

5.2 Objection to Tree Preservation Order number 9 of 2016

Located at Russell House School, Station Road, Otford TN14 5QU

ITEM FOR DECISION

This proposal is referred to Development Control Committee as objections have been received. TPO 9 of 2016 has been served in response to a proposed development at the above named school site (16/02003/FUL). This proposal would have necessitated the felling of nine mature trees to accommodate the proposals with further frontage mature trees potentially compromised.

RECOMMENDATION

That TPO 9 of 2016 be confirmed without amendment.

Description of planning application 16/02003

- 1 Erection of a new single storey dining hall with kitchen, music rooms and changing facilities on the site of an existing tennis court and a new/extended drop off area next to proposed dining hall court. Construction of a new multi-use games area to the rear of the site. The planning application for new development at the school was submitted in July 2016 and withdrawn in September 2016.

Description of Site

- 2 Russell House School is an independent co-educational preparatory school for children aged between 2 and 11 years of age. The site is located to the north east end of the village and consists of the main detached school building with numerous adjacent classrooms and other buildings throughout the grounds.

Constraints

- 3 TPO 9 of 2016
- 4 Kent Downs AONB.

Representations

- 5 We have received an objection letter from the Head Master of the school Mr McCarthy.
- 6 Mr McCarthy has supplied details of recent history (2012-present day) of the school and its growth over the last few years. In 2012 the school had 182 pupils and between then and now the roll has risen to 210, which he has stated is now at capacity.
- 7 The reasoning for the planning application according to Mr McCarthy was to have a sufficiently large enough dining space for one sitting as opposed to the current three sittings. It was also proposed to change the changing

facilities, which are currently small and inadequate. It was also proposed to alter the internal road system and drop off/pick up area to alleviate the negative impact on the busy road.

- 8 He has further stated that all of these proposed improvements will disappear due to the serving of TPO 9 of 2016.
- 9 Mr McCarthy has stated that his basis for the objection is that he cannot agree that users of the road or the village enjoy the view of the trees and that if upheld they will prevent any and all future development of the school.
- 10 Mr McCarthy has stated that the school would be more than happy to carry out replacement planting within the north east corner of the school grounds. He has also extended an invitation to interested parties to visit and discuss in greater detail and to expand on the aforementioned points

Appraisal

- 11 Given the information provided by Mr McCarthy it would appear that the proposed development would be beneficial to the growth of the school.
- 12 Having viewed the site proposed for the dining hall, the originally proposed design would hug the eastern boundary at the expense of the mature trees located growing parallel with it. If the footprint of the proposed dining hall were to be located more in keeping with the existing tennis court, it would leave space for the trees to be retained.
- 13 The serving of TPO number 9 does halt the proposals as they are currently proposed, but does not necessarily prohibit development. It was not served in order to halt this proposal but to ensure the retention of these mature trees. They are prominent within the landscape as they are located within the frontage grounds and potentially seen by hundreds of passers by on a daily basis. It is therefore considered that their removal would have a negative impact upon the surrounding landscape.
- 14 The mature trees located between the existing games courts and 41 Station Road, which are shown to be removed to accommodate the proposed development are located upon a raised area of land, which is approximately a metre higher than the adjacent games court. They are growing in what is a strip of land that runs parallel with the boundary of 41 Station Road. They are not located centrally and taking up a large swathe of land thereby halting any development. There is therefore scope for a compromised design where the trees are retained and development could be agreed.
- 15 With regard to the implications for future development on the site, the trees would remain a constraint. However, the protection of the trees through imposition of a preservation order is not intended to prohibit development per se. It does mean that any proposals in the vicinity of the trees would be required to minimise the impact upon them. It may be possible to achieve this through careful siting of a building, its size and design and potentially through construction methods, such as use of raft or piled foundations.

- 16 It has been suggested that additional planting could be conditioned and agreed. Should the trees shown for removal be removed and the development as proposed be agreed, then there would be limited space for additional planting within the frontage of the site. The proposal is therefore to carry out planting to the rear north east of the site, which is probably the least publicly visible location within the whole of the school grounds. Existing amenity value within the current street scene would therefore be lost.

