

Planning Officer: Mr Z Denton

Planning Application Ref: R/120/19/T

Location: Woodland area to front of 1 West Preston Manor Preston Paddock BN16 2AF

Description of works: Cut back 2no. holm oak trees by 3m on western side and crown reduction of 2m to 1no. cedar tree

Reasons Given: 1. T1/T2 Encroachment into road and carriageway 2. T3 To balance shape following recent limb failure

Comments on Application:

T1 Holm oak / <i>Quercus ilex</i>	Approx. height: 12m	Average spread: 5m	Age class: Mature
T2 Holm oak / <i>Quercus ilex</i>	Approx. height: 20m	Average spread: 5m	Age class: Over-mature
T3 Himalayan cedar / <i>Cedrus deodara</i>	Approx. height: 22m	Average spread: 5m	Age class: Mature

- T1 – A multi-stemmed specimen of asymmetric form, seeking light by growing out across the road to escape the canopy spread of more dominant adjacent trees. It is prominent to users of the estate access road and is so low that it will soon become an impediment to the passage of high-sided vehicles. It appears outwardly and from a distance to be in a fine physiological state.
- T2 – One of three closely-spaced large and wide spreading trees, having long ago achieved root and crown cohesion such that they can and should be classified as a group. It is not clear which tree is the subject of this application. Management objectives are likely to be similar for all three trees, in the absence of any known significant structural defect or disease. They are prominent to users of the estate access road and their high canopy is visible from the public highway (footway and carriageway). They are slightly asymmetric in form with extensive high growth forming over the access road/carriageway.
- T3 – Outwardly this tree appears to be in a fair physiological state. It is devoid of branches for much of its height, having been subject to progressive branch removal/suppression and more recently a couple of large limb failures. This has left the tree with a ‘mop-headed’ appearance, forming a compact upper crown of moderate shoot extension – it appears slightly stunted. This is a tree with low volume crown relative to its overall mass.

Conclusions:

- This is a conscientious and well-intentioned set of work proposals although I find certain elements unnecessary and potentially detrimental to those tree’s ongoing health and vitality. There is also some ambiguity around which of the four holm oak trees along the sites west boundary are intended to be worked upon.
- T1/T2 - There is a clear and necessary requirement to undertake pruning work on the holm oaks to ensure adequate overhead clearance above the carriageway (non-adopted highway).
- T3 - This tree requires careful management that acknowledges its reduced ability to acquire sufficient energy reserves and subsequent increased vulnerability to environmental changes and disease progression. The crown reduction work proposed is unnecessarily severe and if enacted to the maximum extent of 2m on all aspects would result in damaging loss of crown volume. I would go further to say that any significant limb or branch removal would be detrimental to the tree’s ongoing health and vitality. I find this element of the application to be unjustified and wholly unacceptable.

Recommendations:

- As it stands, I recommend **REFUSAL** for this application.

Advisory:

- I would like to see the applicant submit a revised specification for lesser works such as detailed below, which would clarify the trees requiring attention and seem to address the majority of their concerns whilst preventing a diminution of the tree's landscape and public amenity value:

T1 Holm oak

- *Crown lift to achieve a maximum of 6metres overhead clearance above carriageway*
- *Reduce back lateral spread on west aspect only by a maximum of 2metres*

G2 (formerly T2) Group of 3x holm oak

- *Crown lift to achieve a maximum of 6metres overhead clearance above carriageway*
- *Reduce back lateral spread on west aspect only by a maximum of 3metres*

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- If the applicant is prepared to re-submit in line with this advice, then I would be able to recommend APPROVAL subject to the following conditions:

Conditions To Be Applied to All Approved Works: -

- Where whole branches are to be removed and final cuts made close to the trunk or branch union they are to be made as shown in Figure 2 of BS3998:2010
- Where branches are to be shortened back the final cuts are to be made at the correct angle shown in BS3998:2010 and adjacent to a live bud or lateral.
- **Reasons:** To accord with current industry guidelines and sound arboricultural practice in general.

Mark Warwick
Tree Officer / Parks and Greenspace Team

Figure 2 Positions of final cuts

