

Officer Report to Chigwell Parish Council

Application: EPF/0839/26

Site: Hanbridge House. (Hainault Hall), 173 Lambourne Road, Chigwell, IG7 6JU

Proposal: TPO/EPF/22/88, Ref. G3 - works to three ash trees

Recommendation: Objection as submitted / request deferral pending Tree Officer clarification

This application seeks consent for works to three ash trees at the rear of 173 Lambourne Road. The neighbour notification describes the proposal as “3 x Ash Trees — Crown reduce to previous points”, while the application form describes the works as “Pollard back to previous pollard points at approximately 1.8–2.2 metres and remove all deadwood”, with the reason given as routine maintenance.

Officer assessment

The Parish Council should be concerned that the description of works is unclear and potentially inconsistent. A crown reduction to previous points and a pollard to approximately 1.8–2.2 metres may not amount to the same operation. If the stated height is measured from ground level, the proposal would appear to involve a very substantial reduction of mature protected trees, rather than ordinary maintenance. The submitted information also appears limited, with no arboricultural report, no evidence of poor tree condition, no property-damage justification and no detailed explanation of why works of this scale are necessary.

The site is sensitive because the property the Grade II listed Hainault Hall. The trees appear to form part of the mature landscaped setting of the property and contribute to the character and amenity of the area. In these circumstances, any consent should be precise, limited and based on clear arboricultural justification.

It is recommended that Chigwell Parish Council objects to the application as submitted or requests that determination be deferred until the District Council’s Tree Officer has inspected the trees and confirmed the exact scope of acceptable works. The Parish Council should make clear that it does not object in principle to appropriate deadwood removal or genuinely necessary works back to established previous pollard points. However, the present wording is too broad and could permit excessive reduction harmful to the amenity value of the protected tree group and the setting of the listed property.

The suggested Parish Council response is: Chigwell Parish Council objects to the application as submitted. The Council considers that the proposed works are insufficiently clear and may be excessive, particularly given the reference to pollarding three ash trees to approximately 1.8–2.2 metres. The Council requests a site inspection by the District Council’s Tree Officer to confirm whether previous pollard points exist, whether works of this scale are arboriculturally justified, and whether the visual amenity and setting of the listed property would be preserved. Should the District Council be minded to grant consent, the Parish Council requests that any approval be tightly conditioned so that works are limited only to the three identified ash trees, no cutting takes place below agreed previous pollard points, no felling or stem removal is permitted, the works are undertaken by a suitably qualified contractor in accordance with BS 3998 and full regard is had to nesting birds and wildlife legislation. In the absence of such clarification and control, the application should be refused.