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Dear Sir/Madam

St Johns Draft Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Design Guidance

The Councils Executive at its meeting of 5 February 2004, agreed the adoption of the above draft guidance for the purpose of undertaking public consultation. I enclose a copy of this document for your information. As a local resident or property owner, with a vested interest in the quality of the local environment, the Council is particularly interested to hear your views on the draft guidance and welcomes any comments you wish to make on this document.

The main purpose of the Guide is to help clarify what it is that is special about the character of the Conservation Area which the Council is seeking to protect and enhance. This information should assist applicants when preparing submissions for planning consent, such as alterations and extensions, as well as assisting the Council in the control of development to protect the character of the area.

If you would like to comment on the contents of the Draft Guidance then please reply in writing by Monday, 5 April 2004. The Council values all contributions made and will fully consider any points raised prior to finalising the document for formal adoption by the Council.

Yours faithfully,

C.L. Fairlamb
Borough Planning Officer

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letter to residents

Paul Russell Chief Executive
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ST JOHNS CONSERVATION AREA STATEMENT: DRAFT CHARACTER APPRAISAL and DESIGN GUIDANCE

1. BACKGROUND

St. Johns was designated as a conservation area in 1991 in accordance with section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 in order to protect the areas special architectural and historic character. The boundary of the area is shown on the Character Appraisal Map. The conservation area is south west of Woking Town Centre and is linked to the building of the Basingstoke Canal.

The conservation area consists of the Victorian core of the village to the east of the Basingstoke Canal which is centred around the entrance to St. Johns Lye. The area includes; St Johns Road from the junction with Hermitage Road eastwards up to Priors Court and all the land bounded by the Canal, Church Road, Warwick Lane, St Johns Hill Road up to Oak Cottage and St Johns Lye up to the sports pavilion. The north west boundary is contiguous with the Basingstoke Canal Conservation Area, which includes Kiln Bridge. The area of the Basingstoke Canal Conservation area which directly adjoins the St. Johns Conservation Area has been included in this appraisal.

During the construction of the canal the demand for bricks to build locks, bridges and associated developments stimulated local brick manufacture. As brickworks already existed around St. Johns they flourished on the new trade until at least the end of the 19th Century.

The canal was also instrumental in the development of nurseries around St. Johns during the 19th Century. The importation of large quantities of manure from the stables of London was essential for cultivation and accordingly many important nurseries developed around St. Johns Village.

During this period of economic growth most of the Victorian development of St. Johns came into existence which was accomplished through the sale of common lands to the London Necropolis Company in 1854, which made the land available for development. Owing to the intervention of the Vicar of Woking 60 acres of land at St. Johns were withheld from the sale and became the Lye.

The form and layout of St. Johns Village centre is dominated by its relationship with the Lye and the adjacent Basingstoke Canal. In this respect the village has retained a strong semi rural character with many of its older properties facing directly onto the Lye and the open space surrounding the church, in a traditional 'village green' arrangement. Many properties in the village date from the late Victorian Period with a large number of Victorian Villas and semi detached cottages built in a distinctive style with closely matching facing materials.

2. PURPOSE OF STATEMENT

This document describes what it is about the qualities of the character and appearance of the St. Johns Conservation Area which makes it special and that need to be protected and enhanced. A short summary of this statement is set out in Appendix 1. the purpose of the document is to:

- Define the detailed features of the conservation area which contribute to its special character that need to be protected;
- Provide guidance for the design, layout and material finish of developments and other works,
- Assist the Council in making decisions on planning submissions to control the quality of design in new development which could affect the areas character;
- Assist householders in the preservation and restoration of period dwellings;
- Assist in the preparation of proposals for the enhancement of the conservation area.

Applicants for Planning Permission and Conservation Area Consent should submit a statement setting out how their proposals will preserve or enhance the character of the Conservation Area in accordance with the Guidance.

Failure to heed the advice set out in the Guide may result in delay or even refusal of the application. Applicants are encouraged to first discuss their proposals with the Council prior to formal submission.

3. SPECIAL PLANNING CONTROLS

The Council has special planning controls within a conservation area under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 which are used to protect its character. These particularly relate to:

- The control of demolition
- The control over the detailed design of new development (including extensions) to ensure they are sympathetic to its character.
- The control of works to all trees in the area.

