

From: [DC Consultation](#)
To: [Laura Garth](#)
Subject: FW: Planning Application Consultation 19NP0101 The Orchards, Harbottle, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE65 7DH
Date: 12 December 2019 16:22:07

From: Robert Mayhew
Sent: 12 December 2019 15:59

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From: Robert Mayhew
Sent: 11 December 2019 18:42
To: DC Consultation
Cc: Colin Godfrey; Gill Thompson
Subject: RE: Planning Application Consultation 19NP0101 The Orchards, Harbottle, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE65 7DH

Application Reference Number: 19NP0101

Proposed Development: Harbottle Castle Tree Preservation Order - Application to carry out work on protected trees - Felling of 3 Horse Chestnut, 3 Rowan, 1 Ash, 14 Sycamore, 13 Holly, 1 Silver Birch, 2 Cherry, 2 Oak, 1 Beech, 1 Wych Elm, 1 Douglas Fir, 1 Aspen, 1 Elm. Deadwooding of 1 Lime, 1 Yew and 1 Sycamore. Crown reduction of 3 Holly and 1 Yew and Crown Lift 1 Rowan, 1 Yew and 1 Holly at The Orchards, Harbottle, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE65 7DH

Dear Colin,

Thank you for consulting me on the above application to carry out work on protected trees. I would like to make the following observations with respect to the tree and landscape implications of the proposed work, as set out in the applicant's documentation, on the trees covered by the Harbottle Castle Tree Preservation Order within the National Park.

My first observation is that our records indicate that 90% of the woodland in the National Park have woodland management plans but unfortunately this wood is not one of them. I would strongly suggest that a Forestry Commission [woodland management plan](#) is produced for this site in line with Government policy, particularly because it has already been identified for its local amenity value within the village of Harbottle. Failure to maintain an up to date woodland management plan may hinder the Authority's understanding as to whether the applicant's future tree work proposals would or would

not secure the maintenance of the special character of the woodland or the woodland character of the area. Unfortunately it is a shame this was not picked up as a recommendation within the Tree Hazard and Risk Assessment Report.

I also note on the application form that the applicant has indicated that this wood is within a conservation area. I do not believe that this to be the case. In relation to the Tree survey Plan that accompanies the Tree Hazard and Risk Assessment Report, I believe that the Beech Tree listed as T54 is missing and has in fact been mistyped as the green T53 to the south of the site.

Having attended site and noted that the trees identified on the survey plan had been marked up, my initial observation would be that the applicant has appropriately identified the need to undertake work to some of the trees within Harbottle Castle wood. The work is required both from a public health and safety perspective and also from a good woodland management perspective. Appointing an arboricultural specialist to survey the trees and set out the proposed work in a report with accompanying site plan identifying the individual trees is good practice and thus welcomed. I also note and welcome that all work is to be carried out in line with British Standard BS3998.

Given the nature of the proposed work and the volume of living timber that is likely to be derived from the work, I would advise that the applicant, if they have not already done so, ought to contact the Forestry Commission and ascertain whether a felling licence will be needed or whether the work is covered under one of the felling licence exemptions. [Further details can be viewed on the FC website or in this publication.](#)

In relation to the findings of the Tree Hazard and Risk Assessment Report I will highlight the following:-

- This wood is privately owned and therefore public access to the wood is not permitted and thus works identified on the grounds of public health and safety should relate to trees that have the potential to directly affect public safety immediately adjacent to the wood not within the wood.
- The applicant identifies in the 'Discussion' section of the Tree Hazard and Risk Assessment Report that "At present, the larger and more dominant trees reduce daylight from reaching the woodland floor and inhibit developing ground cover. Observed in areas of recent windblown trees and the growth of smaller woodland plants". This may well be true but it is important that both the species diversity and age diversity of the wood is maintained in order to retain the amenity value of the wood. ie I would not advocate felling all the old trees to enable more young trees to establish as the old trees provide an important ecological habitat in their own right. My observation would be that the extent of mature holly on site was as significant a factor in restricting light from reaching the woodland floor as the current extent of mature tree canopy. As the applicant already identifies, the mature tree canopy (20m+ in height) is not complete across the entire wood due to historical tree loss. The mature canopy of this wood is in my view one of the key features that contributes to the amenity value of this wood.

- Whilst the applicant identifies in the recommendations section that the work will be beneficial as a means of wildlife management, there is no mention as to the likely impact of the proposed work on the current wildlife associated with the trees identified to be felled. Might some of the mature trees have bats or other protected species associated with them? I would suggest that the applicant will need to consider this prior to any of the proposed work taking place on the mature trees that are identified for removal.
- In terms of the recommendations set out on page 7 of the Tree Hazard and Risk Assessment Report, I am content that these are, on the whole, appropriate and made for valid reasons. The one recommendation that I will go into in more detail relates to bullet point three, "Carry out specified individual tree works and removal, as itemised within tree works recommendations table 1 and plan (see attached table)".

