



Development Management
 Southampton City Council
 Lower Ground Floor, Civic Centre
 Southampton
 SO14 7LY

Tel: 023 8083 2603
 Email: planning@southampton.gov.uk
 Website: www.southampton.gov.uk/planning/

For Office Use Only

Date received:

Fee:

Application No:

Application for tree works: works to trees subject to a tree preservation order (TPO) and/or notification of proposed works to trees in a conservation area.

Town and Country Planning Act 1990

Publication of applications on planning authority websites.

Please note that the information provided on this application form and in supporting documents may be published on the Authority's website. If you require any further clarification, please contact the Authority's planning department.

1. Trees Location

Number	<input type="text"/>
Suffix	<input type="text"/>
Property name	<input type="text"/>
Address line 1	<input type="text"/>
Address line 2	<input type="text"/>
Address line 3	<input type="text"/>
Town/city	<input type="text"/>
Postcode	<input type="text"/>

If the location is unclear or there is not a full postal address, describe as clearly as possible where it is (for example, 'Land to rear of 12 to 18 High Street' or 'Woodland adjoining Elm Road')

Easting (x)	<input type="text" value="444886"/>
Northing (y)	<input type="text" value="115413"/>

Description

Marlhill Copse:
 Land lying to the south of Mansbridge Road Southampton and land on the south side of Mansbridge Road Southampton collectively known as "Marlhill Copse"

The trees within this application are at various points along the main path running through Marlhill Copse. Running from River Walk to The Gregg School.

2. Applicant Details

Title	<input type="text" value="Mr"/>
First name	<input type="text" value="Mike"/>
Surname	<input type="text" value="Weeks"/>
Company name	<input type="text" value="Southampton International Airport Ltd"/>
Address line 1	<input type="text" value="Southampton International Airport"/>
Address line 2	<input type="text" value="Mitchell Way"/>

2. Applicant Details

Address line 3	<input type="text"/>
Town/city	<input type="text" value="Southampton"/>
Country	<input type="text" value="UK"/>
Postcode	<input type="text" value="SO18 2NL"/>
Primary number	<input type="text"/>
Secondary number	<input type="text"/>
Fax number	<input type="text"/>
Email address	<input type="text"/>

Are you an agent acting on behalf of the applicant?

Yes No

3. Agent Details

No Agent details were submitted for this application

4. What Are You Applying For?

Are you seeking consent for works to tree(s) subject to a Tree Preservation Order?

Yes No

Are you wishing to carry out works to tree(s) in a conservation area?

Yes No

5. Identification of Tree(s) and Description of Works

Please identify the tree(s) and provide a full and clear specification of the works you want to carry out.

You might find it useful to contact an arborist (tree surgeon) for help with defining appropriate work.

Where trees are protected by a Tree Preservation Order, please number them as shown in the First Schedule to the Tree Preservation Order where this is available. You should use the same numbering on your sketch plan (see help for sketch plan requirements).

Please provide the following information:

- Tree species
- The number used on the sketch plan); and
- A description of the proposed works.

Where trees are protected by a Tree Preservation Order you must also provide:

- Reasons for the work; and where trees are being felled
- Proposals for planting replacement trees (including quantity, species, position and size) or reasons for not wanting to replant.

e.g. Oak (T3) - fell because of excessive shading and low amenity value. Replant with one standard ash in same position.

- Pine (Monterey) (T119) - Fell to ground. Multiple dead/dying branches overhanging adjacent property and garden. Very large scaffold stems, major dead wood throughout crown. History of major limb failure. Girdling roots. Resin bleeding at ground level east side up to 6m to main union. Falling pine cones also hazardous to adjacent property and footpath. Tree estimated at 100+ years and beyond useful life expectancy. Replant 3 trees. Replanting location and tree types to be agreed with SCC.

- Pine (Monterey) (T120) - Fell to ground. Multiple dead/dying branches overhanging adjacent property and garden. Some broken and snapped limbs, deadwood throughout canopy & bias to south over garden. History of major limb failure along pine crest. Stem co-dominant at 4m AGL, very large scaffold stems. Slight swelling around root collar. Falling pine cones also hazardous to adjacent property and footpath. Tree estimated at 100+ years and beyond useful life expectancy. Replant 3 trees. Replanting location and tree types to be agreed with SCC.

