

# Planning Application: Report of Handling

Reference No. 22/0696/TP



Renfrewshire  
Council

## KEY INFORMATION

**Ward: (1) Renfrew North and Braehead**

**Applicant:**

Mr Alister Milne  
Graham Construction  
Graham Site  
Meadowside Street  
Renfrew  
PA4 8SY

**Registered:**

04 November 2022

Report by Head of Economy & Development

**PROSPECTIVE PROPOSAL:** Removal of ten mature trees and approximately 50 smaller trees / saplings to facilitate construction of drainage line

**LOCATION:** Clyde Waterfront and Renfrew Riverside Infrastructure Project, Meadowside Street, Renfrew

**APPLICATION FOR:** Treeworks covered by a TPO



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## RECOMMENDATION

Grant subject to conditions

Alasdair Morrison  
Head of Economy &  
Development

## IDENTIFIED KEY ISSUES

- The application proposes tree felling to enable the remediation of a historical drain at Blythwood, Renfrew to serve a section of a new road network proposed under the Clyde Waterfront and Renfrew Riverside project. The project is funded through the Glasgow Region City Deal.
- Policy E2 and Policy ENV2 of the Local Development Plan are relevant in the assessment of the application.
- Three letters of objection have been received. These refer to the visual impact of the tree felling and the loss of wildlife habitat and biodiversity.
- A supporting statement advises that the remediation of the drain would enable a reconfiguring of the road which would in turn allow additional trees to be retained, despite a previous consent allowing their removal.
- A scheme of compensatory planting has also been included. This proposes three replacement trees for every mature tree lost and two replacements for every smaller tree / sapling.

# REPORT OF HANDLING FOR APPLICATION 22/0696/TP

SITE ADDRESS	Clyde Waterfront and Renfrew Riverside Infrastructure Project, Meadowside Street, Renfrew
PROPOSAL	Removal of ten mature trees and approximately 50 smaller trees / saplings to facilitate construction of drainage line
RECOMMENDATION	Grant, subject to conditions

PROPOSALS	<p>Tree works consent is sought for the felling of ten mature trees along with approximately fifty smaller trees / saplings within woodland at Blythswood in Renfrew.</p> <p>The tree removal is proposed in order to allow the remediation of a historic drain. It is proposed that the drain would be used in addressing water run-off from a portion of the new road approved as part of the wider Clyde Waterfront and Renfrew Riverside Regeneration Project. The project is funded through the Glasgow City Region City Deal.</p> <p>The use of this drain would allow the approved road to be lowered which would reduce the width of development required to form the road and its embankments. As a consequence, trees that would require to be removed through these works could now be retained.</p> <p>The mature trees proposed for removal to allow the drain to be restored comprise five ash, three sycamore, one beech and one oak. One of the ash trees to be removed has uprooted and is lying <i>in situ</i>. Approximately fifty other smaller trees with a trunk diameter of 200mm or less would also require to be removed. These mostly comprise of sycamore, with some ash, birch and beech included.</p> <p>This report relates to an application that would normally fall within the Council's scheme of delegation to be determined by an appointed officer. However, a request has been submitted by three members, within 21 days of the application appearing on the weekly list, that the matter be removed from the scheme of delegation for determination by the Board. It was considered that the loss of trees and the consequential loss of green space and biodiversity should be discussed in full prior to any decision being made.</p>
SITE HISTORY	<p>Application No: 17/0486/PP</p> <p>Description: The Clyde Waterfront and Renfrew Riverside Project (CWRR) for the construction of an opening bridge across the River Clyde, the construction of the Renfrew North Development Road, new and improved cycling and walking infrastructure and associated landscaping and ancillary infrastructure, and The Stopping-Up of consequential redundant sections of roads, footpaths and accesses.</p> <p>Decision: Granted subject to conditions by Scottish Ministers on 16/11/2018.</p>
CONSULTATIONS	No consultations required.

