

'Cothay' Tree application re TPO 40 (1985):

Summary of Site, Trees and Problems encountered - October 2019

Reference 'B'

SITE OVERVIEW

To the North and North East of 'Cothay', is an established plantation principally of Scots Pine trees around the edge of the site, and some Norway Spruce trees planted more centrally near the garden boundary. These trees were planted by my Father in the 1960's as a screen to mask 6 new houses built on land facing Duck Street. They are covered by TPO 40 (1985).

Additionally there is one Balsam Poplar, being a sucker from 3 other Balsam Poplars sited within the 'Cothay' garden.

The site, per the enclosed TPO plan is marked as **Reference 'A'**, is bordered in red and identified on the plan as 'A1'.

THE TREES

Scots Pine - Marked on my plan as a small circle. These are of mixed condition from good to fair, with one or more having died.

Some slight thinning (with approval) has taken place over the years but the Pines are now quite dense, such they have grown tall in the search for light and (in places) overhang the gardens of the adjoining Duck Street properties. This is now causing a considerable nuisance to our neighbours, as identified by the extracted comments below from Neighbours' letters.

Norway Spruce - Marked on my plan as a small square with a 'C' for conifer. These are mainly in mediocre condition, make little contribution to the screening and are considered of lower ornamental value. The removal of these trees would constitute a minimal negative impact to the plantation as a whole and I imagine would not be considered controversial in tree terms.

Balsam Poplar - Marked on my plan as a small triangle with a 'P' for poplar. This is in a particularly poor condition. It has significant decay near the base, on one side, and is considered potentially dangerous and quite likely to fall in storm conditions. This should now come down.

THE PROBLEMS

Intended as a visual barrier, 50+ years on, they have become very leggy with most of their green growth high up, so no longer giving a visual barrier as intended.

There are other unintended problems arising as evidenced by these comments taken from letters received from several local householders, namely:

- 'Now over 50 ft high'.
- 'Unsightly bare trunks until the top third of their height'.
- 'Due to their size, light is restricted in our garden'.
- 'We have to have our downstairs lights on all day in Winter and a lot in the Summer too on account of the trees taking our light'.
- 'About half the garden is always in shade'.
- 'Bucketfuls of pine needles raked and collected regularly, which is annoying and detrimental to garden growth in the area affected'.
- 'Nothing grows in that area, it is so acidic'.
- 'Plants do not thrive well in our garden'.
- 'The pine needles have made the soil too acid to grow our vegetables any longer'.
- 'Our fruit trees are also suffering from the acidic soil'.
- 'Half the lawn is now mostly moss due to the lack of sun'.
- 'The tree roots take up all the moisture from our plants'.
- 'A concrete patio laid in the area now lifting due to roots from the pine trees'.
- 'We are concerned the roots will cause damage to our drainage system that runs through our back garden'.
- 'In high winds branches and broken tree trunks have fallen in to the garden. Some of these have been really large and hence a significant danger'.
- 'Several trees look unsafe and regularly sections of branches fall on to our lawn'.
- 'If one of the trees were to fall it could cause significant damage and even personal injury'.
- 'The condition of these trees cannot possibly have a beneficial impact on the environment'.
- 'Anything that can be done to thin them out, reduce their height and remove those close to the boundary would be greatly appreciated'.
- 'They are not particularly fine or ancient specimens so why is there a TPO on these trees?'

THE PROPOSAL

A site visit was held on 24 July 2018* with SDDC Tree Officer, Martin Buckley, and SDDC Planning Officer, Richard Rogers. This proposal is based upon their advice. To alleviate the

nuisance caused to our neighbours, to better manage these trees, to maintain the screening value and preserve the visual amenity, the following is proposed.

A 5 Year Management Plan to be put in to operation with the proposed works planned for years one and two being scheduled and subject to detailed prior approval from the SDDC Tree Officer, as to which trees are to be thinned commensurate with the following objectives:

- Remove the Balsam Poplar; and over a period of years
- Selectively remove those trees causing a nuisance;
- Remove poor specimens or those causing over-crowding to thin out the plantation to allow other trees to prosper;
- Remove the Norway Spruce as being of low ornamental value and limited screening benefit.

(* = Our delay in taking more immediate action, over the last 15 months, has been caused by considerable family difficulties, including a family death.)

A second visit was made by Martin Buckley on 23 October 2019, to consider the detailed proposals which now form the basis of this Planning Application. Refer to schedule **Reference 'C1 and C2'** for plan of trees to be removed in Year 1 and **Reference 'D1 and D2'** for plan of trees to be removed in year 2.

After year 2, the SDDC Tree Officer to be invited to attend for a further visit to review progress of site management and to discuss and advise on the proposed works for the remaining 3 years of the plan.

ENDS.