- Pine (Monterey) (T124) - Fell to ground. Multiple dead/dying branches overhanging adjacent property and garden. Heavily bias to south over garden, ivy clad, multiple scaffold stems, moderate deadwood in canopy. History of major limb failure along pine crest. Falling pine cones also hazardous to adjacent property and footpath. Tree estimated at 100+ years and beyond useful life expectancy. Replant 3 trees. Replanting location and tree types to be agreed with SCC.

Ash (Common) (T162) - Fell to Ground. Large stem cavity. Very poor form. Previously cut back and topped over adjacent garden. Trunk wound and decay. Vigorous regrowth. Leaning over buildings. Replant 3 trees. Replanting location and tree types to be agreed with SCC.

Beech (Common) (T163) - Branches overhanging adjacent footpath. Moderate dead wood throughout crown. History of previous pruning to crown lift over gardens. 3x Ganoderma fruiting fungal brackets at three separate locations around root crown (East / West / South sides). Triple stem inclusion at 2.5m AGL. Replant 3 trees. Replanting location and tree types to be agreed with SCC.

6. Trees - Additional Information

For all trees

6. Trees - Additional Information

A sketch plan clearly showing the position of trees listed in the question 'Identification of Tree(s) and Description of Works' MUST be provided when applying for works to trees covered by a Tree Preservation Order. A sketch plan is also advised when notifying the LPA of works to trees in a conservation area (see guidance notes).

It would also be helpful if you provided details of any advice given on site by an LPA officer.

For works to trees covered by a TPO

Please note: If none of the proposed work involves trees covered by a TPO, please answer 'No' to the two questions below

Please indicate whether the reasons for carrying out the proposed works include any of the following. If so, your application MUST be accompanied by the necessary evidence to support your proposals (see guidance notes for further details).

1. Condition of the tree(s) - e.g. it is diseased or you have fears that it might break or fall Yes No

If Yes, you are required to provide written arboricultural advice or other diagnostic information from an appropriate expert.

2. Alleged damage to property - e.g. subsidence or damage to drains or drives. Yes No

If Yes, you are required to provide for:

- Subsidence: A report by an engineer or surveyor (to include a description of damage, vegetation, monitoring data, soil, roots and repair proposals) and a report from an arboriculturist to support the tree work proposals.

- Other structural damage (e.g. drains walls and hard surfaces): Written technical evidence from an appropriate expert, including description of damage and possible solutions.

Documents and plans (for any tree)

Are you providing additional information in support of your application (e.g. an additional schedule of work for question 'Identification of Tree(s) and Description of Works')? Yes No

If Yes, please provide the reference numbers of plans, documents, professional reports, photographs etc in support of your application

01 - Tree Surveys Report (dated 17th February 2020)
02 - Property Risk Inspection Report (dated 27th November 2019) - including site plan and photographs
03 - Summary spreadsheet (dated 12th March 2020), following joint site visit with SCC
04 - Tree T163 Drilling Data

7. Tree Ownership

Is the applicant the owner of the tree(s)? Yes No

8. Tree Preservation Order Details

If you know which TPO protects the tree(s), enter its title or number

- T2 - 020 Town & Country Planning ACT 1947 - The Southampton (Townhill Park - Cutbush Lane) Tree Preservation Order, 1956
- Itchen Valley Conservation Area

9. Authority Employee/Member

With respect to the Authority, is the applicant and/or agent one of the following:

- (a) a member of staff
- (b) an elected member
- (c) related to a member of staff
- (d) related to an elected member

It is an important principle of decision-making that the process is open and transparent. Yes No

For the purposes of this question, "related to" means related, by birth or otherwise, closely enough that a fair-minded and informed observer, having considered the facts, would conclude that there was bias on the part of the decision-maker in the Local Planning Authority.

Do any of the above statements apply?

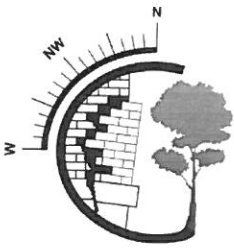
10. Trees - Declaration

I/we hereby apply for planning permission/consent as described in this form and the accompanying plans/drawings and additional information. I/we confirm that, to the best of my/our knowledge, any facts stated are true and accurate and any opinions given are the genuine opinions of the person(s) giving them.

