

APPLICATION SITE

The application site is for the property known as 'The Mount', Queens Road, Thomastown, Merthyr Tydfil CF47 0HE

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposals are to fell, two trees in the front garden of the above property. The location of the property is within the boundary of the Thomastown Conservation Area. The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 also makes special provision for trees in conservation areas which are not the subject of a TPO. Under section 211 anyone proposing to cut down or carry out work on a tree in a conservation area is required to give the LPA six weeks' prior notice. The purpose of this requirement is to give the LPA an opportunity to consider whether a TPO should be made in respect of the tree.

PUBLICITY

N/A

CONSULTATION

The Council's Landscape Architect has discussed the proposals with the Council's Arboricultural Officer, in relation to the health and safety of the trees, the Council's Arboriculture Officer is in agreement with the report submitted.

Consultation has also been carried out with the Council's Ecologist in relation to protected species. An advisory note would be required to draw the applicants attention to the implications on bats and birds due to the felling of the trees.

POLICY CONTEXT

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Replacement Local Development Plan (2016-2031)

Policy CW1: The Historic Environment

CONSIDERATIONS

The two trees are situated within the front garden of the property known as 'The Mount'. The character of Queens Road which bisects Thomastown Park consists of a tree lined route. The presence of trees along the road enhance the character and announce the presence of the park. In previous years some of these trees have been lost, felled or lopped resulting in a more incoherent presence, although those that remain continue to reinforce the character of the area. Thomastown Park and the remaining extension to the Conservation Area are of important social history, consisting of the first park in Merthyr Tydfil created and prescribed for public use. The two trees in question certainly add character and their loss would be detrimental to the character of the conservation area.

A report by David Wiltshire, Arboricultural Evaluation Trees at Queens Road Merthyr Tydfil CF47 0HE accompanied the application. The conclusions of the report are as follows:

Sycamore, *Acer pseudoplatanus* 16-17 metres

This large mature tree has severe root damage. The roots have been severed and there is severe decay. A probe into the decay of more than 480mm revealed further internal decay. The tree is bifurcated at approximately 3 metres and there is some included bark although it is difficult to confirm structural integrity of the fork due to the ivy on the main stem. There is minor and major deadwood throughout the crown. Annual increment root growth may cause more damage to built structures, drive, public footpath, etc. The tree is potentially unstable and given its location potentially unsafe. Given this trees location and the targets / hazards when it fails, it is recommended the tree is removed. Re-plant more suitable species for the location.

Hazard: High

Rowan , Sorbus spp. 10-12 metres

The tree is heavily suppressed by the neighbouring sycamore, Main stem is bifurcated from the base and there is a minor shear crack forming and extending up the stem. This has high potential to fail. There is some minor deadwood in the upper crown and ivy in the lower main stem. Given this trees location and the targets / hazards when it fails, it is recommended the tree is removed.

Hazard: Medium /High

The proposed works will have a net detrimental effect on the character of the Thomastown Conservation Area, however overriding issues of public safety should also be taken into account. Therefore, in accordance with recommendations in the arboricultural report it is recommended that the trees may be felled. However, the two trees should be replaced with a single alternative species (1 No. *Carpinus betulus* 'Fastigiata') with details of the size and siting to be agreed by the Landscape Architect.

RECOMMENDATION: Landscape Architect to send letter to applicant advising trees can be felled but must be replaced by a single alternative species (1 No. *Carpinus betulus* 'Fastigiata') in the location to be shown on a plan.