REPRESENTATIONS	Three letters of representation have been received objecting to the proposals. These raise concerns regarding the effects of the tree loss on wildlife habitats, biodiversity and visual impact on the landscape.
DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES	<p><b>National Planning Framework 4 (Revised Draft – Nov 2022)</b></p> <p><b>Renfrewshire Local Development Plan (2021)</b> Policy ENV2 – Natural Heritage Policy E2 – City Deal Investment Framework</p> <p><b>New Development Supplementary Guidance (2022)</b> Trees, Woodland and Forestry</p> <p><b>Material considerations</b> Renfrewshire Planning &amp; Development Tree Policy - 2022</p>
PLANNING ASSESSMENT	<p>Section 160 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 provides a Planning Authority with power to make a tree preservation order if it is expedient in the interests of amenity or if the trees, groups of trees or woodlands are of cultural or historical significance.</p> <p>The Tree Preservation Order (TPO) at Blythswood was made in 1993 to protect areas of amenity woodland to the east of the former Blythswood House which previously stood on the grounds of Renfrew Golf Club. The treework proposals in this case affect an area of the woodland which is described in the Order as mixed broadleaf and conifer woodland comprising mainly of birch, beech, sycamore, scots pine, oak, alder and willow.</p> <p>The treeworks require to be assessed in terms of their impact on amenity and that of the designation of the TPO for the woodland as well as the policies and guidance applicable for the assessment of treeworks applications.</p> <p>The fourth National Planning Framework (<b>NPF4</b>) although not yet formally adopted, was approved by Scottish Ministers on 11th January 2023. It provides the long-term national spatial strategy for planning in Scotland. It sets out the Scottish Government's current view on delivering sustainable, liveable and productive places through the application of spatial principles. NPF4 is considered to be a material consideration and therefore applying these principles in practice is relevant to the consideration of each proposal and as such each application is being considered taking account of the overarching spatial principles. It is considered that the proposal complies with the overall focus of NPF4.</p> <p><b>Policy ENV 2</b> of the adopted Renfrewshire Local Development Plan (2021) states that proposals should preserve and, where possible, protect trees which are subject to TPOs, while the New Development</p>