Date (cannot be pre-application)

Marlhill Copse - March 2020 - TPO Application

Tree Number	Species	Height (m)	Crown Spread (m)	DBH (mm)	No of Stems	Condition	Age Class	Observation	SPH/SN/VTA-20/03.02 - Tree Surveys Report Recommendation	Agreed actions 5th March 2020
T119	Pine (Monterey)	33	20	1200	1	Poor	Over Mature	Adjacent to garden gate, girdling roots, resin bleeding at GL east side up to 6m AGL to main union. Very large scaffold stems major deadwood, unsuitable for retention. Low useful life expectancy.	Fell to ground level. Prior to felling undertake preliminary bat survey for potential bat roosts	*TPO Application - Fell per recommendation Tether at risk limbs if necessary - short term measure
T120	Pine (Monterey)	26.2	20	1200	2	Poor	Over Mature	Some broken & snapped limbs, deadwood throughout canopy & bias to south over garden, stem co dominant at 4m AGL, very large scaffold stems. Slight swelling around root collar, low useful life expectancy.	Remove all deadwood over 25 millimetre in diameter and remove any broken or snapped branches *Update (site meeting 5th March) - Fell to Ground Level - Following adjacent storm damage and increased risk of property & personnel damage during deadwood removal	*TPO Application - Fell per recommendation Tether at risk limbs if necessary - short term measure
T124	Pine (Monterey)	29.8	24	1200	2	Poor	Over Mature	Heavily bias to south, overhangs garden, ivy clad, multiple scaffold stems, moderate deadwood, good physiological condition. Low useful life expectancy.	Fell to create monolith at 10 metre AGL. Prior to felling undertake preliminary bat survey for potential bat roosts	*TPO Application - Fell per recommendation Tether at risk limbs if necessary - short term measure
T162	Ash (Common)	10	6	450	1	Poor	Mature	Large stem cavity, topped, very poor form.	Fell to ground level	*TPO Application - Fell per recommendation
T163	Beech (Common)	32	20	950	1	Poor	Mature	Fungal fruiting body east, west & south sides, triple stem inclusion at 2.5m AGL.	Fell to ground level	*TPO Application - Fell per recommendation



Tree Surveys

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Bramley House
Newnham Bridge
Tenbury Wells
WR15 8NX

Tel: [REDACTED]
Mobile: [REDACTED]

24th March 2020

FAO
Mr M Weeks
Southampton International Airport Ltd
Wide lane
Southampton
SO18 2NL

Ref: SPH/SN/VTA-20/03.02/CL

Dear Mr Weeks

Re: Removal of 5 trees at Marlhill Copse

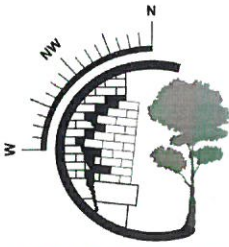
Thank you for your instructions to provide a written summary of the high risk trees extracted from our tree survey ref: SPH/SN/VTA-20/03.02. We have concentrated on 5 trees that are considered to be of high risk. These trees are numbered as T119, T120, T124, T162 and T163 from the tree survey schedule.

T119, T120 and T124 are Monterey pines located close to the southern boundary of Marlhill Copse, in close proximity to the houses located in Beverley Heights and Wilmington Close. The trees are up to 33 metres in height and although a significant feature within the landscape these trees are considered to be at the end of their safe, useful life expectancy.

Monterey pines were introduced to the UK in 1833 and are a very fast growing species with young trees growing over 2 metres a year, they have an average lifespan of between 80 to 90 years. The Monterey pines at Marlhill Copse may have been planted around 1860 and, therefore, could be as much as 160 years old. As these trees age the risk of decay and decline increases, they should be considered to be at high risk of failure.

During the recent high winds, a limb failure occurred to one of the trees, this event further supports our opinion that the trees are at the end of their useful life expectancy and the potential for further failures increases with age and time.

T162: an ash tree of poor quality and form with a large cavity to the eastern side and is considered unsuitable for retention.



