

12 October 2026

Reference: HGY/2026/2776

Site: Goldsmith Court, Shepherds Hill, N6 5AE

Applicant: Hornsey Housing Trust

Agent: Forbes Tree Care Ltd

Dear Daniel,

Objection to significant tree works at Goldsmith Court, N6 5AE (HGY/2026/2776) in the Highgate Conservation Area

I object to the proposed works to T1 plum, T2 goat willow and T3 birch, as notified on 7 October 2026 (the "Notice"). I ask that the Council refuse the Notice as it relates to T1, T2 and T3 and make a Tree Preservation Order ("TPO") before the six-week notice period ends on 18 November 2026. In more detailed terms, I ask that the Council:

1. Make a TPO covering T1, T2 and T3, before 18 November 2026.

T1, T2 and T3 are established trees visible from Shepherds Hill and at least one is visible from Archway Road. They contribute to the Highgate Conservation Area, soften the utilitarian Goldsmith Court and benefit the busy junction beside them. Relevant policies support their retention.

I defer to the Council on whether an order should be made for T4 ash.

2. T1 plum: I do not object to clearance pruning in principle, but ask the Council to refuse the request to "Prune branches close to building to get 2.5m clearance" until the Applicant states the tree's current distance from the building.

Without it, the works could mean anything from light trimming to heavy cutting.

3. T2 goat willow: refuse the request to "Re-pollard at 5m as part of cyclical maintenance" until the Applicant supplies a pollarding history and a timeframe that avoids autumn, the least favourable time for pollarding (see "Information missing from the Notice").

4. T3 birch: refuse the request to "Reduce crown by 3m on all aspects to restrict root growth and reduce lean towards the busy road junction".

The cut is heavy for a birch, per Arboricultural Association guidance, and the Applicant gives no evidence of root growth problems or lean (see "Information missing from the Notice").

5. Consider the cumulative effect of the significant tree work to this corner of the Highgate Conservation Area.

Taken together, a significant tree works programme is proposed.

Instead, the Applicant should consider a narrower scope of works. For example, thinning out the crown by 25% or removing the parts of branches of T3 that obstruct a street sign.

The trees contribute to the Highgate Conservation Area

The trees contribute to the character and appearance of the Highgate Conservation Area, and, in my view, they soften a building that adds little to it. The Notice records that the trees stand in a conservation area. Goldsmith Court, Shepherds Hill lies within the sub-areas of the Highgate Conservation Area.

The Council must give special attention to preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area when it exercises planning functions (section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990). That obligation applies to the question of whether a tree merits protection ([UK Government TPO Guidance](#), paragraph 36-119). The Council's appraisal of the Highgate Conservation Area records that Shepherds Hill is "characterised by ... tree line[d] streets" ([Highgate Conservation Area Appraisal](#), paragraph 8.6.1).

In my view, Goldsmith Court is a utilitarian block whose bulk and detailing add little to the street scene. The trees on the frontage soften the block and screen it from Shepherds Hill. The significant tree work proposed would expose more of the building and thin that screen. At this corner the trees carry more of the conservation area's character than they would beside a building that contributed more, and I ask that the Council weigh that in its assessment.

The gardens at Goldsmith Court are described as a positive contributor to the Highgate Conservation Area. The redeeming feature of Goldsmith Court is its "attractive grounds". See [Appraisal](#), paragraphs 8.4.5 and 8.8.1.

The trees bring environmental and traffic calming benefits, and Haringey Council supports tree coverage

The trees bring environmental benefits. This is noted in London Plan (2021) (G7, [paragraph 8.7.1](#)): "Trees and woodlands ... help to trap air pollutants, add to amenity, provide shading, absorb rainwater and filter noise." This is also reflected in Haringey's [Tree and Woodland Plan](#) (page 12-15) and Haringey's [website](#). The significant work proposed to the trees risks undermining these environmental benefits.

The trees also benefit the busy Shepherds Hill-Archway Road junction. The Trees and Design Action Group's guide [Trees in Hard Landscapes](#) (2014) recognises "the role trees can play in facilitating traffic calming", particularly "at junction corners". The trees on this corner frame the street, soften the traffic environment for people walking past and help to calm a busy junction (see Annex 3). The significant work proposed would meaningfully weaken those benefits.

