



Waldorf School

Tree Preservation Order Objection

February 2017

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Introduction

This representation has been prepared on behalf of Camphill Estates who wish to object to the blanket Tree Preservation Order (TPO) NO. 238/2016 that has been served on the land at the Former Aberdeen Waldorf School, Craigton Road, Aberdeen.

The reasons given by the Council for making the order are:

- (i) The former Aberdeen Waldorf School site has recently been placed on the open market and presents a development opportunity. The current site is heavily wooded and development is severely constrained due to the extent of the woodland.
- (ii) The former Waldorf School site sits adjacent to Craigton House; a tree preservation order (TPO 73) was served on this property in 1993 in order to reserve trees that were considered to make a significant contribution to the amenity and landscape of the area. Similar to Craigton House the former Waldorf School site makes a significant contribution to the amenity and landscape of the Craigton Road area and is an important landscape feature which has a positive impact in providing a landscaped backdrop and context to newer developments to the south of the site and to the north of Friarsfield Road.
- (iii) The serving of a Tree Preservation Order will allow Aberdeen City Council to consider all future tree work proposals and prevent works that are considered to be unsympathetic. In addition the order will ensure future tree cover in this area of Aberdeen.

In summary, the reasons given for the TPO are 1. That this is now a development opportunity, 2. The trees contribute towards the amenity and landscape of the Craigton Road Area, and 3. The trees provide a landscaped backdrop and context to newer developments to the south of the site. It is considered that the TPO served as a blanket over the whole site is not expedient in the interests of amenity and responses to each of the reasons have been provided in the following sections setting out the reasons for objection to the order in respect of all trees located on the Former Aberdeen Waldorf School, Craigton Road, Aberdeen.

1. Development Opportunity

It is correct that the property has been placed on the market following the closure of the Waldorf School approximately 3 years ago. The School comprised of the following accommodation on a 1.66 Hectare site:

- Sports Hall 736 sq.m GIA
- Main Building 1,079 sq.m GIA
- Kindergarten 275 sq.m GIA
- Science Block 300 sq.m GIA
- Lower School 600 sq.m GIA

There are a large number of trees ranging in maturity and value on the site. However, as a brownfield site with a range of buildings in situ, there is significant potential for reuse and redevelopment of this site without resulting in a loss of trees and it is not the case that development, or a new use, is severely constrained due to the extent of the woodland. In considering any future use the blanket TPO served does not provide the landowner, a future owner or local authority with any greater understanding of the value of the trees on the site or their contribution towards the amenity of the area.

Should there be proposals for an alternative use or a new development then planning approval shall be required and there remain sufficient controls through this process to ensure that development does not result in an unacceptable loss of trees. There is no greater value placed on trees served with a TPO through the Aberdeen Local Development Plan and it is not necessary to place this additional control on the land.

Whilst a TPO does not in itself require an owner to undertake any tasks, there is a duty in perpetuity to secure consent for maintenance work on the protected trees, in this case all trees on the site.



Image of Fallen Tree

In practice, the TPO will place a constraint on dealing with minor works including broken branches, blown out crowns, fungal growths and ivy growing around the main trunk etc. There are trees planted in close proximity in a groups and as can be seen in the image below there is a need to carry out tree work from time to time.

The woodland has been planted and managed by the owners of the land effectively to-date without the requirement for a TPO and it is not considered that anything has changed that necessitates additional control being imposed now.

Section 160 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 provides planning authorities with the power to make a TPO if it appears to them to be expedient in the interest of amenity and / or that the trees or woodlands are of cultural or historic significance. There is no provision within Section 160 for making a TPO for the reason that the property has been placed on the market.

2. The trees contribute towards the amenity and landscape of the Craigton Road Area



Trees along Craigton Road and views of Agricultural Fields

At this part of Craigton Road there are trees that line Craigton Road that do contribute towards the general rural character of the area. It should be noted, however, that there are breaks in the trees with views to surrounding fields and properties on Craigton Road without having a negative impact on the character and amenity of the area. The area is located within the Aberdeen Green Belt and the Local Development Plan serves to protect the rural character of the area.

A TPO in this location is not necessary to retain the amenity and character of the area.



Properties located on Craigton Road



Former Waldorf School Entrance and Private Road

Beyond the point of access to the former Waldorf School Craigton Road becomes a private road and there is no wider public benefit to be gained through the TPO in this area. Also, the Site of the former Aberdeen Waldorf School slopes steeply down from Craigton Road and the trees within the site are not generally visible in passing.

The TPO is not considered expedient to maintain the rural character of the area in the interests of amenity. Should you disagree then it is requested that a more detailed assessment is made to ensure that only those trees along Craigton Road that are contributing towards the amenity should be subject to the TPO.

3. The trees provide a landscaped backdrop and context to newer developments to the south of the site

The development to the south of the former Aberdeen Waldorf School and to the north of Friarsfield Road is under construction. In allocating this site and defining the framework for future development a detailed assessment of the landscape impact of the development was undertaken. The Council has restricted development to the lower and flatter land in the area retaining the upper slopes as Green Belt. The Development Framework for the site identified that "New strategic landscaping will be provided along the northern boundary of the site to provide a soft edge to the development and facilitate its transition to Green Belt. Positioned on the higher ground it will also ensure that the housing is set against it when viewed from the south. It will further provide an opportunity to integrate proposed housing with the link road. The width of this landscaping will avoid a uniform depth and appearance to appear as natural as possible."



Landscaping Plan from Friarsfield Development Framework

Planning permissions have been granted for the development at Friarsfield and Planning Permission P140272 was granted for 119 residential units on the land directly to the south of the former Waldorf School and the associated football pitch. The approved plans reflect the wider Development Framework and include a landscape strip along the northern boundary to the site. The housing fronts away from the northern boundary taking advantage of the views and solar gain to the south.



Approved Site Layout for Land Directly to the South of the Former Waldorf School

Development has been restricted to the lower parts of the site and the landscaping strip along the northern edge of the development have been provided to satisfy the planning authority that there is a sufficient landscape backdrop to mitigate the visual impact of the development. Therefore It is not expedient in the interests of amenity to place a TPO on the former Waldorf School for this purpose. Through the planning process the context for the development at Friarsfield has been effectively been dealt with and the TPO is unnecessary in achieving a landscape background and context to the new development.

Conclusion

The imposition of a TPO affects the site owner's ability to undertake tree work where appropriate without submitting an application for consent. Where this involves works to trees that are not preserved in the interests of amenity then this places an unreasonable burden on the owners of the site and additional costs in managing the land.

Section 160 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 provides planning Authorities with the power to make a TPO if it appears to them to be expedient in the interest of amenity and / or that the trees or woodlands are of cultural or historic significance. There is no provision for making a TPO for the reason that the property has been placed on the market.

The existing rural character of the area is protected by the Aberdeen Local Development Plan and the new developments to the south of the site and to the north of Friarsfield Road have been designed to provide a soft landscaped edge to the development and mitigate the visual impact of the development. It is not considered that there are any reasons that are expedient in the interests of amenity that justifies making this TPO covering all trees on the land at the Former Aberdeen Waldorf School.

It is requested that the Council revoke the TPO that has been served on the land at the Former Waldorf School, Craigton Road. Should the Council remain of the view that a TPO is expedient it is requested that a more detailed assessment be undertaken to identify only those trees that are necessary for the purpose stated.