

Ms A King
Tree Service
Natural Environment Team
The Shirehall
Abbey Foregate
Shrewsbury
Shropshire
SY2 6ND

01 July 2015

Dear Ms King

Tree Preservation Order: SC/00228/15

I am writing with my initial response to the tree inspection report from Mr John Blessington on the beech tree subject to the above TPO. My first observation is that the TEMPO guide for suitability of TPOs is referred to in the report but this document was not included for my scrutiny. I have since located the document online.

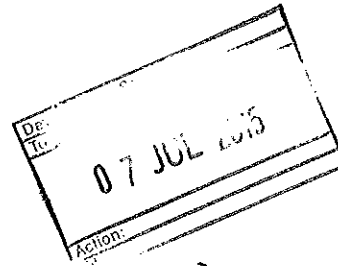
In the guidance notes for users written by Forbes-Laird Arboriculturists, it states that it would be helpful to the relevant parties if a copy of the TEMPO assessment were provided with the TPO. I would appreciate a copy of this document, so that I can view the scores and notes. An extension to the consulting period would also be appreciated; to allow me to pass the TEMPO assessment to an independent arboriculturist.

The first objection in my initial letter still stands in that the amenity value of the tree is poor. Mr Blessington states that the tree has amenity value as it is highly visible and can be appreciated by many people. When you delivered the TPO to my neighbour, I had to explain which tree the order applied to. He responded by saying that he had never noticed it. He has lived in the village for nine years.

I asked a number of my colleagues who pass my house daily driving to and from work what they noticed when passing the property. Each of them mentioned the yew tree arch but not one had noticed the large purple tree.

As I stated before, the tree is only visible from a few adjacent properties as it is on the edge of the village and on a downwards slope. It is of no educational value nor does it provide any benefit to local children as it is on my land and is adjacent to the road. So I firmly believe it has limited amenity value for all the reasons highlighted in my first letter.

The tree report states that the beech is probably two trees together and after closer inspection of the trunk, from the road, it does appear to be two trees. If this is the case then the tree protection area should be seven metres not 13.7 metres.



Moving to the age of the tree, the assessment here is very vague. The age is estimated at 150 years and the life expectancy could be as low as 150 years; according to the TEMPO guide. With a road covering half of the root structure, drains down two sides and a house within six metres of the tree, it is not in the ideal position for longevity. Also with a possible maximum height of 35 metres, twice its current height, it will at some point engulf River Cottage and encroach on my house.

As the tree is adjacent to the road, future growth is likely to cause damage to the road and also present an increased risk to road users should any branches fall. The road will need to be re-surfaced in the very near future, which will inevitably have a detrimental effect on the tree's root structure. The TEMPO guide mentions trees 'outgrowing their context and causing a near future nuisance'; has this been taken fully into account? The Helliwell system puts emphasis on visual amenity but it is short on social effects, which should be considered with equal weighting. The beech is said not to be suitable for major reductions of the canopy, so my neighbours in River Cottage will quite possibly have to continue to live in their current twilight world. The TEMPO assessment should have considered future nuisance; this tree is clearly outgrowing the position it is in due to the shading of River Cottage, near future damage to the road and the lack of scope for appropriate pruning.

The structural safety of this tree is of paramount importance and there appear to be some contradictions in relation to this within the report. Two of the limbs which follow the hedge line, and therefore would affect the road if there were some event, are considered most at risk of structural failure. This presents a potential hazard to road users. The report mentions that there are a number of tight forks, something that has been identified before as a potential risk, but these are classed as 'not of imminent concern'. I have to question when such concern is likely to arise.

The crown is described as imperfect and I would agree with this as most beech trees have a more vertical appearance. However, this tree has been specifically trimmed to ensure it spreads and this will undoubtedly put more stresses on the tight forks and jeopardize its structural integrity. The TEMPO guide is used to assess the suitability of TPOs but this report does not take account of the current or future problems for local inhabitants, lack of light, over-hanging branches, damage to roads, drains or telegraph wires, and the ever present possibility of structural failure causing danger.

The brief section in the report headed 'Other Factors' refers to the Dawn Redwood which stands on my front lawn. Mr Bessington actually commented on the stunning colour of this tree and mentioned that it is commonly referred to as the 'dinosaur tree' as it had been thought to be extinct. The canopies of the beech and the redwood are merging and this is damaging the redwood. Photographs illustrating this point were included with my earlier letter. The redwood is approximately 45 years old and will become a significant specimen if it is allowed the space to grow unimpeded.

I have conducted a survey of the local area from both the ground and the air. Within a five mile radius of Stanton-upon-Hine Heath there are, conservatively, over 100 Copper Beech trees, however I have been unable to identify another Dawn Redwood. The redwood is distinctive due to its shape and its bright green colour.

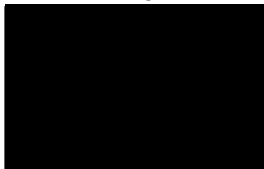
The World Conservation Union classes this species as critically endangered, whereas the Copper Beech is classified as being of least concern. The beech tree would need to be pruned by at least five metres on the eastern side to allow the Dawn Redwood to recover and continue to grow unimpeded. A reduction limit of 10% of branch length is nowhere near sufficient. The TEMPO guidance mentions adverse effects on adjacent trees of better quality. Has this criteria been fully taken into account when arriving at the 'definitely merits TPO' assessment?

The conclusions in my previous letter still stand in that safety is obviously of paramount importance here as the tree overhangs a road and could easily damage a neighbouring property if we experience a storm whilst the canopy is full. I do, however, believe that the stewardship of the Dawn Redwood, which is rare and will become a fine example if it is allowed room to grow, is of a higher priority than that of the Copper Beech which is mature, relatively common and in decline. Incidentally, I have a further nine copper beeches of various sizes on my land and my neighbour has one. I would be happy to move one of the smaller copper beeches to a sensible clear position in my garden if required. Big and purple is not a reason to protect this tree.

As I have not previously had dealings with any part of Shropshire Council, and I have been unable to find the relevant information online, would you please advise me as to who is responsible for making the final assessment of the merits or otherwise of this preservation order.

I look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely



Michael Cauchi