	<p>Supplementary Guidance (2022) states that proposals should protect and promote the positive management of trees for their nature conservation interest.</p> <p>As an additional material consideration, the Council's Tree Policy advises that tree felling should only be supported where necessary in the interests of health and safety; where it is necessary and desirable for the continued growth of adjacent trees; or to address a severe adverse effect on the amenity of residential property.</p> <p>While it is recognised that the proposed treeworks do not strictly fall within these tests, the applicant has submitted supporting information outlining that the refurbishment of the drain would be beneficial to the long term health and quality of the protected woodland as well as reduce the treeworks needed that have already been approved for the new road network being delivered as part of the Clyde Waterfront and Renfrew Riverside project which is being funded through the Glasgow City Region City Deal. <b>Policy E2</b> of the Local Development Plan outlines a commitment to supporting the City Deal Investment Framework and is also therefore relevant in the context of this application.</p> <p>A statement submitted in support of the application provides background to the proposed treeworks. This advises that to progress tendering, land acquisition and statutory consents, a "specimen design" for the Clyde Waterfront and Renfrew Riverside project was initially agreed and planning permission granted for this in November 2018. However, as the project has progressed, certain efficiencies have been identified, one of which is the use of a historic drain which takes surface water from rear areas of a nearby industrial plant and Renfrew Golf Course.</p> <p>Investigation of the drain has found that it is no longer functioning properly due to damage at various locations, with areas of ground having collapsed, pipes broken or blocked with tree roots and manholes exposed and covered with debris. The statement advises that this has resulted in ponding around the route of the drain itself. Therefore, to make use of the drain, refurbishment works would require to be undertaken which would also entail the removal of trees along the route of the drain.</p> <p>A site inspection by the application case officer, undertaken during a period of above-average rainfall in November 2022, has observed that there is indeed considerable ponding around sections of the drain, with many of the trees proposed for removal standing in pooled water. The uncovered manholes were also observed during the site visit.</p> <p>On inspection of the trees to be felled it was noted that they are planted at sporadic locations in proximity to the route of the drain rather than in a consistent line. The zone of the proposed felling is also narrow and centrally located within the woodland. As such, any notable visual impact on the wider landscape is likely to be minimal. Additionally, none of the individual trees are observed to be</p>
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	<p>exceptional specimens. Nevertheless, it is recognised that the loss of trees from protected woodland requires sound justification.</p> <p>The supporting statement advises that the 2018 planning approval allowed the felling of various trees within the woodland to support the new road; however, it states that if the existing historical drain can be used, it would enable the road level to be dropped and the width of the road and its embankments to also be reduced. As a result of the reduction in the width of the road and embankments, the number of trees requiring to be felled under the original consent would be reduced. The statement advises in this respect that approximately 70 trees which are already consented for removal would be retained.</p> <p>Should consent be granted for this treeworks application it would result in a net saving in the overall number of trees lost. The statement advises that if the drain cannot be used, the project would require to revert to the original arrangement. The approved treeworks scheme is immediately adjacent to the new road and it is considered that the loss of these trees would have a greater visual impact on the surrounding area and be more costly as well as have a greater carbon impact in comparison to the approval of this alternative.</p> <p>It is also considered that as a consequence of the renovation of the drain, drainage within the woodland should improve by addressing the current ponding issues. This will be of wider benefit to the longer-term quality and health of the woodland.</p> <p>Within the submission the applicant has also set out a re-planting strategy in support of this application. This outlines an intention to plant three trees for every mature tree removed and two trees for each of the smaller trees / saplings removed. A plan submitted by the applicant identifies a series of potential locations for replanting adjacent to the new road, as well as alongside the route of the drain.</p> <p>The replacement trees would comprise a mixture of heavy standards, standards and feathereds. They would consist of species which are native to Scotland, comprising scots pine, hawthorn, bird cherry, hazel, sweet cherry, blackthorn, rowan and silver birch. These would accord with the chosen replacement species identified in a woodland management plan approved under the previous 2018 application, but with the addition of silver birch which the replanting strategy states is already prominent within the woodland and also beneficial in terms of its quick-growing nature and ability to withstand wet ground conditions.</p> <p>Inspection of the route of the drain notes that native silver birch is especially prominent towards the southern end of the drain. It is also noted that birch is referenced in the TPO. Its inclusion in the replanting scheme is therefore appropriate. The applicant also makes clear that the proposed replacement planting would be over and above the replanting which has already been committed to under previous permissions.</p>
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	<p><b>Conclusion</b></p> <p>Policy E2 of the Renfrewshire Local Development Plan (2021) sets out a commitment to supporting the City Deal Investment Framework. Planning permission has previously been granted for the wider Clyde Waterfront and Renfrew Riverside Project. This has accepted that some tree loss is inevitable in supporting the wider objectives of the scheme and the planning permission included consent for tree felling, together with replanting and woodland management measures. While this current treeworks application would include the removal of healthy trees, it reflects a refinement of the overall scheme which is considered to offer an overall more sustainable solution.</p> <p>The application would support a more efficient drainage system for the new road network that would result in an overall saving of around 10 trees that would otherwise be lost through a previous consent. The application also demonstrates that this solution would reduce the wider impact more generally of the new road network by allowing a drainage solution which would enable the road and embankments to be constructed to a reduced width and height. Furthermore, the remediation of the drain should also provide longer-term benefits to the woodland in terms of addressing current ponding issues and a commitment has been made to carry out replacement planting with native species which takes regard of the woodland management plan previously agreed.</p> <p>Three letters of objection have been received in relation to this application and have formed part of the consideration of the proposal. However, given the above assessment it is not considered that the concerns raised are sufficient to justify refusal of this planning application.</p> <p>It is therefore considered that the proposed treeworks are acceptable in this instance as they would support an improvement of the wider Clyde Waterfront and Renfrew Riverside scheme which would save trees overall, provide longer-term benefits to an existing area of protected woodland, as well as support a more sustainable drainage network for the wider project.</p>
RECOMMENDATION	Grant subject to conditions

### Reason for Decision

The proposal accords with the provisions of the Development Plan and there were no material consideration which outweighed the presumption in favour of development according with the Development Plan.

### Conditions

1. That within three months of the date of consent a detailed scheme of compensatory tree planting detailing the position, size and species of each individual tree and including a timetable for the replanting shall be submitted and approved in writing by Renfrewshire Council as Planning

Authority. The replacement tree planting shall thereafter be implemented in accordance with the agreed scheme and timetable.

Reason: In the interests of natural heritage and continuity of tree cover in the area.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 - Background Papers  
For further information or to inspect any letters of objection and other background papers, please contact Andrew Mackenzie on 0141 487 1375