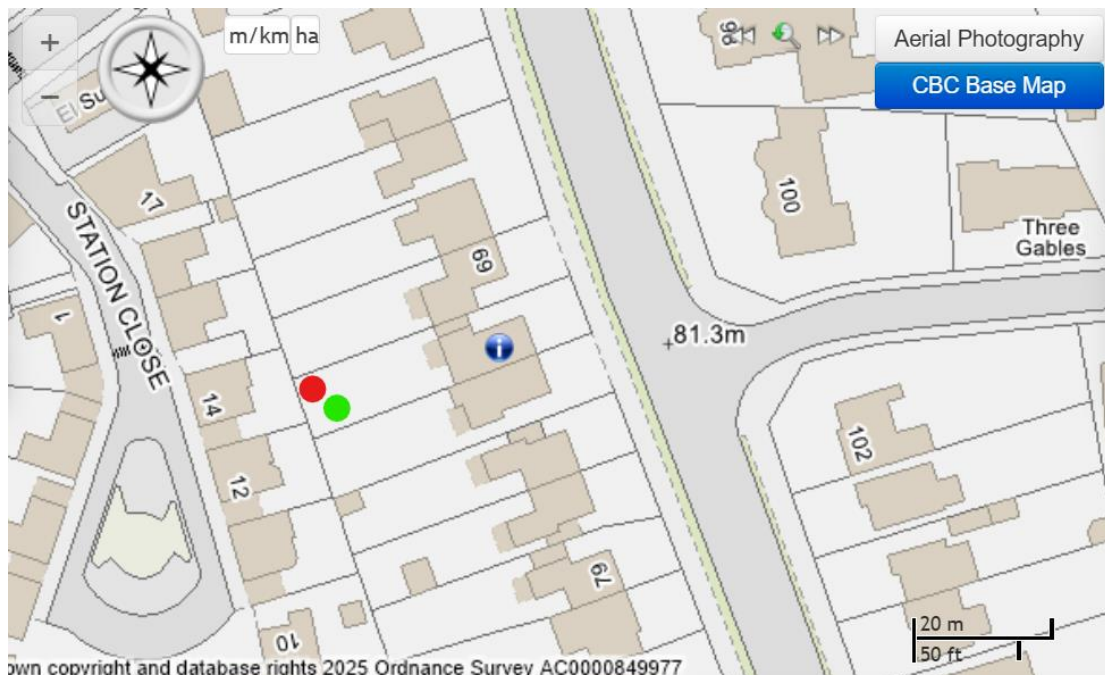


Officer Report

APPLICATION NO: 25/00460/CACN	OFFICER: Mr Sam Reader
DATE REGISTERED: 19th March 2025	DATE OF EXPIRY: 1 st June 2025
DATE VALIDATED: 20th March 2022	DATE OF SITE VISIT: Several
WARD: Leckhampton	PARISH: Leckhampton With Warden Hill
APPLICANT:	Ms Lucy Knibbs
AGENT:	Kyle Marrett
LOCATION:	71 Leckhampton Road Cheltenham Gloucestershire
PROPOSAL:	One stone pine tree to rear of property - fell to ground level

RECOMMENDATION: No objections

Red dot denotes tree to be removed. Green dot denotes tree to be retained. Note, these are approximate location of tree stems, not crown spread:



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1. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND PROPOSAL

- 1.1 Proposal to remove one pine tree from the rear garden of 71 Leckhampton Road. Rear garden is approx. 22m long and 9m wide. Tree is one of two stone pines and the tree to be removed is closer to the rear garden wall and overhangs the rear neighbours' back garden (12 and 14 Station Close).

2. CONSTRAINTS AND RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

Constraints:

Conservation Area

Relevant Planning History:

20/00987/CACN 14th July 2020 No Objections

Pine Trees T1 and T2 - crown lift to 3m over decking and shorten some longer branches by 1 meter and crown thin/clean by 20%

22/00044/CACN 17th February 2022 No Objections

Remove two stone pines

3. POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

Local Plan Policy GI2: Protection and Replacement of Trees: The Borough Council will resist the unnecessary felling of trees on private land and will make Tree Preservation Orders in appropriate cases.

Local Plan Policy GI3: Trees and Development: Development which would cause permanent damage to trees of high value will not be permitted.

