21/01429/TPO 2 Merrow Road

Ward:	**Nonsuch Ward;**
Site:	**2 Merrow Road** **Cheam** **Surrey** **SM2 7LU**
Application for:	**Chestnut tree T16 of TPO 327 located in the front garden - Reduce crown height by up to 2m and lateral spread by up to 1.5m. Thin the crown by 10% and raise the crown by 1.5m**
Contact Officer:	**Jeremy Young**

1 Plans and Representations

1.1 The Council now holds this information electronically. Please click on the following link to access the plans and representations relating to this application via the Council's website, which is provided by way of background information to the report. Please note that the link is current at the time of publication, and will not be updated.

Link: https://eplanning.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?keyVal=QYI75IGYLKA00&activeTab=summary

2 Summary

2.1 This item is for the Planning Committee to consider whether to approve an application for tree works to a tree protected by a Tree Preservation Order. The application is brought before the Planning Committee because the applicant (tree owner) is a Borough Councillor.

3 Site description

3.1 2 Merrow Road is a detached, extended house built by Gleesons in 1936 and is situated in a pleasant residential street. The house is the end of four detached houses of similar style. No. 2 has been extended above the garage.

3.2 The chestnut tree subject of this application is not the common horse chestnut or sweet chestnut species but a more unusual Indian horse chestnut Aesculus indica. It is situated in the front garden approximately 3m from the right front corner of the property. There are no other mature trees of note in the front gardens on this side of the road and some mature street trees in the verge have been removed in recent years and not replaced. The lack of trees makes the Indian horse chestnut a more eye catching tree-scape feature of high visual amenity.

3.3 The front garden of No.2 is mainly covered with a block paved hard standing but with generous landscaped borders containing a scattering of ornamental grasses, shrubs and small trees including *Stipa*, *Pittoporum*, *Ceanothus* and *Cupressus* species. The Indian horse chestnut is located in a raised bed with brick retaining wall. Even though the tree is close to hardscape feature there is no visible damage of concern to these structures.

4 Proposal

4.1 The proposed tree work had to be clarified as it was not defined in sufficient detail in the original application. Officer were satisfied that the further pruning details submitted on 10th November 2021 are clear. Details included a photograph illustrating the proposed reduction level and a specification as set out below:

Chestnut - Crown reduce lateral spread by 1.5m. Reduce crown height by 2m, raise the crown by 1.5m and thin the crown by 10%.

4.2 The reason given for the tree work is because the tree is considered to have grown out of proportion with its setting, growing over the roof and the front of the house. Periodic crown reduction has been undertaken since 1996 as part of the routine maintenance regime and the proposed tree work is a continuation of this maintenance.

5 Comments from third parties

5.1 The application was publicised on 22/11/2021. To date no comments have been received from any third parties.

6 Consultations

6.1 There are no relevant statutory consultees for this tree work proposal.

7 Planning History

Application number	Decision date	Application detail	Decision
14/01786/TPO	21/04/2015	Chestnut tree (TPO327 T16) in front garden, reduce and thin crown.	Permitted
07/01346/TPO	11.03.2008	Crown reduction and crown thinning to chestnut tree in front garden, T16 TPO327	Permitted
96/00444/TPO	19/08/1996	Surgery to Chestnut tree T16	Granted (old code)

8 Planning Policy

National Policy Planning Framework (NPPF) 2021

Core Strategy 2007

Development Management Policies Document November 2015

CS3: Biodiversity and designated nature conservation areas
CS5: The built environment
DM4: Biodiversity and new development
DM5: Trees and landscape
DM8: Heritage assets
DM9**:** Townscape character and local distinctiveness

9 Planning considerations

Background

9.1 This notification is being reported to the Planning Committee because the applicant (the tree owner) is a Borough Councillor.

Tree details and impact on visual amenity

9.2 The Indian horse chestnut is a mature specimen of 16m height with a stem diameter of approximately 900mm at 1.5m above ground level. The tree was probably planted within a decade of the house being built, making it about 80 years old. It is in a good physiological and biomechanical condition. Vitality levels appear high. Although the tree has been crown reduced in the past this has been carried out sensitively and there are no historic pollard points. Re-growth of the branches since the last crown reduction has formed a well- balanced crown of dense branch tracery. There is up to 3m shoot extension growth since the last crown reduction was performed.