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T163: a beech tree with fungal fruiting bodies around its basal area and stem inclusions at the main stem union 2.5 metres above ground level. This tree is also located in an area of high risk, being in close proximity to dwellings located to the south and overhanging the footpath to the north. Micro drillings conducted to the tree revealed significant decay around the base and within the stem extending in places up to 1.5 metres above ground level. The tree must be considered to be at high risk of failure.

Due to the location, size, target area and frequency of use, the trees backing onto the residential homes of Moat Hill, St Helena Gardens, Maryland Close, Beverley Heights and Wilmington Close and overhanging the access road into Marlhill Copse are considered to be of high risk and therefore must be managed accordingly to reduce the risk to acceptable levels.

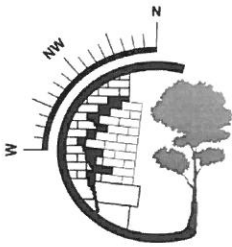
In recommending these works all tree works must be carried out in accordance with British Standard *BS 3998:2010. Tree Work - Recommendations*, and should be undertaken by a properly qualified and experienced tree contracting company. It is advised that they should carry public and products liability insurance of £5 million cover.

We trust that our investigations and recommendations are of reassurance and assistance to you. Should you have any queries or concerns please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely



Simon Holmes MSc. MICFor
Chartered Arboriculturist
Tree Surveys



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Bramley House
Newnham Bridge
Tenbury Wells
WR15 8NX

Tel: [REDACTED]
Mobile: [REDACTED]

28th May 2020

FAO

[REDACTED]
Southampton International Airport Ltd
Wide lane
Southampton
SO18 2NL

Ref: SPH/TPO-20/28.05

Dear [REDACTED]

Re: Marlhill Copse – Timeline and supporting information regarding the re-determination of Tree Preservation Order (TPO) Application 20/00067/TPO

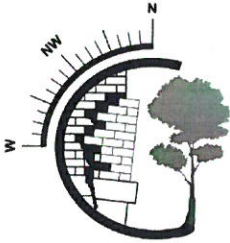
This supporting letter sets out the timeline from the start of Tree Surveys' involvement from January 2020 to the date of this letter and the background information that was available at the relevant times as set out below. This letter also sets out our assessment under Regulation 17(3) of the Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation) (England) Regulations 2012.

Timeline

Following a site visit on 10 January 2020, Tree Surveys were instructed on 30 January 2020 by Southampton International Airport Limited (SIAL) to undertake a hazard tree assessment survey and compile a report for 106 trees at Marlhill Copse. Tree Surveys identified from their own desktop study that the site was one of Southampton City Council's Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINC), and is on Historic England's List of Registered Gardens.

The actual tree assessment was undertaken between Tuesday 4 February and Friday 7 February 2020. The data collected was then interrogated at Tree Surveys' offices. An assessment was carried out of the trees' physiological and structural condition, and any associated cultural action or risk reduction actions, based on:- species profile, size, age range, growing conditions, exposure, proximity to and types of properties and public access and impacts on biodiversity and landscape. The completed tree report and copies of the decay detection results from trees at Marlhill Copse were issued on Tuesday 18 February 2020 to [REDACTED] for SIAL.

The actual survey and assessment was undertaken by Tree Surveys staff with over 30 years' experience in the field of visual tree assessment (VTA), see Appendix 1 for the CV of the staff involved.



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The specified tree risk actions recommended by Tree Surveys are always specifically intended to limit the risk of harm to people or property, while having regard, whenever possible, to retaining trees, landscape character and biodiversity.

On the 5 March 2020, a joint site meeting with Southampton City Council was scheduled, but was postponed to 12 March 2020. On 12 March 2020, Tree Surveys attended a joint site meeting with Southampton Council's Officers: [REDACTED] (Tree Officer) and [REDACTED] (Service Manager) along with representatives of SIAL including: [REDACTED] of SIAL, [REDACTED] of SIAL, [REDACTED] Tree Surgeons), and [REDACTED] (Woodland Consultant), which was convened to discuss the findings of the hazard tree assessment report and proposed recommendations, and to consider the implications of storm damage arising from the storms Ciara on 8/9 February 2020 and Dennis 15/16 February 2020.

