

Highfield Residents Association

Avenue Campus, University of Southampton Tree Works Applications 26/00006/TPO, 26/00007/TPO & 26/00010/TPO

Highfield Residents Association objects to the felling of trees at Avenue Campus unless they are dangerous.

Of particular concern in the application, permission is sought to fell 1 cherry tree and 5 mature ash trees (these stated ash die back). The ash trees (refs. T35, T94, T97-100 in 26/00006/TPO) are mature, very tall and have an imposing positive visual effect on the campus.

These are mature ash trees and their loss will:

- negatively impact the screening between Avenue Campus and adjoining residential roads
- have a detrimental effect on the the visual amenity in general
- remove both screening and habitat of the local area
- The loss of such a larger number of mature tall trees would be significant to residents on the boundary.

Whilst recognising the need for good tree management on the Avenue Campus Site, HRA objects to the felling of mature trees because they are showing signs of ash die-back. The removal for this reason was not supported by the SCC Tree Officer in a similar application in 2024. Nor is it recognised as best practice by the Woodland Trust (of which I am a member) for dealing with ash die back.

The scale of the overall proposed tree felling should be fully scrutinised by the Tree Officer on a tree by tree basis and where possible trees should be preserved to preserve biodiversity corridors and mixed habitats.

No tree replacement planting has been illustrated by the applicant. For any tree felled for safety reasons the replacement tree should be of a significant proportion and maturity.

In summary, we strongly object to these wide-ranging Tree Works. We therefore ask the council to reject the felling of the ash trees (for a second time in 14 months) and any other mature tree that could be saved by careful Arboricultural management. HRA asks that a requirement is made that replacement trees be specified to balance the reductions/removals so that the woodlands of the Avenue Campus are managed according to best practice. The emphasis should be on 'preservation and safety' rather than 'dead or dying'.

Even within the mixed groups application, tree felling rather than maintenance appears to be the norm. This is not acceptable practice unless the trees are dead or dangerous.

HRA asks for consideration that it is now too late in the calendar for such tree management and felling due to the proximity of the nesting season.

HRA objects the Planning Applications as submitted and asks that the Tree Officer is vigilant in his inspection and where possible any tree that could be saved is saved, whether that be a tall mature ash or a small cherry in a mixed group.