Summary of work proposed

Tree Species	Deadwood	Remove epicormic growth	Crown Lift / Crown Reduction	Fell	Other
Oak		T19, T50,			
Beech	T54,	T20,			
Ash		T4,			
Sycamore	T56, T10,	T5, T6, T11, G1, T36, T37, T39, T52, T53,			
Common Lime	T35, T44, T48, T49, T35, T44,				
Horse Chestnut		T1, T45, T51,			
Douglas Fir		T27,			
Wych Elm		T24, T55,			
Yew	T31, T41, T46, T47,	T31			
Birch		T17,			
Cherry		T18, T23, T38,			
Aspen		T43,			
Rowan	T3, T3,	T2, T12, T13,			
Holly	T7, T8, T28,	T7, T9, T28, T7, T14, T15, T16, T21, T22, T25, T26, T29, T30, T32, T33, T34, T40, T42,			
Totals	11	4	7	40 + 1 Group	1

- In relation to the proposed work identified in table 1 of the Tree Hazard and Risk Assessment Report and summarised above, the dead wooding is seen as good woodland management practice, particularly where the deadwood could cause harm to property or people. However, there is no indication as to whether some or any of this will be left in the woodland to aid the ecological diversity, thereby enhance the amenity value of the woodland? The proposed epicormic growth removal is seen as good arboricultural practice that should promote a healthier crown growth for the trees identified. Again the crown lift and crown reduction work will address many of the health and safety issues identified and should not affect the identified trees too severely.
- 73% of the trees identified for work are proposed to be felled and this is where I have scrutinised the application in a bit more detail. In all cases bar T55, the roots and stump are to be retained which is seen to be a positive as it will retain the soil carbon

element of the trees but more importantly, for many of the species it will allow the potential for regrowth to occur so long as the stumps are not treated with a herbicide. I suggest that the applicant is asked to clarify whether herbicide treatment of the stumps is intended post felling. In effect the felling of these trees at ground level can be seen as coppicing, where regrowth may occur from the cut stump. In general, all broadleaved species can be coppiced but some do better than others, and age, time of year that felling takes place, and light levels can affect coppice success rate. Again, there is no indication from the applicant whether regrowth from the cut stools will be promoted.

- Felling the holly will in my view have a positive influence in increasing the amount of light reaching the woodland floor and therefore this work should promote additional natural regeneration in the future.
- The Douglas Fir will not coppice but the 15% thinning out of these trees is seen as good practice given their close proximity to each other and the removal of T27 on the grounds of health and safety is accepted.
- Of all the trees identified for felling, the one that I have the greatest reservation about is T19, an oak. I have read the surveyor's comments and whilst I note the early onset of some decay and bark movement, I am not convinced that the condition of this tree merits removal at this time. If the adjacent beech T20 is to be removed then the increased light is likely to promote further lateral branch growth. It is not leaning over the road and the prevailing wind would blow this into the wood rather than out of it. My preference would be to retain this individual for the time being as I believe it to be low risk, but monitor its ongoing condition. Alternative prescriptions could be considered in the future such as pollarding if its condition deteriorates drastically.
- Finally, in order to maintain the species diversity of the wood, I would recommend conditioning some specific replacement replanting, or promotion of natural regeneration, such that the future canopy species and these individual trees are clearly identifiable. Much of the existing natural regeneration was sycamore, holly, birch and cherry. I would wish to see like for like replacement for the Oak, Wych elm and Aspen identified in the regrowth mix such that the diversity and amenity value of this woodland is retained.
- I understand that this is an application of a one off requirement to undertake the work identified in the Tree Hazard and Risk Assessment Report and accompanying Data and Tree Recommendations Table. Any further work within this woodland would require further consultation with the Authority and possibly the Forestry Commission.
- My final point relates to the current activity that the applicant is undertaking within the woodland that is evident on the ground. There appears to be areas set aside under the canopy of the woodland for the storage of building materials, machinery and vehicles of various description. My concern relates to the degree that this activity is taking place either side of the access track that runs the length of the wood. Care needs to be taken so as not to damage the root zones of the trees within this wood and storing items

on or repeatedly traversing over the root protection zones of the trees is likely to have a detrimental effect on their health and hence the health and amenity of the TPO woodland itself. This is an activity that should be picked up and addressed within the woodland management plan for the site.

I will conclude by saying that on balance, I do not intend to object to this application, indeed there is much within it that is welcomed and seen as good woodland management practice that should prolong the life of some of the individual trees and hence woodland itself. However, I would welcome further consideration being given to the points raised above and if you have any further questions or need any points of clarification then please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Kind regards,

Robert Mayhew

Head of Conservation

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