The Council supports increasing the canopy cover of trees, but the proposed works run counter to that goal. The Council's [Biodiversity Action Plan](#) (2023) lists as an action: "To increase tree canopy cover in Haringey from 25% (2020) to 30%" (page 33). The proposed works, particularly the pollarding (T2) and 3m crown reduction (T3), run counter to the Council's goals.

The Council supports planting trees on the footpath of Shepherds Hill (and elsewhere) through Trees for Streets. Recently, a Trees for Streets tree was planted in front of the allotments that abut Goldsmith Court (see Annex 2). Tree coverage over a footpath is an asset, not a reason for pruning, contrary to the suggestion given for T3.

The Council should make a Tree Preservation Order for T1, T2 and T3

The Council's [Tree and Woodland Plan](#) (2022) states as an objective: "Ensure that trees on private land have the best protection through the making of Tree Preservation Orders" (page 3). Making an order for T1, T2 and T3 would give effect to that objective.

The Council can make a TPO if: "if it appears to them to be 'expedient in the interests of amenity to make provision for the preservation of trees or woodlands in their area'." ([UK Government TPO Guidance](#), paragraph 36-005; Town and Country Planning Act 1990, section 198).

T1, T2 and T3 meet the amenity test. The Notice demonstrates the expediency.

Amenity. [UK Government TPO Guidance](#) (paragraph 36-008) asks the Council to assess amenity by weighing visibility from a public place, size and form, future potential, contribution to the landscape and, in a conservation area, contribution to the character or appearance of the area.

- **Visibility.** T1 (plum), T2 (goat willow) and T3 (birch) can be seen from Shepherds Hill and at least one can be seen from Archway Road.
- **Size and form.** All three are established trees and are larger than the Gonnerman commercial building on the Shepherds Hill-Archway Road junction (see Applicant's photos).
- **Future potential.** The Notice cites no disease, decline or defect in any of the three trees.
- **Character of the conservation area.** See "The trees contribute to the Highgate Conservation Area" above.

Expediency. [UK Government TPO Guidance](#) (paragraph 36-010) states that an order may be expedient where there is a risk of pruning that would significantly affect amenity, that the risk need not be immediate, and that development pressures can justify an order. It also says an order is unlikely to be needed for trees under good arboricultural management. Relevantly:

1. **The risk is current and real.** Works to the three trees are notified. Once the six weeks pass, the Applicant may carry them out at any time within two years without further reference to the Council.
2. **The proposals depart from good practice.** The Arboricultural Association, an industry association, rates birch as having "poor" tolerance to hard pruning and notes that it is "prone to bleeding" ([Guide to Tree Pruning](#)). A reduction of 3 metres on all aspects of a birch (T3) is a heavy cut for a species that tolerates it poorly. The Notice sets no season for pruning the plum (T1), where the [RHS notes](#) summer is better, and it does not give the height and spread that would remain after the T3 reduction.
3. **The trees are not under regular management.** The last notice of works to any tree at Goldsmith Court was in 2005 ([CON/2005/0350](#)).
4. **The site has redevelopment potential.** Haringey has listed Goldsmith Court, with the adjoining commercial premises, as ripe for development and capable of accommodating 37 homes ([Brownfield Site Register](#), site reference 17140361; [Site Allocations DPD](#) (2017) page 102). The [UK Government TPO Guidance](#) recognises development pressure as a reason to protect trees before a scheme comes forward (paragraph 36-010).

An order would let the Council decide any pruning on a full application, with a precise specification, a stated reason for each tree and conditions on method and season.

In any case, it would be appropriate “to proactively make [Tree Preservation] Orders as a precaution” ([UK Government TPO Guidance](#), paragraph 36-010).

Information missing from the Notice

The Notice does not give the Council enough to judge the proposals for T1, T2 and T3. [Haringey's Guidance](#) note for this form asks for "precise and detailed information", a sketch plan showing the precise location of the trees, "a full and clear specification of the works", and "evidence to support your case".