However in exceptional circumstances, the Council may seek to introduce additional planning controls to cover more minor elements of building work, where this is considered essential to protect the areas special character. Further information about additional planning controls is set out in more detail in Appendix 2.

4. DETAILED CHARACTER APPRAISAL

The following range of features have been considered as part of the detailed appraisal of the areas special character.

Pattern of Settlement

- Street Pattern
- Plot Characteristics
- Views and Landmarks

Other Features

- Roads and Footpaths
- Open Spaces and Landscape Features
- Street Furniture
- Negative Features

Building Design, Materials & Uses

- Historic Buildings and Important Groups of Buildings
- Predominant Building Types
- Windows and Doors
- Materials and Colour
- Roofs
- Use of Buildings
- Shop Fronts
- Boundary Treatment

Each of the following sections provides a detailed description of the areas predominant characteristics and where appropriate these are referred to on the Appraisals Map.

- ♦ **Highlighted in bold text at the end of each section, are the main points of concern which should be addressed in any future developments.**

5. PATTERN OF SETTLEMENT

5.1 Street Pattern

The street pattern of the conservation area as shown on the appraisal map, is formed by St. Johns Road from the junction with Hermitage Road eastwards up to Priors Court and all the land bounded by the canal, Church Road, Warwick Lane, St. Johns Hill Road up to Oak Cottage and the immediate section of St. Johns Lye up to the Sports Pavilion. Also included within this appraisal is the area of the Basingstoke Canal conservation area which is directly adjacent to the St Johns conservation area.

- ◆ There are unlikely to be any significant new development opportunities, with the possible exception of land to the rear of the Rowbarge PH, adjacent to the canalside. But any should reinforce the character of the street pattern ensuring that buildings are orientated to face the road frontage, or where appropriate, the canal side frontage.

5.2 Plot Characteristics

Plot characteristics are irregular. Frontages are generally narrow with widths of between 5 to 12 metres. Plots vary and are between 0.01 to 0.1ha in size with infilling occurring in some locations. The commercial building frontages along St. Johns Road are generally continuous and are fronted hard against the footway, while many of the residential properties are either semi-detached or detached with spacing of approximately 3-7 metres. Residential dwellings are normally set back at between 4-7 metres with a boundary.

- ◆ There are very limited opportunities for new development. Where new development is permitted, it is important that the sitting, interval and extent of development respects the characteristics of the area as discussed above.

5.3 Views and Landmarks

There are several views and landmarks in St. Johns Conservation Area which are identified on the appraisal map. They are as follows:

- Tuu restaurant, just before the Kiln Bridge forms an important landmark, and important views around the village;
 - St. John the Baptists Church is a significant landmark which forms an important view from Church Road;
 - Although relatively narrow, there is a important view from the entrance of St Johns Lye towards the wide section of the Lye beyond;
 - The War Memorial within the graveyard of the church forms an important localised focal point.
 - The view along the canal from Kiln Bridge in both directions.
- ◆ The Council will seek to maintain important views and landmarks within the conservation area.
 - ◆ Any new developments should retain and enhance the views and landmarks which have been identified, as shown on the appraisal plan.

Fig 1: Tuu Restaurant is on the Councils Local List and forms an important landmark.



6. BUILDING DESIGN, MATERIALS AND USES

6.1 Historic Buildings & Important Groups of Buildings

There are several historic buildings in the St. Johns Conservation Area. A number of buildings have a

particularly distinctive character, including three dwellings which are locally listed and are shown on the appraisal plan. St. John the Baptists Church (LLB), which was designed by the architect George Gilbert Scott, provides an important focal point and dates from 1840. Tuu (LLB) is a two and a half storey Victorian villa. It is a highly modelled building with a gothic style turret which forms a 'gateway' into the Village core. The Rowbarge Public House (LLB) is an important building which is located in the northern section of the conservation area. It is probably one of the earliest structures dated early 18th Century, although it has had many alterations. The following groups of buildings, which are highlighted on the Appraisal Map, make an important contribution to the character of the conservation area:

- i) A group of four large houses along St Johns Road; No 20, 22, 26 and 28 (The Grange)
- ii) A pair of houses along Warwick Lane

- ◆ Where formal consent is required, the Council will resist demolition and works to adversely alter all period buildings which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area, particularly those on the Local List. The Council will also give particular attention to protecting public views of the setting of these buildings.
- ◆ Any proposed development should take its design cues from the historic buildings in the conservation area, including the form, scale, materials and elevational detailing, in order to enhance or maintain the character of the conservation area.



