

From: Planning Casework [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, October 18, 2024 5:31 PM
To: Section 62A Applications <section62a@planninginspectorate.gov.uk>
Cc: [REDACTED]planning@uttlesford.gov.uk
Subject: FAO Major Casework Team - Woodland Trust further comments on application S62A/2024/0058

Dear Leanne,

Thank you for re-consulting the Woodland Trust on the following application:-

PINS Reference: S62A/2024/0058

Uttlesford Planning Reference: UTT/24/1958/PINS

Proposal: Construction of 16 dwellings including 40% affordable housing and associated infrastructure | Land Adj. To Village Hall, East Of Cambridge Road Ugley

We have reviewed the additional information provided by the applicant and have the following comments.

We welcome the applicant's acknowledgement of the veteran status of TC and TD, and the increase to the buffer zones provided for each tree. However, we note the updated plans still show the gardens of Plots 13-16 within these buffer zones, and the proposed patio and parking area in Plot 16 partially within the buffer of TC.

Veteran trees are irreplaceable habitats and should be afforded an un-encroached buffer zone in line with Natural England and the Forestry Commission's standing advice. The standing advice is clear that buffer zones for ancient and veteran trees should not contain garden areas. It states:

"A buffer zone should consist of semi-natural habitats such as:

- woodland*
- a mix of scrub, grassland, heathland and wetland*

The proposal should include creating or establishing habitat with local and appropriate native species in the buffer zone.

You should consider if access is appropriate. You can allow access to buffer zones if the habitat is not harmed by trampling.

You should not approve development proposals, including gardens, within a buffer zone."

We note the proposal of a covenant to ensure that there is no damage or removal of the veteran trees by future residents without prior consent. However, such a measure is unlikely to guarantee the long-term retention of these trees or prevent the increased management and sanitisation that is likely to occur as a result of the development.

The development will still lead to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of the veteran trees. In turn this will increase the need to manage the trees for safety reasons, whilst any infrastructure which future residents may install in their gardens may impact on the root systems of the trees. Veteran trees typically feature significant deadwood habitat of great value for biodiversity, e.g. retained deadwood in the crown, broken or fractured branches, trunk cavities and wounds. As they age, the trees will inevitably shed limbs and branches, presenting a risk to their surroundings. As such, the health and safety risks associated with the trees will change and result in a requirement for more intensive management. This will lead to a loss of habitat from sanitisation through removal of deadwood, as well as the potential for consequential decline, or need for removal.

We note that the site's past use as a quarry may have previously impacted the root systems of these trees, however the proposed restoration of soil levels would mean that the site now provides the suitable rooting space and environment that the trees would require. Until the applicant has undertaken further root investigations to demonstrate otherwise, the tree's root system should be considered to extend towards the proposed development and given the appropriate buffer. Even if the roots are found to not be as extensive on the development side of the site, our concerns relating to health and safety risks and future tree management would remain.

We consider that the applicant has not demonstrated that appropriate mitigation measures are in place to prevent the deterioration of these veteran trees as a result of the development.

As such we will be **maintaining our objection** to this application.

We hope you find these comments helpful - if you would like to discuss any of the points raised, please contact us at [REDACTED].

Yours sincerely,
Frankie Moughton-Small

Frankie Moughton-Small
Programme Assistant - Woods Under Threat

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

Cases involving woods and trees under threat can change and evolve during the planning process due to a wide variety of reasons. Where a development involving ancient woods or veteran trees no longer remains a threat due to changing circumstance surrounding said application and based upon professional judgement steered by our conservation research, the Woodland Trust withholds the right to withdraw or amend its objection and review its approach.

The Woodland Trust is not a statutory body ie a non-statutory consultee which means we can advise but are not able to take direct action. However we are alerted to many threats to ancient woodlands around the country,

albeit with limited capacity to take on every case. As a charity, we provide all information in good faith, funded by public donations. For more information about this please visit here: [REDACTED]