All that has been supplied is a four-line schedule, a Google Maps screenshot and imprecise photos. The gaps are:

1. **No plan.** Without a sketch or location plan, neither the Council nor stakeholders can confirm which trees T1 to T4 are, or how far each stands from the building and the road. Section 211(3)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 calls for "sufficient particulars to identify the tree". Notably, the Google Maps screenshot lacks the precision of the example plan in [Haringey's Guidance](#).
2. **No scope for T1.** "Prune branches close to building to get 2.5m clearance" gives no count of branches, no cut diameters and no present distance. [Haringey's Guidance](#) treats "cut back" and "lop" as too vague, and "prune branches" is no more precise.
3. **No pollard history for T2.** "Re-pollard at 5m" needs the date of the last cut, the cutting cycle and the position of the existing pollard heads. The [RHS](#) notes that pollarding "is usually done annually, and would need to be carried out every few years to avoid potential problems", so the cutting history matters. The RHS also notes that "The least favourable time for pollarding is the autumn, as decay fungi may enter the pruning cuts". The Notice gives no timing for the work, and it is now autumn, the least favourable time. Photographs of the existing pollard points would show whether the cutting cycle has been kept up.
4. **No information on how close T1 is to the building. The Notice cites pruning by reference to the proximity to the building, but provides no information on how close the tree currently is to the building.** It is not possible to assess how much of the tree would be lost or any risk to the building (if any) posed by the tree.
5. **No evidence for the root growth (T3). The Notice cites "restrict root growth" (T3).** The Applicant supplies no evidence of problems with root growth, such as a drainage survey, and does not explain how a crown reduction would restrict root growth. If the root-growth reason relates to damage to the building, the Notice also lacks the reports that would normally support it, such as a structural engineer's report, and there is not even an attempt to provide a photo.
6. **No evidence for the lean (T3).** The Notice cites a "lean towards the busy road junction" (T3) but supplies no measurement or photograph of it. Annex 1 shows that any lean is over the footpath, not the road, and a tree over footpath is no reason to reduce the crown by 3m.

I ask the Council to request the missing information, and refuse the Notice as it relates to T1, T2 and T3 if it is not forthcoming. If the Council does not make an TPO, I ask it to invite the Applicant to revise the specification along the lines set out above.

Thank you for considering these matters.

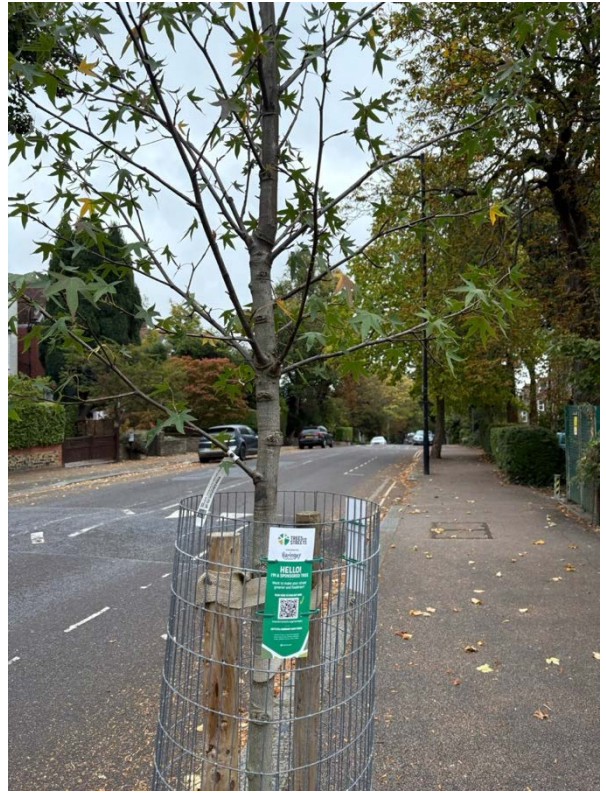
Yours sincerely,
Alexander F

Annexes: Photos of trees viewed from Shepherds Hill taken on 12 October 2026

Annex 1: Photo from Shepherds Hill looking down towards Archway road. Note, this shows that Goldsmith Court trees do not overhang the road, only the footpath.



Annex 2: Photo showing recently planted tree on Shepherds Hill as part of Haringey's "Trees for Streets" programme. The tree covers part of the footpath.



Annex 3: Photo showing T1, T2 and T3 visible from the Shepherds Hill-Archway Road junction