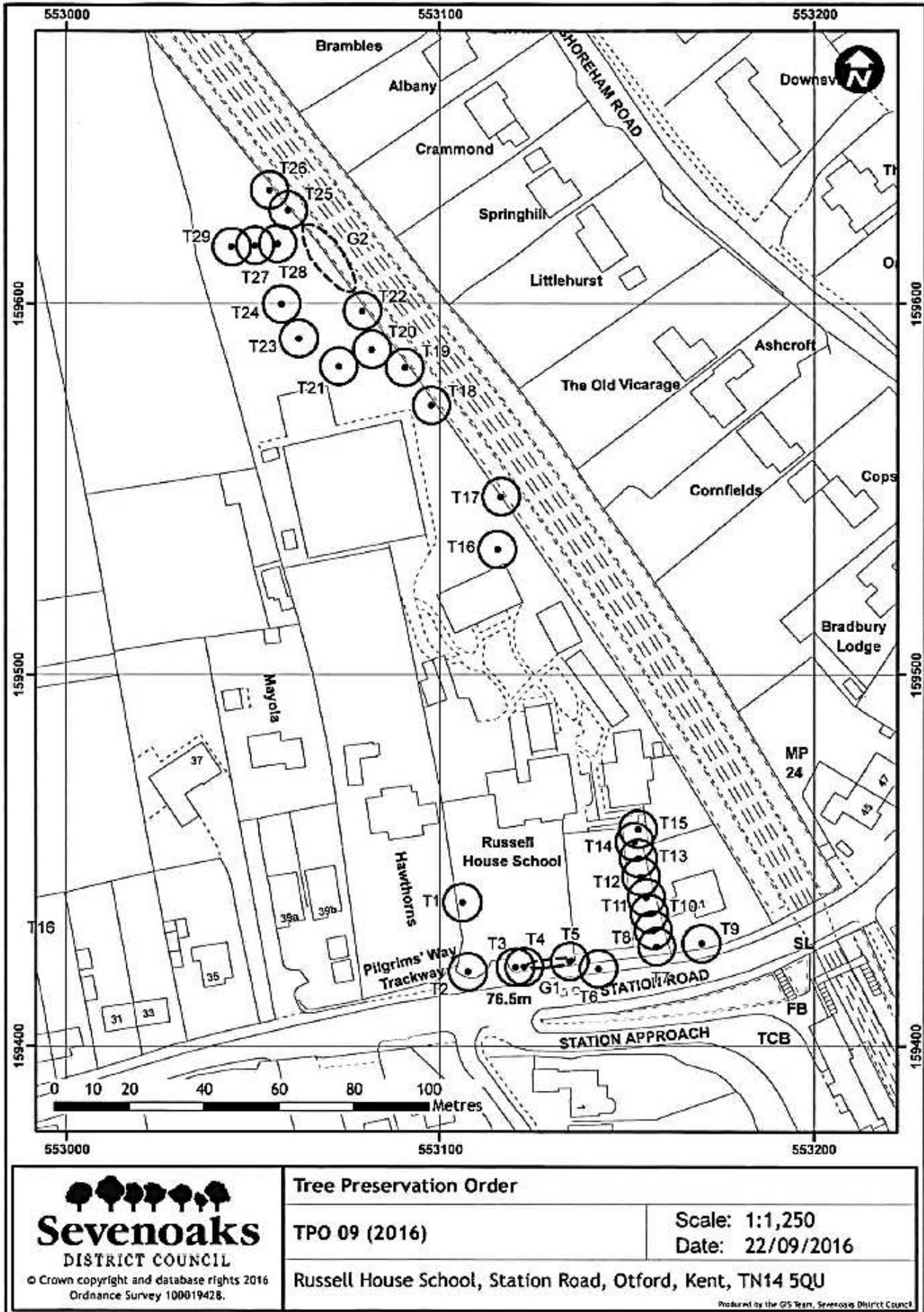
Conclusion

- 17 It is therefore my recommendation that TPO 9 of 2016 be confirmed without amendment.

Attached TPO/09/2016 Plan and Schedule 1 as (Appendix 1).

Contact Officer(s): Les Jones Arboricultural & Landscape Officer
Extension 7289

Richard Morris
Chief Planning Officer




Sevenoaks
 DISTRICT COUNCIL
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 Ordnance Survey 100019428.

Tree Preservation Order

TPO 09 (2016)

Russell House School, Station Road, Otford, Kent, TN14 5QU

Scale: 1:1,250

Date: 22/09/2016

Produced by the GIS Team, Sevenoaks District Council

SCHEDULE 1

SPECIFICATION OF TREES

Trees specified individually
(encircled in black on the map)

<i>Reference on Map</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Situation*</i>
T1	Horse Chestnut	Situated on the south western boundary of Russell House School, Station Road, Otford, Kent.
T2	Lime	Situated on the south western boundary of Russell House School, Station Road, Otford, Kent.
T3	Lime	Situated on the southern boundary of Russell House School, Station Road, Otford, Kent.
T4	Lime	" " "
T5	Lime	" " "
T6	Lime	" " "
T7	Lime	" " "
T8	Hornbeam	Situated on the south eastern boundary of Russell House School, Station Road, Otford, Kent.
T9	Lime	Situated on the southern boundary of Lyncroft Cottage, 41 Station Road, Otford, Kent.
T10	Hornbeam	Situated on the eastern boundary of Russell House School, Station Road, Otford, Kent.
T11	Hornbeam	" " "
T12	Hornbeam	" " "
T13	Hornbeam	" " "
T14	Hornbeam	" " "
T15	Hornbeam	" " "
T16	Robinia	" " "
T17	Sycamore	" " "
T18	Norway Maple	" " "
T19	Norway Maple	" " "
T20	Norway Maple	" " "
T21	Sycamore	" " "
T22	Norway Maple	" " "
T23	Sycamore	Located to the rear of the playground at Russell House School, Station Road, Otford.
T24	Sycamore	" " "
T25	Sycamore	Situated on the eastern boundary of Russell House School, Station Road, Otford, Kent.
T26	Sycamore	" " "
T27	Sycamore	" " "
T28	Sycamore	" " "
T29	Sycamore	Situated on the western boundary of Russell House School, Station Road, Otford, Kent.

Trees specified by reference to an area
(Within a dotted black line on the map)

<i>Reference on Map</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Situation*</i>
	None	

Groups of trees
(Within a broken black line on the map)

<i>Reference on Map</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Situation*</i>
G1	A group comprising of 4 Yew trees.	Situated on the southern boundary of Russell House School, Station Road, Otford, Kent.
G2	A group comprising of 4 Sycamore trees.	Situated on the eastern boundary of Russell House School, Station Road, Otford, Kent.

Woodlands
(Within a continuous black line on the map)

<i>Reference on Map</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Situation*</i>
	None	

* complete if necessary to specify more precisely the position of the trees.