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Date: 28th October 2013
My Ref: E/RP/SM7346/11/7
Your Ref:
Contact: S Marshall
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FAO: Karen Jensch

RE: Waltham Church of England Primary School, Waltham on the Wolds (Section 211-Tree preservation order number 151/924/6).

Dear Karen,

Thank you for your enquiry regarding planning consent to remove a beech tree in the grounds of Waltham Church of England Primary School. The tree is a mature specimen which is of a similar age to the school and is located to the rear of the main building. The tree is growing within the tarmac covered playground and adjacent to the recently developed additional classroom space (mobile classroom).

A detailed and in depth Arboricultural report was previously submitted, by YMD Boon Ltd and Waltham on the Wolds Church of England primary school, with the application to reduce the size of the trees canopy (13/00203/TPO). This application was duly approved by Melton Borough Council. The report was carried out by Symbiosis Consulting Ltd. Symbiosis Consulting Ltd are an independent, qualified and reputable arboricultural consultancy firm. Further to this survey, and TPO application, a supplementary Arboricultural report, dated September 2013, has been compiled by Symbiosis Consulting Ltd (as recommended in their initial report). The supplementary report has been submitted with the notice of intent to remove a dead or dangerous tree.

Prior surveys of both this beech tree and other trees on school property have been carried out by Leicestershire County Council's Forestry department. Health and safety surveys have been carried out on a regular cyclical basis to fulfil the statutory obligations of the school and county council. During the construction of additional classroom space (January 2010) a development site survey was carried out using British Standard 5837, 2005: Trees in Relation to Construction – 'Recommendations'

Between 2009 and 2013 the tree has been subject to varying levels of specialist tree surveys. These range from: visual tree assessments; detailed investigation of the structural integrity of the tree stem using a micro fine drill (resistograph); climbing inspections; use of an air spade to remove soil near to the trees base exposing structural roots, with further testing of their integrity using a resistograph. Samples of a fungal body, collected during the consultants assessment dated March 2013, have been sent away for further, detailed, scientific analysis. As has been noted in their report the poor condition of

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the fungal body would not allow for a positive identification, however; all of the features which were still visible fit with the characteristics of giant polypore (*Meripilus giganteus*).

From 2009 the presence of giant polypore (*Meripilus giganteus*) has been visually noted in and around the buttress roots of the tree, as mentioned above a sample has also been analysed by the Forestry Commission. Giant polypore is a decay fungus which affects the structural integrity of large, major, roots. Smaller fibrous roots, which carry moisture and nutrients from the soil into the trees system, are mostly unaffected by the fungus. As the tree is still absorbing moisture and nutrients from the soil its canopy will appear to have good health and vigour. However, the decay pattern by the fungi is such that the major roots, which help to support the tree, can be weakened and their structural integrity lost. Infection by giant polypore will render the tree liable to wind throw (i.e. fracturing, loss and failure of structural roots under wind stress). From 2009 to 2013 the visual spread and colonisation of the fungus (i.e. the size and spread of the fruiting body) has become more extensive. It was first noted in 2009 as a small bracket on one buttress rooted. The most recent pictorial evidence would suggest that there are now numerous brackets at various locations of the trees stem.

The further presence of a second aggressive decay fungus (*Ustulina deusta*: syn *Kreztmaria deusta*) has been noted in the initial report by Symbiosis Consulting Ltd (section 4.4). *Ustulina deusta* is known to decay the main stem of some broadleaved tree species, with beech being particularly susceptible. Prolonged infection by *Ustulina deusta* can lead to a brittle fracture of the trees stem as wood is excessively degraded.

The presence of these two aggressive decay fungi (on their own either fungus could be enough to render the tree unsound) will act in such a way as to render the tree unstable during strong wind events. Prolonged decay by the fungi will be likely to render the tree liable to failure without a strong wind event. Given that there are two buildings located on either side of the tree and a playground directly under the canopy it is quite probable that should the tree fail it will cause significant damage to the surrounding property. Consideration should also be given to the high occupancy rate of both the buildings and the playground. These factors when taken in conjunction equate to a tree which poses a high risk of causing a hazard.

Given all of the information provide in the application, report and supplementary report, as well as my comments above **I would recommend that full consent be given to allow for the felling works to be carried out.**

If you require any further details at this stage then please contact me in the usual way.

Yours sincerely,

Stewart Marshall Tech.Cert (ArborA)
Assistant Arboricultural & Forestry Officer

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