

Case Officer: Harry Chalk
Reference: WA/14/22/T
Location: Gable House, The Street, Walberton, BN18 0PH
Proposal: Crown reduction of 1no. silver birch tree (T1) to height 12m and spread 9.5m
Reasons given: Too large for garden, dominates other trees and plants

Comments on Application:

Birch / *Betula pendula/pubescens* Height: 10-15m Radial spread: 0-5m Age class: Early mature

- This tree appears to be in a fine physiological state. Uniform and open limb/branch framework offers an impressive crown profile.
- Visible in part from public highway and almost entirely from Baptist Church Hall car park.
- Seems to be in harmony with its surroundings (relationship to dwellings) although naturally dominant over gardens.
- Whole crown reduction pruning will permanently alter the crown profile and visual effect.

Conclusions:

- The applicant is concerned about the dominance of this tree over garden shrubs and bedding, a view I have some sympathy with as despite birch being a relatively open-crowned tree – it is at the top-end of the rear garden and may feel oppressive.
- Improving conditions around the tree can be achieved by more sympathetic pruning (e.g., crown lifting) without incurring a loss of amenity.

Recommendation:

- As it stands, I am unable to support this application. I **would like the applicant to be invited to agree to a revised proposal for lesser works (as described below) and as part of the current application so as not to incur further delay.** Such work would go some way to addressing their concerns whilst preventing a diminution of the tree's landscape and public amenity value:
- *'Remove lowest 9 branches of variable diameter (2 from NW aspect, 1 from N aspect, 3 from E and S aspects).'*

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- If the applicant agrees to the above proposal, then I would be able to recommend APPROVAL subject to the following condition:

Condition to Be Applied to All Approved Works: -

Condition 1

Part a) 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

Part b) 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: In the interest of the tree's continued health and vitality and to accord with current industry guidelines and sound arboricultural practice.

- *See also the standard pruning guidance notes issued with the consent letter*

Advisory:

- Birch trees have a general poor tolerance of hard pruning and are susceptible to bleeding from those wounds. Long-term vitality can be severely affected. The optimum times to prune are during the summer or mid-winter periods (June to August and late-December to early-February).

Mark Warwick
Tree Officer / Greenspace

Figure 2 Positions of final cuts

