

PLANNED PRUNING WORKS TO TREES IN A CONSERVATION AREA

RE: THE OLD HALL, WESTONBIRT, TETBURY, GL8 8QT

Friday 17th November 2023



FIGURE 1: Row of beech trees that overhang neighbouring land



FIGURE 2: The beech trees have been managed as a hedge on the owners side



FIGURE 3: The beech trees were historically managed as a hedge before being left to grow

A linear group of beech trees (*Fagus sylvatica*) are present between the residential property 'The Old Hall' and neighbouring land which consists of a driveway that leads to Westonbirt School (Figure 1 and shown as G1 on site plan). The trees are under the ownership of 'The Old Hall'. The trees have historically been managed as a hedge as can be seen in Figure 3 where the stems clear divide into multiple co-dominant stems all around a similar height of approx. 1.5m above ground level. The tree owner has managed his side of the trees by trimming the lower growth annually to form a hedge and provide screening (Figure 2), however over the years the tops have been left to grow and now they greatly overhang the tree owners garden as well as the school's driveway. The school have repeatedly asked the tree owner to reduce the size of the trees as they feel that any limb failure could potentially cause harm or damage to the numerous cars that use the driveway each day or could simply cause a nuisance if the driveway becomes blocked. At the northern end of the group of trees is a wooden electrical pole with a suspended transformer. The utility company have made attempts to cut back branches away from the transformer but only limited pruning has been possible due to the close proximity. They have advised the tree owner on a number of occasions that a more substantial prune of the trees is required in order to stop them having to re-visit the issue approx. every 2 years.

Given the information listed above, it is proposed that the trees are reduced in height be approx. 50%. The trees are approx. 12m in height and therefore their height will be reduced by approx. 6m. The original proposal was to reduced the stems back down to where the stems divide at approx. 1.5m above ground level, there by restoring the old pollard point. While I believe the trees could tolerate this given their previous management and abundance of lower growth, the size of the pruning wounds that would be put on the stems, would ultimately lead to extensive decay and a reduction in the tree's longevity. Therefore, it is felt that a more considerate scope of works will still satisfy the external pressures to prune from the tree owner, the school and the utility company, while not being to the long-term detriment of the trees.

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