

Agenda Item 8

Development Services
Salisbury District Council
61 Wyndham Road
Salisbury
Wiltshire SP1 3AH

Officer to contact: Shane Verrion
direct line: 01722 434382
email: developmentcontrol@salisbury.gov.uk
web: www.salisbury.gov.uk

Report

Subject : Tree Preservation Order at B&Q Store, Southampton Road, Salisbury
Report to : City Area Committee
Date : Thursday 22 November 2007
Author : Shane Verrion

Purpose of report:

This item is before Members because an objection has been received to the Tree Preservation Order (TPO no.396) at B&Q Store, Southampton Road, Salisbury, Wilts, SP1 2LE

Background:

TPO 396 was enacted on 30th August 2007 to protect two areas of trees on the B&Q site, adjacent to the Southampton Road, that are deemed to be under threat.

A pre-application enquiry concerning an extension of the B&Q store indicated that two groups of trees bordering the stream, beside the A36, could be lost and replaced with a much narrower band of landscaping.

The trees are considered to be important because they partially screen the B&Q premises from the A36, which is the main route into the city from the east.



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Objections:

RPS Landscape Architects have objected to the TPO, on behalf of B&Q Plc, in a letter dated 26th September 2007, making the following points:

- The trees concerned are mainly willow and are mostly in poor condition with decay and dieback.
- A few other species that are present are inappropriate to the setting and are also in poor condition.
- A large Weeping Willow (near the entrance) has had extensive tree surgery in the past, leaving wounds which could start to decay.
- B&Q have recently taken over the freehold of the site and they are introducing a long term programme of planting and management.

Comments on objections:

In response to the objections raised, it is acknowledged that some of the trees included in the order are not in particularly good condition, but they are still worthy of protection because of their high amenity value.

The trees are not in such a position that they pose an unmanageable threat to public safety and future maintenance works can be considered by application.

Many of the trees have recently been pollarded. Willow trees respond well to pollarding, and although they will need to be cut back on a regular cycle (every 3-5 years), quick re-growth provides a low, dense canopy in the interim period, which is ideal for screening purposes.

A tree Preservation Order is not intended to prevent reasonable maintenance of trees and if any are identified as being unsafe an application can be made to carry out necessary works, including felling. If permission is granted to remove a tree, the Local Authority can insist on a suitable replacement planting, to ensure an acceptable level of tree cover is maintained for the future.

Conclusion:

The trees on the boundary of the B&Q site are a good example of the benefits trees can provide and they create a positive early impression for visitors entering the city from the east. If the current tree cover is lost to development, it will take years for any replanting to establish, and with restricted space the same level of screening will be difficult to achieve.

Options for consideration:

Members should consider the Tree Preservation Order and decide on one of the following options:

- 1) To confirm the order (and protect the two areas of trees specified)**
- 2) Not confirm the order (and not protect the two areas of trees specified)**

Recommendations:

That Tree Preservation Order 396 should be confirmed without modification.