Fig 2: No. 20 St Johns Road. An important building reflecting architectural characteristics of the area.

6.2 Predominant Building Types

The majority of buildings in the conservation area date from the late Victorian period. Many of these properties have a similar architectural style. The predominant form is that of wide fronted, detached or semi detached, two story dwellings, under a shallow pitched roof of approx 30°, some with bays to the lower levels and with no accommodation in the roof space. Most properties have simple roofs of hipped; plain construction made from slate and punctuated with chimney stacks to either end. Properties are normally finished with render or clay facing bricks or a mixture of both, with simple architectural ornament including buff coloured contrast patterning on quoins and window heads.

- ◆ Any new developments should take their design cues from existing period buildings in the conservation area and should be appropriate in size, form, architectural detail and material finish to reinforce its character. Extensions or alterations to existing dwellings should closely match their architectural detail and material finish.



Fig 3: A typical pair of Victorian dwellings.

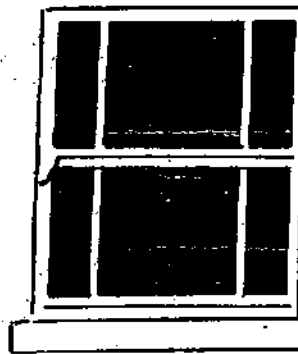
6.3 Windows and Doors

Timber windows are predominately painted white, and are used throughout the area in the form of casement and sash windows. They are normally subdivided into two or four panes with traditional glazing bars.

Doors are of solid construction, some are subdivided with the use of glass. A mixture of different colours are used such as white and green.

- ♦ **Doors and windows with similar proportions and glazing divisions to those characteristic of the area will be required in new developments. Traditional casement and sash windows are appropriate, with traditional subdivided glazing. Property owners are encouraged to retain original doors and windows by undertaking routine maintenance and to repair existing elements rather than replace them with bland modern units. Artificial materials such as UPVC or aluminium are not normally acceptable for doors and window frames. The Council may consider the introduction of further planning controls to protect these features.**

Fig 4: Traditional sliding sash windows are appropriate for new developments.



6.4 Materials and Colour

Most properties are constructed from local red facing bricks or are painted with rough cast render or a mixture of both. Simple buff coloured contrast patterning on quoins, window heads and string courses are commonly used. White paint work is predominately used on windows with doors in a variety of colours.

- ♦ **New developments must use material and colour treatments which are characteristic of the conservation area.**

6.5 Roofs

Roofs are of hipped shallow pitched construction of approx 30° made from slates, some with clay ridge tiles. Brick chimney stacks form an important part of the roofscape normally at either end of the roof.

- ♦ **The profile and material finish of existing roofs should be reflected in new developments.**

6.6 Use of Buildings

There are a variety of different uses within the conservation area. Commercial use is mainly concentrated along St. Johns Road with some residential use. Warwick Lane, Church Road, and St Johns Lye are mainly in residential use.

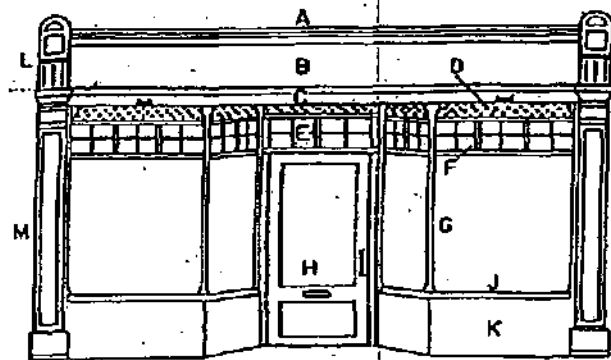
♦ **Development for business use will be restricted to the area along St. Johns Road.**

6.7 Shop Fronts

There is a mixture of shopfront designs in the conservation area. However, only those which incorporate traditional elements enhance the character and appearance of the area.

