



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 October 2025

by **Margaret Wright BSc (Hons) MSc MArborA**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 05 November 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/TPO/W1715/10390

3 Hocombe Park Close, Chandler's Ford, Hampshire, SO53 5PT

- The appeal is made under regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation) (England) Regulations 2012 against a refusal to grant consent to undertake works to a tree protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO).
 - The appeal is made by Mr Caplin against the decision of Eastleigh Borough Council.
 - The application Ref: T/24/98101, dated 1 September 2024, was refused in part by notice dated 17 October 2024.
 - The work proposed is
 - T1 Acer to be reduced by approximately 2 metres.
 - T2 Beech tree limbs growing towards house to be reduced by approximately 3 metres.
 - T3 Sweet Chestnut tree to be pollarded and left at approximately 8 metres in height.
 - G1 Group of Rhododendron along boundary to be reduced by approximately 2 metres.
 - The relevant TPO is Eastleigh Borough Council Tree Preservation Order No 236 Hocombe Road (Cordoba – Brook Cottage), Hocombe Drive (2-18 & 3-5), Hocombe Park Close, Chandlers Ford, which was confirmed on 12 July 1993.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed insofar as it relates to the work originally applied for as set out in the fourth bullet point above. The appeal is allowed insofar as the same specification as above, save for the reduction of the crown by a lesser amount of 3 metres (m), subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The work for which consent is hereby granted shall be implemented within two years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The aforementioned work shall be carried out in accordance with British Standard BS3998:2010 *Tree Work – Recommendations*.

Preliminary matters

2. The Council has issued a split decision, approving works to T1, T2 and G1 and refusing works to T3. The appeal relates only to the element refused; the remainder of the consent stands and is unaffected by this decision.
3. The Council also granted consent for a modified specification. In particular, it approved a reduction of the beech tree (T2) to provide 3 metres clearance from the property rather than a 3 metre branch length reduction as originally applied for. That element of the decision has not been appealed and therefore does not fall to me for consideration. My decision relates solely to the refused works.

Main issues

4. The main issues in this case are the effect of the proposed work on the character and appearance of the area and whether sufficient justification has been provided.

Reasons

5. The tree is a mature sweet chestnut situated in the rear garden of No 3 Hocombe Park Close. It forms the foremost element of a boundary group separating the garden from the adjoining property. By virtue of its position at the leading edge of this group, the chestnut contributes to both the wind dynamics as well as the visual presence of the group when seen from the nearby highway. This tree group provides a green corridor linking gardens with Hocombe Mead beyond.
6. Given the visibility of the tree, as well as its connections to the nearby nature reserve, I am satisfied that the chestnut, and the group to which it belongs, makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area. Pollarding the tree would inevitably have a harmful effect on the contribution the chestnut tree makes to the group and the locality. Given this, any justification for the works must be convincing and compelling. It is to those reasons, the second main issue, to which I now turn.
7. The heavy reduction/pollarding proposed would remove a substantial portion of the crown, unbalancing the tree and risking decay through large pruning wounds. Sweet chestnut does not respond well to extensive crown reduction, and the works would exceed accepted arboricultural practice. However, the Regulations enable me to consider the application from first principles provided no prejudice occurs. To that end, a modest reduction of up to 3m would maintain the tree's structure and allow it to retain its leading role within the group. The younger trees nearby would continue to provide visual continuity, and the effect on the visual cohesion of the group would therefore be limited.
8. I recognise the concerns regarding the overall condition of the tree and potential for branch loss given the failure of the large branch. I also note the letter of support emphasising those concerns. However, on the evidence before me, I am not persuaded that pollarding is the only solution, or that less extensive options have been fully considered. In my judgement, there remains a reasonable basis for allowing a proportionate response, and a lesser degree of pruning would reasonably address perceived risk without harming the tree's health or its appearance within the group.
9. In that context, and in accordance with the Planning Practice Guidance, where the arboricultural justification for works is limited, reasons to approve need not be compelling if the effect of those works would be minor. A reduction of up to 3m would have a temporary effect on appearance, with the tree expected to recover quickly and continue its contribution to the character and appearance of the area. Those works, whilst not achieving the appellant's desired outcome would not lead to any prejudice as they would be substantially less than originally applied for.

Conclusion

10. Any application for work to a protected tree requires a balancing exercise to be undertaken. The effect of the proposed work on the character and appearance of the area needs to be weighed against the justification put forward for the work. Given the harm to the character and appearance of the area would be minimal, and the smaller reduction works would ensure no large branches are cut, I see no reason to withhold consent for a lesser amount of works, which would also provide the appellant with some reassurance against future branch failures.
11. Therefore, the appeal will succeed in part and I shall allow the lesser amount of works reducing the crown by no more than 3 metres, subject to conditions.

Margaret Wright

INSPECTOR