

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT

Application Ref: F/25/100593

Site Address: 10th Itchen (West End) Scout Group, Scout Hall, Elizabeth Close, Southampton, SO30 3LT

Case Officer: Katie Lasham

Description: Erection of a detached single-storey timber outbuilding, replacement section of fencing to the front boundary, installation of an Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) on proposed new fence, felling of 1 x common lime tree 'Tilia x europaea' (a tree protected by Tree Preservation Order) and replacement tree planting.

Particular Site Constraints?	Yes ☒	No ☐
Within urban edge Tree Preservation Order on site Within SSSI Impact Zone Within priority habitat lowland mixed deciduous woodland		

Planning History?	Yes ☒	No ☐
T/15/77476: Remove 2no. lowest branches to 1no. Lime, reduce long limb by up to 2m to 1no. Oak & fell 1no. Birch. Consent for tree works approved January 2016.		

Publicity:	Letters ☒	Site Notice ☐	Newspaper ☐
Representations:	Three representations have been received, including one comment and two objections. One of the two objections is a signed petition, signed by 16 local residents. The objector comments raised include: - Harmful impact with loss of tree which supports wildlife. - Replanting of oak tree will take too long to grow - Tree has TPO status so should not be removed unless unsafe - Environment should be preserved. - Increase in traffic from additional cars with lacking parking facilities - Noise increases from additional children on site and noise of vehicles The comment received raises the following points: - Useful if defibrillator is positioned on the side of the fence so that residents can use it.		
Parish Council:	No Comment		
Trees:	Site is covered by a blanket TPO. Insufficient justification provided to justify the loss of the TPO tree, and it would be impactful to visual amenity, with it located within prominent view of the public realm. Retains objection from that of the submitted pre-app even with new evidence provided as does not demonstrate any significant changes that would warrant the scheme now acceptable. Proposed oak tree to be planted is not expected to be able to reach maturity in the location identified with the space physically limited both above and below ground between the gate and the proposed outbuilding, contrary to Trees and Development SPD.		
Ecology:	No objection. Reviewed Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and raises no concerns.		

	The lime tree which is proposed to be removed has been assessed and did not have any potential bat roost features at the time of the survey. It does have the potential to be used by nesting birds. Site comprises suitable habitat for foraging/commuting bats, badgers, hazel dormice, breeding birds and hedgehogs. There is a badger sett in the woodland with at least one active entrance. License from Natural England is not required given the proposed construction method and tree removal method with the relevant impact zone buffers for the use of heavy and light machinery. Exempt from 10% BNG legislative requirement. Ecological enhancements required and safe working practicing condition required.
Drainage	A rain garden planter proposed is an appropriate surface water drainage method.
Environmental Health (noise)	No objection

Site Visit:	Yes ☒	No ☐
Details: 14 January 2026		

Policy:
National Planning Policy Framework Planning Practice Guidance Development Plan: The <u>Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2036</u> The most relevant policies are Strategic policies S1 and S2; and Development Management policies DM1, DM2, DM8, DM11; DM13; DM14 and DM36. Supplementary Planning Documents: Quality Places; Parking Standards; Character Area Appraisals; Trees and Development; Biodiversity.

Assessment:
<u>Summary of site and proposal</u> The application site is 10th Itchen Scout Group, located within a primarily residential area of West End. The Scout Hut comprises an existing L-shaped single-storey building to the west side of the plot and an existing outbuilding to the east side of the plot, set behind a metal gate and wire mesh fencing. Scout Leader car parking is set just outside of the fenced area. The rear half of the site comprises woodland and the site comprises a blanket TPO for all tree species. The TPO lime tree is located to the site frontage, set back from the fenced boundary line and due to its location and size is a visually positive and important feature within the surrounding vicinity. The application proposes the felling of the existing TPO lime tree, to create space for a new single-storey outbuilding for scouts' children to utilise, measuring 3.66m x 2.44m and a maximum of 2.26m in height to create space for a room with a table and chairs. The outbuilding is proposed to be timber cladded and painted sage green and comprises a shallow mono pitch roof. The Design and Access Statement explains that this room is not proposed to increase the provision of additional children, it is to allow for a breakout space for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and/or Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs (SEMH).