Note 1: 'High value' means a sound and healthy tree with at least ten years of safe and useful life remaining, which makes a significant contribution to the character or appearance of a site or locality.

4. CONSULTATIONS

No consultation has been undertaken.

5. PUBLICITY AND REPRESENTATIONS

Number of letters sent	
Total comments received	
Number of objections	
Number of supporting	
General comment	

Previous concerns about this tree were:

- Concerns over eventual height and spread of trees
- Resident does not enjoy or value their presence
- Resident suggests species is inappropriate for the site and alternative species may be more suitable

- Concerns of the risk to the Victorian rear wall (between 71 Leckhampton Road and 12 / 14 Station Close) and the main sewer / drain for Leckhampton Road which runs parallel to the wall through the gardens behind Station Close

Previous objection to the removal of both pines was from a Ward member and was focussed on the protection of amenity and wildlife value.

5.1 Comments Received

6. OFFICER COMMENTS

6.1 Determining Issues

This is a Conservation Area Notification of Intent to fell one pine tree in the rear garden of 71 Leckhampton Road. The applicant is an employee of Cheltenham Borough Council, so for the sake of transparency it was appropriate to bring the decision to Committee Members for determination.

Local policy states that the Council will resist the unnecessary removal of private trees and will make TPOs in appropriate cases (Policy GI2 of the Cheltenham Plan).

Previous Committee decision (2022) to issue No Objections to removal of both trees has now elapsed but trees and site have not changed, nor has local or national policy.

6.2 The site and its context

The tree is situated at the end of the rear garden of 71 Leckhampton Road, roughly to the north of another stone pine. Currently the tree is roughly 6-7m tall with an approximate overall crown spread of 5m. Both trees are stone pine (also called umbrella pine due to their upswept form). They are an evergreen species, native to the Mediterranean and much used for shade and amenity value in towns and coastal regions (they are also the source of pine nuts). They occasionally shed heavy, fist-sized cones. Both of these trees are approximately 25 years old and therefore far from their mature height and spread which could be twice their current size in UK conditions. Reducing the size of the crown of these trees is a limited management method given that only green growth can be removed – it would be difficult to retain their original, pleasing visual amenity should height and spread reduction be undertaken. We estimate that these trees are growing 15cm annually. The tree proposed for removal is growing across the boundary to the west (and to a lesser extent to the north). Should these trees be removed, the retained silver birch, of approximate equal height, will become more apparent. However, this tree has grown in the shade of the pines and its growth and form has been suppressed resulting in a somewhat drawn-up appearance.

6.3 Design and layout

The trees currently have a natural and pleasing aspect but will grow out of proportion to the garden over time, probably within ten to twenty years. The shade cast, as well as tree debris, will increase as the trees continue to grow. Whilst only part of the crown of one tree is visible (with difficulty) from Leckhampton Road itself, they add to the arboricultural

fabric of this part of the conservation area. The current deteriorating state of the decking in the garden of 71 Leckhampton Road is contributed to by the shade and debris drop (including bird droppings) from the trees.

6.4 Impact on neighbouring property

Properties to the north and west will be most affected by the shade cast by these trees, and 12 and 14 Station Close no doubt receive the most debris from them (needles, cones etc). It's not easy to predict future structural damage to boundary walls and infrastructure.

6.5 Access and highway issues

N/A

6.6 Sustainability

The trees have good form, and if left could likely grow to be fine handsome trees. They of course have the benefits of providing wildlife habitat and contributing to the green infrastructure of the area (temperature reduction, carbon storage etc). This species of tree probably has less wildlife value than many native species but it appears that, for example, small birds do adapt to make use of non-native tree species.

The trees probably have around 5-10 years useful life expectancy before one or both grow too large for the garden.

6.7 Other considerations

7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1** This is currently a fine tree but with limited public visual amenity. Previously both trees were proposed for removal and Planning Committee voted to issue a decision of No Objections. This decision has now elapsed (by just over 1 year). Although the loss of the pine would be regrettable, the limited retention span before it outgrows the garden, coupled with its limited public visibility makes a Tree Preservation Order inappropriate. On balance, the Trees Section has no objections to its removal. Given the lack of change in local or national policy relating to tree protection since the previous proposal to remove both pines, the Council's position should be unchanged.