

DELEGATED APPLICATIONS

ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO: DC/25/2077: 8 Palmer Close Storrington.

REPRESENTATION AND CONSULTATION RESPONSES:

Storrington and Sullington Parish Council has stated natural response to this proposal, subject the considerations of the HDC Arboricultural Officer.

No additional representations have been received in respect of this application.

ASSESSMENT:

1. The tree that is the subject of this application is a mature twin-stemmed specimen of *Betula pendula* (Silver Birch), with two co-dominant stems arising from a single basal union.

2. The tree is located within the rear garden of the above property. It is protected by the Area Tree Preservation Order (TPO), TPO/0172 which covers the wider estate; the order was served on 11-04-1967. The Silver Birch is considered to pre-date the making of the TPO, and it is of an age and presence consistent with trees intended to be retained under the Area TPO designation.

3. The applicant seeks consent to fell the tree due to concerns regarding its overall structural integrity, in particular the connection between the co-dominant stems and the pronounced lean of the eastern stem. In addition, they consider that tree's central position within the rear garden reduces the usability of the main garden area.

4. The crown of the tree is visible from within Palmer Close above the property. The tree is also visible from Heathlands to the east due to a break in the building line, and from the twitten, which forms a boundary between the two estates. Its removal would therefore be partly noticeable from public vantage points, particularly from the twitten and the adjacent estate to the east. However, other trees are present within the grounds, including a small Oak and a more mature Pine. The Pine is clearly visible within the wider area and makes a substantial contribution to the overall amenity of the locality.

5. The tree has historically been subject to surgery works to manage its size and form in relation to its residential setting, and cable bracing has been installed within the upper canopy. Cable bracing is an arboricultural technique used to provide supplemental structural support to trees that possess weak unions, included bark, or co-dominant stems. The system typically comprises flexible steel cables installed between limbs in order to limit excessive movement during high winds and reduce the likelihood of structural failure, while still allowing a degree of natural movement.

6. In this case, the installed bracing system is currently observed to be extremely taut and appears no longer to be functioning as originally intended. Over time, as trees increase in girth and respond to mechanical stresses, long-term bracing can alter natural load distribution and growth patterns. It is considered likely that the structural dynamics of the tree have adapted to the presence of the bracing, such that each stem now relies upon the other for shared mechanical stability. The more easterly stem exhibits a pronounced lean over an outbuilding within the applicant's garden, increasing the potential consequences should structural failure occur.

7. Given the length of time the cable bracing has been in situ, it is likely that the two co-dominant stems have developed a degree of structural interdependence. The removal of the more easterly, heavily leaning stem in isolation would significantly alter load distribution within the remaining structure and may introduce increased torsional stress at the basal union. This could compromise the structural integrity of the retained stem and potentially precipitate subsequent failure.

8. In view of these factors, selective removal of one stem is not considered an appropriate or sustainable long-term solution, to the issue, as the overall structural resilience of the tree has likely been altered by the prolonged presence of the bracing system. Therefore, on balance, and in this instance the structural concerns with the tree are considered sufficient to justify removal. Retention through further adjustment of the bracing is unlikely to provide a reliable long-term solution, and partial works to remove only one stem would exacerbate structural risk.

9. It is considered that removal of the tree would not result in a significant erosion of the wider treed character of the area, subject to a condition requiring replacement planting within the next available planting season (November to March). A suitable replacement would comprise a medium-sized native species appropriate to the scale of the garden, such as Field Maple (*Acer campestre*) or Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*), planted as a standard tree of 10–12cm girth in a broadly similar position were reasonably practicable.

RECOMMENDATION:

Grant consent subject to the conditions below.

CONDITIONS TO BE APPLIED:

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| 1. TR2 | <i>Time limit, 2 years</i> |
| 2. TR7 | <i>Replacement (Single tree)</i> |
| TINF1 | <i>Note to applicant.</i> |
| TINF2 | <i>Wildlife protection.</i> |

DELEGATED

Authorising Officer sign.....ANBU..... **Arboricultural Officer (Development).**

Date.....02 Mar 26...