At this meeting the recent loss of a large branch from tree T119, a Monterey Pine was discussed, as the event highlighted the increased risk of failure to mature trees during adverse weather events. This incident was discussed on site with the Council's Tree Officer, and it was agreed in light of this most recent limb failure and the risk to the public and neighbouring properties posed by the risk of further limb failures or complete tree failure that the recommended course of action for this tree should be to 'fell'.

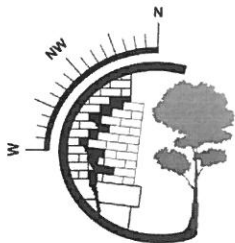
The recommended mitigation measure for all three Monterey Pine trees were discussed, in light of the limb failure of T119, since all three trees are of a similar size, age and condition. It was agreed that the appropriate action to take was to 'fell' and this is set out in the summary schedule accompanying the application (in column headed "Agreed actions 12 March 2020 – note that the original schedule referred to 5 March 2020 which is a typographical error. We understand that SIAL is re-submitting this schedule with the date corrected to 12 March 2020, being the date of the site visit referred to above).

The Ash T162 was also discussed in light of the recommendation to fell in the February hazard tree assessment report. The large stem cavity observed during the original inspection by Tree Surveys was inspected during the meeting, and it was agreed that the recommendation to fell was appropriate due to the risk to the public and neighbouring properties posed by the tree's close proximity to those properties, and the lack of amenity and landscape function the tree provided due to its poor form.

In addition, the Beech (T163) was also discussed given the recommendation to fell in the February hazard tree assessment report due to fungal fruiting bodies. It was agreed that this recommendation was appropriate due to the extent of internal stem decay, detected by Tree Surveys' micro drillings.

Application 20/000676/TPO was submitted to Southampton City Council, along with the above Tree Assessment report (of 18 February) and the Summary Schedule (from the joint site meeting of the 12 March 2020), on the 13 March 2020. This application was subsequently withdrawn following a request by the Council.

On the 24 March 2020 Tree Surveys submitted a letter to SIAL, following a request by them to provide a summary rationale for the proposed actions (following the site visit on 12 March 2020) to mitigate the risks posed by the three Monterey Pines (T119, T120 and T124), and the Ash (T162) and Beech (T163).



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The above letter of 24 March 2020 and the Visual Tree Assessment and Decay Detection results from the Marlhill Copse report are written as expert reports for consideration by Council officers as part of a TPO application (i.e. being assessed by professional arboriculturists who are experienced and aware of the techniques used in the visual tree assessment process, and who had also visited the site and viewed the condition of the trees for themselves). A copy of this letter was forwarded to the Council and it was posted on the Council's website on the 30 March 2020.

TPO application 20/00067/TPO was originally determined by the Council on 5 May 2020. Works commenced under that consent, with the Beech T163 being felled over consecutive days beginning on 11 May 2020 and completed on 14 May 2020. Works have subsequently been instructed to cease. We understand that this is the result of litigation against the Council's decision to grant the TPO consent. We further understand that the Council has agreed to this TPO consent being quashed by the Court, meaning that the application will be re-determined by the Council.

As a result, on 15 May 2020 SIAL instructed Tree Surveys to provide a timeline of our involvement at Marlhill Copse and provide information in support of the re-determination of application 20/00067/TPO.

Since the 24 March 2020 Tree Surveys have had sight of the following documents:

- a) Copy of the Tree Officers comments, dated 21 April 2020;
- b) Southampton Council's Consent dated 5 May 2020 for felling of the trees T162, T163, T119, T120 and T121 and the attached condition regarding replacement planting;
- c) Southampton Council's short briefing to Cabinet / EMT held virtually on 30 April 2020;
- d) The officer's Delegated Decision Notice (DDN) dated 4 May 2020.

Reviewing the above documents Tree Surveys would make the following observations/comment:

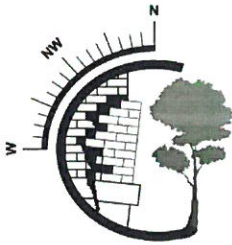
Item (a), the comments of officers reflect the discussions and recommendations agreed upon at the site visit on 12 March 2020. In all three instances, the Southampton tree officers come to the same conclusions on the reasons for the need to fell the three Monterey Pine, T119, T120 and T124, as Tree Surveys, i.e. that the risk of harm to the people living in the properties adjacent to the trees the subject of the tree work application 20/00067/TPO can only be mitigated by felling, and outweighs the amenity value of the trees.