To replace the felled lime tree, a new oak tree, grown from a sapling from the scout's group, is to be planted in front of the proposed outbuilding and between the new proposed fencing. The Design and Access Statement refer to three new trees that could also be planted elsewhere within the site but no reference to where these would be planted is shown. A new Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) is proposed to be fixed onto the proposed 1.8m metal fencing and will face out onto the public side to allow it to be accessed by the community.

Principle of development

The development is within the urban edge where the principle of development is acceptable, in accordance with the aims of Policy S2 of the Local Plan. Policy DM36 of the Local Plan requires extensions to existing facilities outside of district and local centres if they comply with certain criteria. The proposed extension does not aim to expand or intensify the scout's group and instead seeks permission for a separate break out space. With no intensification of the use and only additional floor space proposed for the same number of scouts, the scheme is in accordance with Policy DM36 of the Local Plan.

Impact on character and appearance of the area

Policy DM1 of the Local Plan requires all development to respect and where possible enhance the character and appearance of the area, taking full account of mass, scale, materials, layout, density, design and siting both and in relation to adjoining buildings, spaces and views.

The proposed outbuilding is of a suitable size and scale to preserve visual amenity of the area, comprising a sage green cladding to the walls to assimilate well within the surrounding verdant setting. Whilst the outbuilding itself is acceptable, it is proposed to be located in place of an existing TPO tree, set forward of the building line and prominently located from the surrounding area.

The tree officer was consulted on the proposal and has objected to the loss of the TPO tree as it is visible from the public realm of Elizabeth Close and contributes to the visual amenity because of its location and significant size. As the tree is separated from many trees to the rear of the site, it is viewed as an individual tree and therefore the loss of this would harmfully impact the visual amenity of the area, with the proposal creating a significant loss in the existing woodland and verdant character of this site. This tree is visually prominent and has grown to an expansive size with the open space around it, but this is to be replaced an oak tree which the Design and Access Statement explaining it measures 1.5metres in height. This is not a suitable replacement, as the tree officer makes clear that because of the restricted amount of space for planting due to the siting of the outbuilding, the tree will not reach maturity, creating a significant adverse impact on the visual amenity of the area. Whilst the small tree to replace the existing substantial TPO tree would be significantly smaller, the long time it would take to grow in of itself would not be a significant concern as succession planting is in principle welcomed.

Whilst the outbuilding in its design is therefore acceptable, the required loss of the tree to create space for this, and with the further loss of low level soft landscaping surrounding the site potentially to be removed to replace the existing mesh fencing, and the planting of a tree that does not have sufficient space to grow to maturity, the proposal is considered to have a detrimental impact on the visual amenity of the site. Whilst the background setting of the scout hut is wooded in its character, this standalone TPO lime tree set forward of any other trees to the site provides a particularly important visual contribution due to its siting being visible from wide ranging views.

The Design and Access Statement has attempted to justify that the tree is not prominently visible from all surroundings of Elizabeth Close due to the large conifer tree located on The Vicarage, blocking views of the TPO lime tree. However, this is a protected tree that from many surroundings when not standing in front of the conifer is very visually prominent and adds an important positive contribution to the locality. Accordingly, the loss of the TPO tree

to be replaced with an outbuilding and replanting of a tree that will not grow to become an important visual feature in the surrounding area will create undue harm on the vicinity.

The proposal also seeks to replace the existing chain link fencing with 1.8metre high bow top polyester powder coated railings in dark green which will be of a similar material of the existing gate. The proposed plan does not clearly identify the expanse of the proposed fencing or an elevation plan of the exact fencing details which are shown indicatively in the Design and Access Statement, however this could be appropriately conditioned for a boundary treatment plan to be submitted, noting that the Design and Access Statement explain the fencing spans the front of the site from the gate to the corner of the car park. The AED to be mounted to the fence is also an acceptable alteration to preserve the character of the area.

