

**LONDON BOROUGH OF BROMLEY**

**COMMITTEE:** Plans Sub Committee No.2 28<sup>th</sup> April 2011

**SUBJECT:** Objections to Tree Preservation Order 2401 at 20, 24 and 28 Bromley Road and 33 Manor Road, Beckenham

**CHIEF OFFICER:** Chief Planner

**CONTACT OFFICER:** Coral Gibson ext 4516

**WARD:** Copers Cope

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**1 COMMENTARY**

1.1. This order was made on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2011 and relates to 4 lime trees, 1 in the back garden of 20 Bromley Road, 2 in the back garden of 24 Bromley Road and one on the boundary of 28 Bromley Road and 33 Manor Road.

1.2 Comments have been received from the owners of 24 Bromley Road and their concerns relate specifically to the two lime trees in their back garden, T.2 and 3 of the order.

1.3. Your first comment relates to the amenity value of the trees and you ask for clarification about the meaning of significant impact as central government guidance states that a tree is worthy of statutory protection if its removal would have a significant impact on its surroundings. You also comment that they are limes which are a common species in the area and are plentiful in neighbouring roads and parks and they do not have any historical value. With regard to the assessment of amenity for Tree Preservation Orders, no standard method is in use which determines when a tree merits a Tree Preservation Order, and when it does not. All methods of amenity assessment contain some inherent subjectivity and the amenity value of trees depends on many factors, and a tree may be appropriate in one location, but out of place or unattractive in another. Trees do not lend themselves to classification into high or low landscape value categories. In this case the four trees are visible from Bevington Road and make a positive contribution to this part of Beckenham. In this case the species of the trees is not considered to lessen their amenity value.

1.4. You wish to improve your back garden and consider that this can only be done at the expense of one of the trees, T.3. You currently have a small patio immediately at the rear of the house, a lawn and at the end of the garden a slightly raised patio with the two limes in each of the two back corners. The tree roots have caused the patio to lift slightly and this together with the change in level is a trip hazard for your small children. You wish to remove this rear patio and increase the area of lawn and create flowerbeds. You also point out the

garden is significantly shaded during the summer months.

1.5. The trees are to the south of the house and will cause direct shading. The two trees are 13 metres from the back of the house and are in a reasonably healthy condition. They have been pollarded many years ago and have reformed full canopies with no obvious evidence of any significant problems at the old pollard points. You have pointed out that you had the trees pruned about 18 months ago (the lower canopies were lifted) but this has not improved the situation in your garden. Some additional work such as thinning the canopies may help to alleviate the problems but it is accepted that this may not improve the situation to the extent that you desire. In respect of removal of the patio and extending the lawn this would not harm the trees, although the presence of the trees would limit the choice of species of plants that you could grow. You expressed concern about the hazard from falling branches – it is a characteristic of limes that they will always have dead wood within the canopy but this is mainly small twigs which will fall from the trees in windy conditions. Other problems such as leaf drop and honeydew are seasonal problems, with honeydew production being dependent on the fluctuations in aphid populations during the summer months, so in some years the effect will be more noticeable than others.

1.6. One letter of support for the making of the order has also been received.

## **2. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

2.1. This report is in accordance with Policy NE6 of the Council's adopted Unitary Development Plan.

## **3. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS**

3.1 If not confirmed the order will expire on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2011.

## **4. RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.1. The Chief Planner advises that the trees make an important contribution to the visual amenity of the surrounding area and notwithstanding the objections raised, the order should be confirmed.