



# COUNCIL OF THE ISLES OF SCILLY

Planning & Development Department  
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## OFFICER REPORT – DELEGATED

Application number: P/17/026/TWA	Expiry date: 28 April 2017
Received on: 16 March 2017	Neighbour expiry date: NONE CONSULTED
UPRN: 000192001578	Consultation expiry date:
Legal agreement:	Site notice posted:
Departure:	Site notice expiry:
Complies with Development Plan? Y/N If not, ensure you cover in the report how material considerations outweigh the plan?	
Is this decision contrary to local council recommendation?	

Applicant:	Mrs Aisling Hick
Site Address:	Watermill Lodge Watermill St Mary's Isles Of Scilly TR21 0NS
Proposal:	Crown lift Sycamore and Elm trees on Western boundary and crown lift Sycamore and pollard 10 no. elms within the site.
Application Type:	Tree Works Applications

### Description of site and development:

This is a notification of an intention to carry out tree works at Watermill Lodge on the northern side of St Mary's. The site is relatively large with mature mixed deciduous trees and a high number of elm trees. The works are described as no works to the north boundary trees and pollarding of trees on the east boundary and crown lifting of works on the section of the garden with the approved shepherds hut including:

- Crown lifting of a sycamore and elms and sycamores along the west boundary; and
- pollarding of elms along the east boundary.

### Public representations:

The Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust note that the management of elm trees should be carried out during October, November and December unless the limbs pose a health and safety risk. Pruning in the spring and summer weakens the elms and poses a risk to bacterial, fungal or insectivorous vectors and late summer cuts increase the risk of vigorous epicormic re-growth, which damages the tree.

Elm Trees are an important ecological resource in Scilly and nationally elms of the size seen here are very rare, due to the presence of Dutch elm disease on the mainland. It is not best practice to carry out tree work during the bird breeding season, unless the work is being carried out for health and safety reasons, in which case a bird breeding bird survey should be carried out.

### Constraints and designations:

Conservation Area, AONB and heritage coast

#### Appraisal/key issues and conclusion:

The proposed works do not intend to remove any trees from this site. As the Isles of Scilly are within a designated Conservation Area, any person wishing to prune or fell a 'tree' is required to serve notice on the Local Planning Authority, allowing 6 weeks for the LPA to consider the impact of the works proposed. Where the works are considered to have a detrimental impact upon the character and appearance of the conservation area then the only course of action is to place a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) on the tree(s). If the LPA do not do this within 6 weeks then the works are deemed acceptable and can proceed. If the tree(s) are not formally protected under a TPO there is no provision to impose conditions on the works applied for. The 6 week deadline for such an order to be made would be on or before the 28th April 2017.

A LPA can only assess the amenity value held by the tree(s) and can make a Tree Preservation Order if it appears to them to be 'expedient in the interests of amenity to make provision for the preservation of trees or woodlands in their area'. It is therefore necessary to consider the amenity value of the trees proposed to be pruned or felled:

#### Visibility

The trees at Watermill can be seen clearly by the public by walking along the roads around St Mary's and whilst there are no public rights of way through this site, Pungies Lane allows vehicular and pedestrian links around the north side of St Mary's. The trees therefore are visible publically although longer views of this site remain limited. The trees are a mixture of mature and semi-mature trees that are considered to hold good amenity value and are clearly visible to the public.



#### Individual, collective and wider impact

Dutch elm disease-free trees are of particular importance to the diversity overall of Trees in Britain. The trees at Watermill are a mixture of large and smaller trees to sparse to form a woodland and appear collectively as linear boundaries which are prominent in the vicinity. Pollarding is a common practice on St Mary's, where the trees form field boundaries. The trees around this site do form clear boundaries which have been allowed to mature in to tall trees which are predominantly elm trees. It is considered that the management of these boundary trees along the eastern boundary, in which it is proposed to pollard them, will result in the loss of some of their amenity value, but as this is not a woodland it is considered that the works in this case are acceptable. Works to crown lift the trees on the western side of the site will ensure the trees are well managed around the site. It is recommended that the applicant is advised on the concerns expressed by the Wildlife Trust about the timing of works to Elm Trees.

Whilst some of the works appear to be contrary to the views or concerns expressed by the Wildlife Trust, it is considered that it will not result in harm to the overall character of the conservation areas and as the trees are proposed to be positively managed it is not recommended necessary to impose a TPO at this time. The submitted works overall will not result on the removal of trees but would appear to be appropriate for the long-term management.

#### Recommendation:

**Raise no objections to the work.**

Signed: 	Dated: 29/03/2017	Signed: 	Dated: 31/03/2017
Planning Officer		Senior Manager	