Item (d), the DDN sets out the same reasons as in Item (c) for giving permission to fell the trees and also the implications if the application were refused.

“Refuse the application

If the application were to be refused, there is a risk of branch or whole tree failure. Given the proximity to local residents this could be catastrophic and could result in loss of life or significant damage to property. The City Council would also be at risk of liability for 12 months after the date of refusal.”

The additional above information that has been made available to Tree Surveys since 24 March 2020 supports the reasons for recommending the felling of the trees as set out in our letter to Southampton Airport dated 24 March 2020.



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Conclusions and Assessment under Regulation 17

The three Monterey Pine trees (T119, T120 and T124) are well beyond the normal natural age range for the species, the average lifespan is 80 to 90 years and in our opinion the trees were most probably planted around 1860 therefore, they are approximately 160 years old, and at least 60 years beyond their average lifespan. As trees age the risk of decay and decline increases and with increased age comes an increased risk of failure as demonstrated by the recent limb failure of T119, as such they must be considered to be high risk due to their age, condition and proximity to the adjacent properties and public.

The Beech tree (T163) has fungal fruiting bodies of *Ganoderma species*, in the advanced stage of the decay process complete stem failure or uprooting may occur, and the advanced inspection technique (Micro drilling decay detection) isolated extensive decay around the base, this extended up the stem to at least 1.5 metres above ground level. The tree must be considered as high risk and failure will occur if it is not felled.

The Ash tree (T162), has a very large stem cavity close to ground level, the wood is decayed, and fungal fruiting bodies were evident within the cavity. The tree is within falling distance of the adjacent properties and access road and is at high risk of failure and must be felled.

Regulation 17(3) of the Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation) (England) Regulations 2012 states:

"Where an application relates to an area of woodland, the authority shall grant consent so far as accords with the practice of good forestry, unless they are satisfied that the granting of consent would fail to secure the maintenance of the special character of the woodland or the woodland character of the area."

Trees T119, T120, T124 and T163 are mature specimens situated along the ridge at the top of Marlhill Copse. As such they are dominant on the skyline and provide elements of landscape merit, visual amenity, environmental, social and biodiversity benefit. The Ash (T162) was also located along the ridge line however, it was suppressed by adjacent trees, had been topped and had very limited landscape merit or visual amenity.

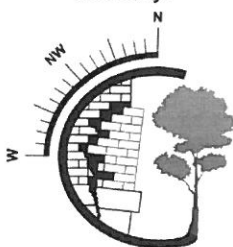
Marlhill Copse extends to some 8.3 ha and the trees in question are a very small component of the woodland composition and require felling to reduce the risks associated with their poor structural condition.

Good forestry

In our view, the felling of these trees would accord with the principles of good forestry. When considering good forestry, felling at regular intervals or because of defect is normal silvicultural practice for tree managers. The removal of dead, dying and dangerous trees would also fall under normal forestry objectives for sustainable woodland management, as would the removal of competing trees, and trees that are of poor physiological condition, or of poor physical form. Building resilience into woodland management is a vital component in

the fight against the global threat from pest and disease. The use of native planting such as Scots Pine, Beech and Field Maple can contribute significantly to the reduction and impacts from pests and disease and enhance the ability of trees to respond and adapt to changes.

The effect of felling, as being applied for in application 20/00067/TPO, will be similar to that of thinning and will enhance the understorey and ground flora, provide an increase in uneven age structure and improve biodiversity. This all accords with the practice of good forestry.



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Alternatives to felling should also be considered where they are appropriate, and tree management must be balanced with the risks associated with them for example:

- Fencing off areas around the trees to protect the occupants or public;
- Diverting paths around target trees;
- Canopy reduction or canopy thinning and in some cases a combination of the two.

In the case of the trees at Marlhill, fencing them off (exclusion) would be impractical, as it would block the access road along the top of the escarpment and would not diminish the risk to the adjacent properties should they fail. Diverting the access road may be possible, but construction work would result in damage to trees along the new route and would not reduce the risk associated with the trees should they fail in relation to adjacent properties.