As mentioned previously, it is also not clear from the plans whether the proposed fencing will require the total removal of the surrounding soft landscaping below the tree which offers some visual screening into the site and adds to the verdant character. If the scheme was to be acceptable in all regards, a soft landscaping condition could be added to soften the area surrounding the proposed open fencing to ensure the verdant character is retained. Overall, the proposed fencing to the site frontage is not considered such a harmful alteration as to materially harm the surrounding area.

The Grade II Listed Building Church of St James is set sufficiently far away and screened by surrounding neighbouring buildings to ensure the scheme does not have any impact on this designated heritage asset.

For the reasons stated above, the scheme is considered contrary to Policy DM1 of the Local Plan and the aims of the Quality Places SPD.

Impact on residential amenity

Paragraph 135(f) of the NPPF and Policy DM1 of the Local Plan requires all development to preserve the amenity of neighbouring residents and where possible enhance it to provide a high standard of amenity for existing and future occupiers.

The development accords with guidance set out in the 'Quality Places' SPD in that there will be no unacceptable impact on the amenity of the neighbouring properties in terms of loss of privacy, light or outlook by way of the proposed loss of the TPO tree and the proposed new outbuilding.

The environmental health officer was consulted and raised no concern with the outbuilding to be used for children. With no intensification of the site and with the outbuilding still set sufficiently away from neighbouring properties, there are no concerns raised with noise impacts or general disturbance, and the scheme is in accordance with Policy DM1 and DM8 of the Local Plan.

Impact on highway safety and parking

Policy DM14 of the Local Plan requires all proposals to provide adequate parking to ensure highway safety/traffic management. Provision will take account of the adopted Eastleigh Borough Council's Parking Standards SPD which sets out minimum requirements for parking provisions. Policy DM13 requires all development proposals that generate vehicle movements likely to have an impact on the immediate vicinity to demonstrate parking provision can be met on site.

The proposal seeks a modest increase in internal footprint with the new outbuilding to be used by the scout group. The outbuilding is not proposed to intensify the use of the scout group, but to act as a separate area that children can use for a breakout space. Representations raise concerns with traffic increase and increased drop-off and pick-ups but with no increase in intensity, this is not of concern. Even if the scout group were to increase in numbers with this additional outbuilding, the limited internal space provided

would not create any significant harm to the existing traffic and parking provision on the surrounding road.

For the reasons detailed above, there is no new harmful impact on highway safety or parking provision, and the proposal is therefore in accordance with Policies DM13 and DM14 of the Local Plan.

Impact on trees

Policy DM11 requires proposals to protect, conserve and enhance habitats including trees that are important to biodiversity and local character. The Trees and Development SPD seek development to not involve the loss of trees that add to the value of the character of the area, for their appearance or for biodiversity, unless they can be replaced with features of equivalent or enhanced value.

The proposal seeks the loss of the category C TPO lime tree to the site frontage. The tree officer was consulted on the proposal and has objected to the loss of the TPO tree as it is visible from the public realm of Elizabeth Close and contributes to the visual amenity because of its location and significant size. The tree officer further objects to the replacement oak tree as in its proposed location it will not be able to reach maturity, with a limited space shown between the outbuilding and the new fencing for the oak tree to grow. Whilst it is accepted this is a category C tree, this does not justify the loss of the protected tree, particularly as the proposed replacement tree would not be of an equivalent or enhanced value, contrary to the Trees and Development SPD. The limited space between the outbuilding and fence would not permit any future tree to replicate the important visual amenity this lime tree provides.

The tree officer further objects as insufficient justification has been provided to demonstrate there are no other alternative spaces within the site to locate the outbuilding that would ensure the retention of the TPO tree. The re-use of the existing outbuilding currently used for storage has been discounted due costs of renting a separate storage facility that would still be required and the lack of intervisibility between the scout group in the hall and those in the outbuilding. An extension to the building has been discounted on harm to existing trees RPA's and this space being utilised for external activities. The provision of an outbuilding set elsewhere within the site has also been discounted due to the site being heavily treed so even running a base and power through to the outbuilding would impact multiple trees.

