE ISLES OF SCILLY

Planning & Development Department
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OFFICER REPORT – DELEGATED

Application number: P/17/003/TWA	Expiry date: 28 February 2017
Received on: 16 January 2017	Neighbour expiry date: NONE CONSULTED
UPRN: 000192001558	Consultation expiry date:
Legal agreement:	Site notice posted: 19 January 2017
Departure:	Site notice expiry: 9 February 2017
Complies with Development Plan? Y/N If not, ensure you cover in the report how material considerations outweigh the plan?	
Is this decision contrary to local council recommendation?	

Applicant:	Mr John Banfield
Site Address:	Middle Tinks Holy Vale St Mary's Isles Of Scilly TR21 0NT
Proposal:	Various works to 108 mature hedgerow Elm trees.
Application Type:	Tree Works Applications

Description of site and development:

This is an application to carry out tree works to a total of 108 Elm Trees within the Holy Vale Area of St Mary's. The works are supported by an extensive report on trees in this area, produced by a local Arboriculturalist under the Natural England Higher Level Stewardship scheme. This set out proposed works to 8 Groups of trees:

A – the group assessed included 10 Elm Trees - described as semi-mature saplings, hedgerow specimens growing alongside a stone wall.

B - the group assessed included 32 Elm Trees - described as mature and semi-mature specimens growing along the border of the Porth Hellick Nature Trail.

C - the group assessed included 29 Elm Trees - described as a mature hedgerow bordering a field and garden requiring major tree surgery

D - the group assessed included 14 Elm Trees - described as mature hedgerow specimens growing along a stone wall with a number identified as windblown and over-mature for their position.

E - Trees Not Surveyed and not included in the works but recommended these are assessed and included.

F - the group assessed included 30 Elm Trees - described as a mixture of mature trees and saplings growing along a stone wall bordering a footpath

G - the group assessed included 5 Elm Trees - described as mature, semi-mature and saplings growing along a stone boundary.

H - the group assessed included 4 Elm Trees - described as mature, semi-mature and saplings growing along a stone boundary.

The report is supported by some research of trees on Scilly and the historical origins of tree species that have been introduced or evolved in and around this area. This indicates that the Elm was not the original dominant species but due to the management of hedgerows and the cultivation practices of the land, the nature of Elm Trees has resulted in their dominance within this area. The trees form a small woodland from the ground but when viewed from above, as with aerial photographs then the trees appear more as outgrown field boundaries.

Public representations:

Due to the scale of the tree works proposed Officers have consulted the public on the work and comments have been received from the Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust. These comments express a number of concerns in relation to not fully recognising, within the report, the local, national, and cultural significance of elm trees. These comments suggest that more pollarding, for tree management purposes should take place. It suggests that crown lifting should only take place if access is an issue and for aesthetics of tree form or for nature conservation purposes as it serves only to increase light transmission to areas closer to the trunk. As a result the WT recommended that crown lifting should be avoided on older mature trees. Where it is needed then it should be restricted to the secondary branches on the primary branch or a shortening of the primary branch.

They also comment that if 'sail' is an identified problem then crown thinning is a more appropriate technique and is usually carried out on trees that produce large amounts of epicormic growth such as Elm Trees. It is noted that pruning is best carried out during October, November and December and pruning in spring weakens the elms and late summer cuts increases the risk of vigorous epicormic re-growth.

Finally it is noted that only trees which provide habitat for lichen should be crown lifted and the ivy removed. Work on trees with bat roosts in should be avoided unless a hazard in the tree has been identified. The elm trees at Holy Vale should be looked at in the national context of a unique resource as a group of Elm Trees with no Dutch elm disease, evaluated and brought under pollarding management where appropriate and work should only be carried out in October, November and December.

Constraints and designations:

Archaeological Constraint Areas

Special Site of Scientific Interest 15.7687, Name: Higher Moor. Island: St Mary's

Appraisal/key issues and conclusion:

As the Isles of Scilly are within a designated Conservation Area, any person wishing to prune or fell a 'tree' is required to serve notice on the Local Planning Authority, allowing 6 weeks for the LPA to consider the impact of the works proposed. Where the works are considered to have a detrimental impact upon the character and appearance of the conservation area then the only course of action is to

place a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) on the tree(s). If the LPA do not do this within 6 weeks then the works are deemed acceptable and can proceed. If the tree(s) are not formally protected under a TPO there is no provision to impose conditions on the works applied for. The 6 week deadline for such an order to be made would be on or before the 28th February 2017.

A LPA can only assess the amenity value held by the tree(s) and can make a Tree Preservation Order if it appears to them to be '*expedient in the interests of amenity to make provision for the preservation of trees or woodlands in their area*'. It is therefore necessary to consider the amenity value of the trees proposed to be pruned or felled:

Visibility

The trees at Holy Vale can be seen clearly by the public both by walking along the roads around St Mary's and through footpaths through the Higher Moors Nature Trail. The trees therefore, as a mixture of mature and semi-mature form a small woodland that are considered to hold high amenity value and are clearly visible to the public.

Individual, collective and wider impact



As Dutch Elm Disease-Free the trees at Holy Vale are of particular importance to the diversity overall of Trees in Britain. The trees at Holy Vale are a mixture of large and small elm trees with lots of suckering and epicormic growth. The submitted report suggests local management practices of these former hedges, has resulted in the spread of the elm through the agricultural shelter-belt hedges. The effect of the wind together with excessively wet winters has also contributed to the demise of some of the mature trees. As there are a range of ages, however, the longevity of this area as a wooded site could continue for decades as mature elms die but saplings continue the cycle of tree growth. The future potential amenity therefore remains high.

The trees, as noted by the Wildlife Trust, have both local and national significance as small woodlands of elm trees are now rare in the UK. The area contributes significantly to the character and appearance of the conservation area. The amenity value collectively of this group of trees is therefore considered to be high.

Contrary to the advice of the Wildlife Trust, most of the tree works are for crown lifting of between 4,5 and 6 metres. The rest of the works include pollarding or re-pollarding.

Recommendation:

The submitted works overall will not result on the removal of Elm Trees but, as suggested in the report, are in need of management. Whilst some of the works appear to be contrary to the views or concerns expressed by the Wildlife Trust, the Tree Survey Report has been undertaken by a person with arboricultural qualifications. The tree works will not result in harm to the overall character of the conservation areas and as the trees are proposed to be positively managed it is not recommended necessary to impose a TPO at this time.

Signed: 	Dated: 27/02/17	Signed: 	Dated: 28/02/17
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Planning Officer

Senior Manager