

Proposed New Tree Preservation Order No: 567 (2015)

Site: Long Plantation, Ashton Hall Estate, Ashton Road, Lancaster

Location of Trees: Woodland x1

Assessment:

I have assessed an area of woodland, known as “Long Plantation”, established within the Ashton Hal Estate, Lancaster, with regard to the suitability and the appropriateness of serving the woodland with a Tree Preservation Order.

The woodland does not lie within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), or within a Conservation Area. As such, the woodland is not currently protected in law.

Background

Lancaster City Council was informed by a member of the public that trees were being felled within a woodland area, known as Long Plantation, within the wider Ashton Hall Estate.

Lancaster City Council’s Tree Protection Officer, visited the site. It was confirmed that trees had been removed from within Long Plantation, creating a significant open, clearing within the plantation, stumps had been removed with an excavator. Trees felled, and still in leaf included sycamore and elm. Most of the timber and tree stumps had been removed from the plantation and/or burned onsite.

We can confirm that authorisation was granted by the Forestry Commission, for the landowner to thin a total of x30 sycamore trees, equal to 15 cubic meters volume of timber, over the 5 year period. This was agreed under the terms of Felling License no. 010/220/10-11, issued January 2011, with an expiry date of 16.01.16. We understand from the FC that the current license had been issued to allow completion of works authorised under an earlier Felling License, issued by the Forestry Commission.

The current license was limited to “thinning” works only. We understand that the Forestry Commission will consider whether a breach in the aforementioned Felling License has occurred.

The land owner was advised not to carry out any further tree work operations within Long Plantation, until the matter had been consider duly by the Forestry Commission.

Trees within the plantation include a range of young, semi-mature, early-mature and mature trees, mainly broadleaf species including ash, sycamore, beech, hawthorn, elm and oak. There are also a range of coniferous species, including pine. The woodland forms a significant landscape feature, visible from a range of locations frequented by the general public. The plantation is also an important resource for a range of wildlife species, including the potential to provide habitat and foraging opportunities for protected species, such as nesting birds and bats. Certain habitats and species, including nesting birds and bats are subject to protection as laid out in the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.

The intentions of the land owner are unclear, following the establishment of a significant clearly, devoid of trees within the heart of the plantation. Any level of land development has the potential to adversely impact upon trees and woodlands, through a range of direct and

indirect means. Whilst, a tree preservation order does not prevent or obstruct development, it does however, mean that existing trees and woodlands must be a material consideration within any future planning application that may affect the site.

Trees

For the purpose of this report the woodland in question, Long Plantation has been identified as **W1**. The woodland includes mixed species deciduous and coniferous species. It links to other similar areas of woodland nearby, helping to maintain important wildlife corridors and maintain significant landscape features.

The woodland can be clearly seen from the public domain, it is entirely in keeping with the character and appearance of this rural location. It forms a significant landscape feature.

Where trees are proposed for removal in excess of 5 cubic meters per calendar quarter, an application for a Felling License must be made to the Forestry Commission and authorisation granted prior to any such works being undertaken. A Felling License contains information and conditions relating to the work authorised.

Threat

Lancaster City Council considers the woodland to be under threat, sufficient to justify their protection with a tree preservation order at this time.

The amenity value of trees contained within **W1** have been assessed using a Tree Evaluation Method for Preservation Orders (TEMPO). TEMPO Assessment Score: 21+ - definitely merits a TPO.

A TPO does not prevent maintenance from being undertaken, subject to an agreed Woodland Management Plan, it does however, mean that all works with the exception of removal of deadwood must be agreed in writing by the local authority prior to undertaking work. All work must be undertaken in compliance to BS 3998 (2010) Tree Work.

Decision: To serve Tree Preservation Order no.567 (2015) under sections 198 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990, in the interests of public amenity; affecting x1 area of woodland, comprised of mixed species broadleaf and deciduous species, including young, early-mature and mature trees.

The woodland in question has important amenity value. It represent a valuable wildlife resource and make links to other similar woodland within the wider locality.

Title	Tree Preservation Order no.567 (2015), Long Plantation, Ashton Hall estate, Ashton Road, Lancaster
Grounds	In the interest of public amenity and wildlife benefit. Potential threat from development and tree removal.
Designation	W1

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29.10.15