♦ **Where there is a proposal to either alter a shop frontage or provide a new shop unit within the conservation area, the design should incorporate traditional shop front elements as shown above. The design should also take into consideration the overall architectural design of the building.**

♦ **Lighting if any, should be externally illuminated and discreet. Internally illuminated projecting box signs and fascias will not be permitted.**



A cornice	E fanlight	J sill
B fascia	F transom	K stallriser
C blind box	G mullion	L corbel/console bracket
D grille	H panelled door	M pilaster

Fig 5: Traditional elements of a shop front.

6.8 Shop Signage

There is a mixture of shop signage in the conservation area.

♦ **Projecting signs should be positioned no higher than fascia level and restricted to one per shop. Their depth should be related to the depth of the fascia board. Too many projecting street signs will detract from the conservation area.**

♦ **Traditional painted hanging signs on metal brackets will be more acceptable on older period properties.**

♦ **Advertisements will be restricted to areas below the ground floor fascia level. Signs above the fascia level and on gable ends or flank walls will be resisted.**

♦ **Generally advertisements should be simple, legible and restricted in both size and extent. Multiple signs create visual clutter which generally detracts from the appearance of the building.**

6.9 Boundary Treatment

Many properties directly join the pavement without any intervening boundary. In some locations buildings are set back using a variety of different boundary forms such as hedges and fences.

♦ **Boundary treatments for new developments should reflect the predominant treatment in the area. Where appropriate building frontages should directly join the pavement without any further means of enclosure. Planning consent will not normally be granted for a development which introduces an incongruous style of boundary treatment, or which changes the original pattern of boundary style.**

7. OTHER FEATURES

7.1 Roads and Footpaths

Most roads in the conservation area are constructed of tarmacadam varying between 5-8 metres wide. Half of Church Road has a gravel type surface. Footways are generally between 2-3 metres wide, although there is a lack of footway in some locations. Most of the footway is paved in brick pavers and small paving flags. The colours of materials and surface patterns complement the brick frontages of the buildings. The surface materials used in the lye car park are red and brown pavers with the parking bays indicated in white.

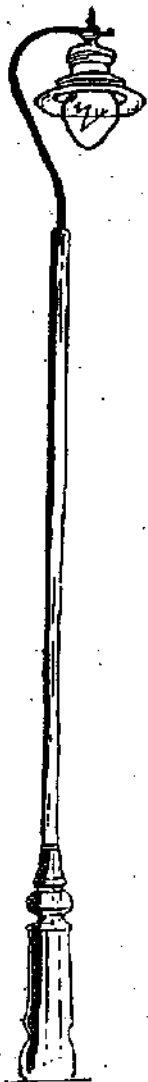
7.2 Open Spaces and Landscape Features

There is one significant open space within the conservation area, which is the Cricket Ground and St Johns Lye. The view can clearly be seen from the houses around the edge of St. Johns Lye and can be glimpsed from the entrance in St Johns Road. A secondary open space is that of an area of open grass in front of the graveyard. This can be viewed from a number of points along Church Road.

The canal forms an important landscape feature running the length of the Conservation Area with footways either side and can be viewed from certain points such as Kiln Bridge. Unfortunately, although the canal is an important feature within the Conservation Area many of the properties along it back onto it ignoring its visual importance.

There are a number of mature trees within the conservation area. A number of these trees are the subject of Tree Preservation Orders and the Council will consider making further orders to protect good specimen trees of amenity value in accordance with the criteria set out in Appendix 2.

- ◆ The Council will resist the felling or undertaking of any inappropriate works to trees which are subject to Tree Preservation Orders (see Appendix 2). The Council will also promote the planting of new trees of suitable species to maintain the areas landscape character.
- ◆ New developments within the area of the Canal should face directly onto the canal side frontage to improve its amenity value.



7.3 Street Furniture

Within the conservation area there is a mixture of street furniture. Traditional style street lamps, traditional style benches, traditional bins and traditional bus shelters are on both sides of St. Johns Road. However, many other elements, such as modern street lamps and parking restriction signs create clutter and detract from the appearance of the street scene.

- ◆ Any new street furniture should complement the character and appearance of the conservation area such as the use of elegant black cast iron equipment. Where new development is proposed, services such as telephone and cable wires should be located underground, and street signs carefully sited.
- ◆ Street furniture within the Canal corridor should use equipment suitable for a Waterway Environment, such as that specified by the British Waterways Board, which is normally painted black and white.

Fig 6: A traditional street lamp.