Canopy reduction is unsuitable for most coniferous tree species as their growth is directed outward from the needle bearing tips. Removal of the tips during a canopy reduction will result in the loss of the leading shoots and they are unlikely to redevelop. The reduction will leave a weak unstable tree with a bare, unnatural appearance. The reduction will also result in a significant number of pruning wounds, providing entry points for bacterial and fungal pathogens.

The management objectives for Marlhill Copse, for example creating a sustainable woodland with enhanced habitat diversity, promoting natural regeneration on the site, maintaining the landscape and amenity contribution of the trees at Marlhill Copse, will require careful direction and a long term vision if the objectives are to be achieved.

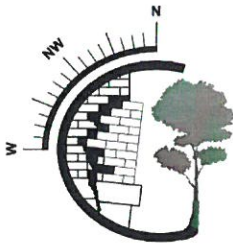
In achieving the objectives, retaining standing trees that are over mature such as those identified above, would not be in the long term interest of good forestry management, and would be contrary to the basic principles of risk management enshrined in health and safety principles. In addition, the loss of the Monterey Pine, Beech and Ash are necessary to maintain the health and safety of the public and the adjacent landowners/occupiers.

Securing the maintenance of the special character of the woodland or the woodland character of the area.

Due to the steep topography of the woodland, and the limited views of the woodland from the surrounding area, there are few locations which provide any direct views of the five trees identified for felling. The only direct views of the five trees, from outside the woodland, are from highways Moat Hill and St Helens Gardens and even then the views are restricted to the upper parts of the trees due to the buildings and other vegetation.

While the removal of the trees would have some impact on the skyline views from the above highways, it will be negligible due to the remaining trees in the woodland providing a 'background woodland character' to the landscape. Therefore, in our opinion there would be a negligible impact on the woodland character of the area.

It is accepted that there would be an impact on the special character of the woodland, but this would be limited to those walking within the woodland footpath network mainly in the immediate area of the felled trees due to the intervening vegetation and layout of the pathways restricting any medium to long distance views. Clearly the impact to people using the woodland would be greatest immediately after felling, but this impact would only be transitory and therefore the impact on the special character of the woodland is considered to be negligible.



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Those who live within the adjacent properties to the trees being felled would also notice the tree loss, which would have the effect of increasing their light levels.

The proposed replacement plantings by SIAL would take some 5 to 10 years to reach a size that would begin to re-create the benefits provided by the trees that are proposed to be removed due to good forestry and health and safety reasons. However, it must be remembered that removal of the five trees will create a significant opportunity for the surrounding trees to increase their canopies and filling the gaps created by the felling. It is considered that it is this growth that will most quickly reduce the impact on the woodland and accordingly it is considered that the felling of the five trees, whilst having an immediate, albeit, negligible, impact would also result in the maintenance of the special character of the woodland.

Conclusions

It is recognised that the greatest impact will occur immediately upon felling. However, in our opinion this loss would not fail to secure the maintenance of the special character of the woodland when considered as a whole or indeed the woodland character of the area for the reasons set out above.

Furthermore, the visual impact will be temporary and will diminish as the retained trees mature, filling the spaces created by the felling. It is our professional opinion that the visual impact will be reduced due to the background tree cover of the woodland and the resultant increase in growth of adjacent trees. Furthermore the proposed replacement planting that SIAL is proposing to carry out (and which was conditioned on the original consent) of large, (16/18cm girth) beech, field maple, and 3 number 1.8 metre tall Scots Pine provide a range of biodiversity benefits, and will increase the woodland resilience to future threats.

In addition, felling will fit well within the confines of the woodland management objectives in providing a positive biodiversity gain. For example, leaving the decaying beech as a standing monolith will provide habitat encouraging fungi and insect larvae such as the Giant Stag beetle, fracture cuts made during felling provide crevice like features for mammals such as bats, recorded at the site.

In summary, the felling of trees T119, T120, T124, T162 and T163 is good forestry practice. The felling would not affect the woodland character of the area at all; and on balance it does not affect the special character of the woodland in the near term and does not in the longer term. This is our professional judgement.

Yours sincerely

