

Officer Report

Application No.	25/0320/FH/TCA
Site Address	LAND REAR OF TAMARISK, THE UNDERCLIFF, SANDGATE, FOLKESTONE, CT20 3AT
Officer Name	Luke Webb
Proposal	Works to trees in a Conservation area comprising of T1-T13 Sycamores prune 13 sycamores back to previous reduction points, removal of approx 3 metres of new growth.

Recommendation

Report Number	RD-436986
Recommended Decision	Recommended to be No Objections
Recommendation Date	31 March 2025

Report

SITE VISIT

A site visit was undertaken on 24/03/2025.

The site and proposals were assessed from the Undercliff, Sandgate High Street and areas of the public realm.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The site is a steep wooded piece of land on the south west side of The Undercliff, a narrow 'no through' road which winds its way northwards from Sandgate High Street. The site is set in a secluded location containing a number of areas of woodland and large detached properties. It is set on the hillside to the north of the attractive coastal village of Sandgate and within the designated conservation area.

The thirteen Sycamores that are subject to this notification stand to the south of Tamarisk (formally Clear View) on a parcel of land which slopes steeply down to meet the boundaries of properties in The Crescent. The trees are just outside Tree Preservation Order No 3 of 1973 which extends over a number of parcels of land and properties in this location. They are fairly visible in the street scene and together with adjoining vegetation, are considered to make a valuable contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

There have been four previous applications for works to trees at this address:

20/0875/FH/TCA - Works to trees situated within a conservation area comprising: T1 Sycamore -re-pollard to previous pollard points; T2 Sycamore - reduce height by 5 metres - No Objection

20/0836/FH - Various pruning works to six Sycamores (T3, T4, T5, T8, T9 and T10), all subject of Tree Preservation Order No 3 of 1973 - Approved with Conditions

Y07/1522/SH 25% - Crown reduction of 12 Sycamores in a conservation area – no objection

Y01/0186/SH - Pollarding of 5 Sycamores in a conservation area – no objection

PROPOSAL

The application has been made by the owner/occupier of the dwelling to the north of the trees (Tamarisk) and comprises:

Works to trees in a Conservation area comprising of T1-T13 Sycamores prune 13 sycamores back to previous reduction points, removal of approx 3 metres of new growth.

ASSESSMENT

All of the trees were semi mature Sycamores that stood immediately to the south of the application property in an area of private land to the north of The Crescent. The trees measured approximately 9 meters in height and had stem diameters that ranged from 250-350mm in diameter in breast height (dbh). The average crown spreads of the trees was 4 meters and the extension growth from the previous pruning measured approximately 3 meters which is consistent with the previous application that as approved in 2020.

The majority of the trees were set on a steep slope and formed part of a wider matrix of slope structural vegetation but were not fully accessible at the time of the site visit due to dense ivy, vegetation and steep topography. Whilst a detailed inspection could not be undertaken at the time of the site visit, all of the trees were observed from a distance and appeared to be in reasonable health.

PUBLICITY

Site Notice displayed. Expiry date: 19/03/2025

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Sandgate Parish Council: No objections subject to the views of the Tree Officer.

RELEVANT POLICIES

The Development Plan comprises the Core Strategy Review 2022 and the Places and Policies Local Plan 2020.

Places and Policies Local Plan Policies Policies HB1 and HE1

Core Strategy Review (2022): SS1 (Spatial Strategy)

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 Section 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.

National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) Natural Environment

Town & Country Planning Act 1990 and Town Country Planning (Tree Preservation) (England) Regulations 2012.

APPRAISAL

The group of trees provides an important landscape feature in this location and make a positive contribution to the wooded escarpment.

The trees have been reduced previously to keep them managed and the works as proposed are a repeat of those undertaken previously as such it would not be appropriate to withhold consent on this occasion.

The proposed works are minor in nature and are considered reasonable and in line with good arboricultural practice to keep the trees managed. Furthermore, It is not considered that the proposed works will be detrimental to their long term health or form, or be harmful to the character and appearance of the conservation area

IMPACT

PPLP Policy HB1 is a general design policy, which has been written to ensure that good design standards are considered during the evaluation of planning applications and PPLP HE1 has been written to ensure the protection of the historic environment. In association with this application it is the conservation area

that is the historic asset and so the impact of the works has to be considered in relation to the visual aesthetic of street scene and the character of the conservation area.

The proposed works are a repeat of those that have been previously carried out. They are minor in nature and will not have a significant impact on the appearance of the trees, the visual aesthetic of street scene, the character of the historic environment or settings of the conservation area, therefore, are considered to be compatible with the aforementioned local policies.

RECOMMENDATION

In light of the above, it is considered the proposal complies with the above policies and the NPPF and therefore no objections are raised.

Suggested Informatives (5)

1

This decision is valid for two years from the date of submission of your valid notification and the operation may only be carried out once unless otherwise stated. If you do not carry out the works within this period, you must submit a new notification if you wish to proceed.

2

All works hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the provisions of the current edition of BS 3998 by a competent person.

3

Care should be taken to consider nesting birds between March and September as in accordance with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and also the need to consider the protection of any roosting or foraging bats afforded protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017) (as amended).

4

Works to trees could result in disturbance to wild animals, plants and important wildlife sites protected by law. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that appropriate precautions are taken to ensure that an offence is not committed. Further advice can be sought from Natural England and/or Kent Wildlife Trust.

The material generated from the tree work hereby permitted should be disposed of, or processed as necessary, to leave the site in a safe and tidy condition following each phase/ completion of the work.