7.4 Negative Features

There are relatively few negative features within the conservation area. These include:

- The modern street signs
 - The concrete bollards along St Johns Road
 - The garage at the junction of St. Johns Hill Road and St. Johns Road.
- ◆ **Where opportunities arise, either through development schemes or enhancement projects, the improvement of the negative features identified above should be addressed.**

Appendix 1
ST JOHNS CONSERVATION AREA STATEMENT
Character Appraisal and Design Guidance
Summary

1.0 Purpose

This document provides a summary of the main features that make a special contribution to the character and appearance of the St. Johns Conservation Area which the Council seeks to protect and enhance through its statutory planning controls. **Householders and designers seeking to undertake any form of development in the area should ensure their proposals preserve or enhance the areas character, with particular reference to the points made on bold text below. Applicants for Planning Permission and Conservation Area Consent should submit a statement setting out how their proposals will preserve and enhance the character of the Conservation Area in accordance with the guidance. Failure to heed the advice set out in the guide may result in delay or even refusal of the application. Applicants are encouraged to first discuss their proposals with the Council prior to formal submission. A full copy of the Guidance can be obtained from the Council on request.**

2.0 Background of Designation

The Conservation Area was designated in 1991, as shown on the attached map.

The Conservation Area is located southwest to Woking Town Centre and is linked to the building of the Basingstoke Canal. The area developed due to the construction of the canal in the late Victorian period with many properties having a similar architectural style.

3.0 Pattern of Settlement

- The street pattern is formed by St. Johns Road from the junction with Hermitage Road eastwards up to Priors Court and all the land bounded by the canal, Church Road, Warwick Lane, St. Johns Hill Road up to Oak Cottage and St Johns Lye up to the Sports Pavilion. The area of the Basingstoke Canal Conservation Area directly adjacent is also included.
- Plot characteristics are irregular. Some buildings are sited hard against the footway while others are set back within their curtilage.
- Properties are generally detached or semi-detached, with commercial properties generally continuous. Frontages are narrow at 5-12 metres.
- Commercial buildings directly abut the pavement while residential dwellings are normally set back at between 4-7 metres with a boundary.
- There are a number of significant views and important landmarks. Tuu Restaurant forms an important landmark and view, St. John the Baptists Church forms a significant landmark and view, there is an important view over St. Johns Lye, the War Memorial forms an important localised landmark and there are important views from Kiln Bridge.
- **Whilst opportunities for redevelopment are very limited, it is important that the siting, spacing and rhythm of new development respects the existing character of the area and reinforces**

4.0 Building Character

4.1 Important Buildings The following have special interest;

- No.1 (Tuu) St. Johns Road, The Rowbarge Public House and St. John The Baptist Church are Included on the Councils Local List.
- **The Council will resist demolition and works to adversely alter all period buildings in the Area, particularly those on the local list.**

4.2 Building Style

- The predominant building style of the area is that of wide fronted Victorian dwellings. Buildings are generally 2 stories under a shallow pitched hipped roof.
- Timber windows are used in the form of casement and sash. Doors are of solid construction or are subdivided with the use of glass. Many colours are used.
- Many dwellings have similar architectural ornament such as simple buff coloured contrast patterning on quoins and window heads.
- Facing materials are red/orange facing bricks, many painted with rough cast render or a mixture of both. Roof tiles are slate.
- Shop fronts are in a mixture of designs. Those with modern shop fronts constructed from aluminium or UPVC or with large fascia panels, detracts from the character of the parades.
- **New developments should reinforce the character and appearance of the street frontage in terms of height, form, scale, and material finish, and should take their design cues from appropriate buildings in the immediate locality.**

5.0 Other Features

- 5.1 Boundary Treatment Many properties directly adjoin the pavement whilst others are set back using a variety of different boundary forms such as hedges and fences.
- **Boundary treatments for new developments should reflect the predominant treatment in the area.**
- 5.2 Trees There are a number of important trees within the area and a number of these trees are the subject of Tree Preservation Orders.
- **The Council will resist felling or undertaking of any inappropriate works to trees which are subject to Tree Preservation Orders (TPO).**
- 5.3 Canal The Canal forms an important landscape feature within the Conservation Area.
- **Any new developments in the vicinity of the Canal should face it to increase its visual amenity value.**

Appendix 2
Criteria for the Selection of Trees for Protection
By Tree Preservation Order (TPO)

The following criteria on health and amenity value will be used in the selection of trees to be protected by Tree Preservation Orders:

1. Health and Structural Condition

- Condition in relation to type, age and position (ref. BS 5837 – 1991)
- Evidence of; storm damage, root lifting, dead/diseased wood, excessive epicormic growth, weak forks etc. that would reduce selection.
- Type and position of tree is appropriate for its location.
- Reasonable life expectancy without compromising adjacent buildings or infrastructure.
- Need for corrective action to maintain the tree in a safe condition.