9.3 Indian Horse Chestnut are native to Kashmir and the Western Nepal and were introduced to Britain in the mid 19th Century. They are a desirable tree which deserve more widespread planting. Ultimately, Indian Horse Chestnut is a large growing specimen tree which can exceed 20m in height. Juvenile leaves are tomato red in colour and quite striking. They unfurl to form bold leaves with a silver underside giving a lively effect. Anecdotal evidence suggests that Indian Horse Chestnut may be less susceptible to bleeding canker which troubles our more ubiquitous horse chestnut trees. Indian Horse Chestnut thrives on a variety of different soil types.

9.4 This tree work proposal will reduce some of the stature of the tree and will partially denude the crown periphery. However, the dense crown means that it should be possible to prune retaining many growing points and the tree should infill quickly with new growth as it has done in the past.

9.5 The extent of the crown reduction specified in this proposal is not excessive and pruning wounds will be well under the 100mm maximum diameter specified in the British Standard for Tree Work BS3998. This means the wounds should callous over quickly with wound wood. The Tree Officer is not that familiar with the wounding response of this particular species. Horse chestnut normally have a soft heartwood and a poor resistance to fungal invasion. As a consequence they are damaged by large pruning wounds. Inspection of previous pruning wounds on this Indian Horse Chestnut shows a good wounding response where branches have been removed and reduced previously. Officers are therefore confident the proposed tree works will not cause any harm to the health of the tree or have any adverse impact on visual amenity.

9.6 Given the potential ultimate height and spread of the tree and the close proximity to the house, it appears both justified and prudent to undertake periodic containment pruning. In addition crown lifting by 1.5m is proportionate with the overall reduced height and removes the low hanging, potentially more obstructive branches. Crown thinning by 10% is also tolerable works as this will thin some of the over-crowded branch tracery.

9.7 The proposed tree works will have no adverse impact on protected wildlife, and will accord with council planning policy and policy contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

10 Conclusion

10.1 The pruning proposed is justified to manage the portions of a large growing tree in a confined setting. The works specified are unlikely to damage the health of the tree and the impact on landscape amenity will be limited. Accordingly Officers recommend the application should be approved.

11 Recommendation

11.1 Epsom & Ewell Borough Council has considered your application for the above works to protected trees and GRANTS CONSENT to the proposed work subject to the following conditions

Condition(s):

(1) All tree work shall be carried out in accordance with the following specification:

Chestnut tree T16 of TPO 327 located in the front garden - Reduce crown height by up to 2m and lateral spread by up to 1.5m. Thin the crown by 10% and raise the crown by 1.5m

Reason: To ensure that the tree(s) receive the appropriate treatment and that the tree work is of a satisfactory standard to protect amenity in accordance with Policies CS1 and CS5 of the Core Strategy (2007) Policies DM5 and DM9 of the Development Management Policies 2015, British Standard BS 3998 2010 and guidance to protect and enhance the natural

environment contained within the National Planning Policy Framework 2021.

(2) Where whole branches are to be removed and final cuts made close to the trunk or branch union they are to be made as shown in Figure 2 of BS3998:2010.

Where branches are to be shortened back the final cuts are to be made at the correct angle shown in BS3998:2010 and adjacent to a live bud or lateral branch

Reason: In the interests of the trees continued vitality, health and to accord with current industry guidelines and sound arboricultural practice and in accordance Policies CS1 and CS5 of the Core Strategy (2007) Policies DM5 and DM9 of the Development Management Policies 2015.

(3) The agreed pruning operation/s shall comply with the following recommendations contained within BS3998:

4.4 Avoiding damage from tree work operations
7.1 Pruning and related work (General)
7.2 Minimising the potentially undesirable effects of pruning
7.6 Crown Lifting
7.7 Crown reduction and reshaping

Reason: To ensure that the tree(s) receive the appropriate treatment and that the tree work is of a satisfactory standard to protect amenity in accordance with Policies CS1 and CS5 of the Core Strategy (2007) Policies DM5 and DM9 of the Development Management Policies 2015.

Informative(s):

(1) Control of tree pest and diseases - When engaging contractors or arborists to work on your trees, you are advised to ensure that your chosen contractor recognises the importance of bio-security in arboriculture and that they adhere to good industry practice as promoted by organisations such as the Arboricultural Association and the Forestry Commission. Simple measures such as disinfecting equipment and appropriately disposing of arisings can help prevent the introduction and spread of pests and pathogens. A free downloadable guidance booklet on the application of bio-security in arboriculture is available from the Arboricultural Association at https://www.trees.org.uk/Book-Products/Application- of-Bio security-in-Arboriculture-en