However, the existing storage outbuilding and concrete slabs is located within the RPA of five protected trees therefore the principle of an outbuilding within RPAs has already been successfully achieved within the site. Whilst the existing storage outbuilding may not have power serving it, there are less wooded parts of the site an outbuilding could possibly be located on and without an arboriculturist report confirming the proposed location is the only possible area to have power serving it, justification for the outbuilding only being possible in this the location and the subsequent loss of a TPO tree to the site frontage has not been fully demonstrated by a suitably qualified arboriculturist.

For the reasons outlined, the scheme is contrary to Policies DM1 and DM11 of the Local Plan and the aims of the Trees and Development SPD.

Impact on ecology

A Preliminary Roost Appraisal was submitted in support of the proposal. The ecology officer raises no objection to the proposal and replacement tree planting of four trees, subject to the provision of biodiversity enhancements in accordance with Policy DM11 of the Local Plan and a condition added to ensure safe working practices are carried out during development to protect surrounding wildlife. Representations received raised concerns that wildlife using the tree would be impacted, however the ecology officer has raised no concerns in this regard, welcoming the provision of a replacement tree and three other trees

planted within the site to be used for wildlife. There are no likely significant impacts on the SPA.

Planning Balance

The LPA support proposals for enhancements to community facilities that provide additional on-site amenities for users of the scout group including members with SEMH and/or SEN needs and recognises the community benefits of a proposed AED defibrillator and ecological enhancements. However, this proposal has not provided clear and convincing justification that has been corroborated by a suitably qualified arboriculturist that justifies the outbuilding can only be in this one location as to not impact RPAs and allow power to the outbuilding, such that it requires the loss of the TPO lime tree to the site frontage that provides a significant contribution to the surrounding visual amenity of the area. Further compounding matters, the replacement planting of an oak tree to the site frontage has insufficient space to reach full maturity, with the replacement tree significantly less visually prominent than the tree to be felled.

On balance therefore, whilst the benefits of the scheme are recognised, they are not considered sufficient to outweigh the harm afforded onto the site and is thus contrary to Policies DM1 and DM11 of the Local Plan and the Trees and Development SPD.

Climate Change

In July 2019, the Council declared a Climate Change and Environmental Emergency. In doing so it agreed, among other things, to: (a) put in place measures to ensure the Council's own operations and functions achieve carbon neutrality; (b) work with partners to aim for all projects and services delivered in the Borough to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030; (c) ensure that the Council's procurement policy recognises carbon neutrality as one of its primary considerations; and (d) recognise the urgency of action to mitigate and adapt to climate change in every decision taken by the Council. This is underpinned by the Climate and Environment Emergency Strategy 2020–2030 and the supporting Climate and Environmental Emergency Action Plan – Update June 2020.

The declaration of the Climate Change and Environmental Emergency demonstrates a strong commitment from the Council to achieve net zero. The NPPF, development plan and adopted local plan policy do not set this as a specific target, but it is a material consideration to be considered alongside all other material considerations. In any case addressing climate change is a core part of the NPPF and local plan policy. The need to support the economy is part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment for the adopted local plan, as is an assessment of climate impacts.

The NPPF aims for the need for housing to be met, and policy S2 of the Local Plan sets a target for 14,580 dwellings to be provided by 2036. The NPPF, Policies S1, DM2 and DM3 of the Local Plan and energy and water elements of the adopted Environmentally Sustainable Development SPD require development to be sustainable in terms of resource use, climate change and energy use. When considering the impact of climate change, the proposed development is expected to be resilient to the potential effects of climate change and is expected to reduce/limit impacts on climate emissions as a result of the development or its use.

Equalities Implications

Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 created the public sector equality duty. Section 149 states:

- A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
 - a. eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - b. advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;

- c. foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

When making policy decisions, the Council must take account of the equality duty and in particular any potential impact on protected groups. It is considered that this application does not raise any equality implications.

Conclusion:

Recommendation:

PERMIT ☐

REFUSE ☒

Comments ...