2. Amenity Value

a) Visual significance within the landscape.

- Visibility of the tree from surrounding public areas (or those with limited public access).
- Prominence of the tree as a local focal point or landmark.
- Popularity of the location, i.e. busy or seldom visited.
- Contribution to the local landscape character.
- Contribution as an element of a landscape feature, e.g. an Avenue.
- Contribution in screening out an unsightly/incongruous feature in the landscape.

b) Form of Tree.

- Shape and balance of tree in representing typical characteristics of species.
- Particularly unusual or distinctive characteristics of trees form.
- Extent of impact that past works or natural damage have made on the form of the tree.

c) Scarcity

- Rarity of species or particular cultivar.
- Special historical associations with site or locality.

d) Potential Future Benefit

- Value in contribution to future landscape character of area.

3. Other Factors

- e.g. contribution to the setting of an historic building.

Appendix 3

ADDITIONAL PLANNING CONTROLS WITHIN A CONSERVATION AREA

The Council has special planning controls in a Conservation Area in addition to its normal planning powers, as set out below :

1. Demolition

Conservation Area Consent is normally required before any building or structure can be demolished within the area, including certain walls and outbuildings. This provision applies unless the building has a volume less than 115 cubic metres or was constructed under permitted development rights, such as garden shed.

Formal Listed Building Consent is also required for works to demolish or alter the appearance or setting of a Statutory Listed Building.

It is an offence to undertake demolition in a conservation area, where approval is required, or any works to a listed building, without prior consent. Conviction is punishable by fine or imprisonment.

2. Development

The following additional restrictions on development require planning permission:

- Any extension which would increase the volume of an original dwelling by more than 10% or 50 cubic metres (whichever is largest, up to a maximum of 115 cubic metres. All additional buildings within the site over 10 cubic metres, regardless of location are treated as extensions to the dwelling).
- An extension or any kind of alteration to a dwelling which would materially alter the appearance of the roof.
- Cladding the outside of a building with stone, tiles timber, render or any other material which would alter its appearance.
- The installation of a satellite dish on any part of the building visible from the highway

3. Design of New Development

The Council has a special duty when considering applications for development in a Conservation area to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area. All

Proposals will be carefully examined to ensure that all elements of the proposal, particularly; layout, bulk, height, form, elevational design, colour and material finish are appropriate in scale and character for that particular part of the conservation area. In this regard only full detailed planning applications will normally be considered and must show both plan and elevational relationships with adjoining buildings. All applications in conservation areas are advertised to allow for public comment.

4. Minor Alterations and Additions

Small changes to residential buildings such as the alteration or replacement of original windows do not normally require permission unless the property is statutory listed. However, the continued loss of architectural detail can gradually erode the character and appearance of an area through the culmination of minor changes. The Council will monitor the conservation area and if evidence supports will seek the introduction of an Article 4(2) Direction to remove certain rights of permitted development in the area. This would enable such minor matters to be brought under planning control, where this is considered necessary to protect the areas special character.

5. Trees

Anyone proposing to do work on a tree * in a Conservation Area, including; lopping, topping or felling, is required to give the Council six weeks notice of their intentions in writing. This period

allows the Council to inspect the tree so that it can consider if it should be the subject of Tree Preservation Order (T.P.O.). No works can be undertaken on trees which are protected by a T.P.O. until formal consent has been granted by the Council.

* For these purposes a tree must have a trunk with a diameter exceeding 75mm when measured at chest height (1.5 metres above the ground).

It is an offence to undertake works on a protected tree without prior consent which is punishable by fine.

The Council may use the powers given through the Environment Protection Act 1995 to ensure property owners maintain their trees and shrubs if they are causing an obstruction of the highway.