

20/00067/TPO Comments on 28th May letter from Simon Holmes [published on SCC website 12.6.20]:

Please note this letter of 28th May adds no further direct assessment information to that provided in the letter by Simon Holmes of 24th March, which added no new observation or assessment to the table below.

1. No reference or explanation is made for the following recommendations (made after storms Ciara and Dennis is given) having been altered:

Tree number	Species	Height (m)	Crown Spread (m)	DBH (mm)	No of stems	Observation	Recommendation	Reference
T119	Monterey Pine	264	20	1200	1	1 large limb has failed and fallen onto SIAL land blocking walkway. Had this limb failed on the other side of the tree it would have smashed through the roof of the house behind. The limb was inspected and showed signs of low SULE (as previously reported) and the other limbs are expected to be in a similar condition, a large % of the remaining limbs are hanging over private property and this constitutes immediate risk of harm given the very recent limb failure. Furthermore the Marihill Cope site has been closed off due to the presence of these dangerous trees however increasingly local residents are breaking the fences down to gain access and walking underneath these limbs. The airport has done everything practicable to ensure members of the public do not access the site and are informed by use of signage what the risk is. However they do still gain access which further constitutes a immediate risk of serious harm.	Removal of deadwood and all limbs hanging over private property or the permissive path	Photo 1
T120	Monterey Pine	222	20	1200	2	1 large limb has failed from the similar aged adjacent tree (T119) and fallen onto SIAL land blocking walkway. The limb was inspected and showed signs of low SULE (as previously reported) and the other limbs on this tree are expected to be in a similar condition. A large % of the limbs on this tree are hanging over private property and this constitutes immediate risk of harm given the very recent limb failure. Furthermore the Marihill Cope site has been closed off due to the presence of these dangerous trees however increasingly local residents are breaking the fences down to gain access and walking underneath these limbs. The airport has done everything practicable to ensure members of the public do not access the site and are informed by use of signage what the risk is. However they do still gain access which further constitutes a immediate risk of serious harm.	Removal of deadwood and all limbs hanging over private property or the permissive path	
T124	Monterey Pine	206	24	1200	2	1 large limb has failed from the similar aged adjacent tree (T119) and fallen onto SIAL land blocking walkway. The limb was inspected and showed signs of low SULE (as previously reported) and the other limbs on this tree are expected to be in a similar condition. A large % of the limbs on this tree are hanging over private property and this constitutes immediate risk of harm given the very recent limb failure. Furthermore the Marihill Cope site has been closed off due to the presence of these dangerous trees however increasingly local residents are breaking the fences down to gain access and walking underneath these limbs. The airport has done everything practicable to ensure members of the public do not access the site and are informed by use of signage what the risk is. However they do still gain access which further constitutes a immediate risk of serious harm.	Removal of deadwood and all limbs hanging over private property or the permissive path	
T166	English Oak		8	300	1	Tree has fractured in the storms and dangerously leans over path towards private property	Fell tree to safe height to remove risk of further failures.	Photo 2
T167	Larch		6	300	1	Tree has failed in the storms and now is uprooted with dangerous lean	Fell tree to safe height to remove risk of further failures.	Photo 3
T163	Beech	26	20			Fungal fruiting body east, west & south sides, triple stem inclusion at 2.5m AGL.	Fell to ground level	
T145	Scots Pine	16	7			Dead heavily suppressed.	Fell to ground level	
T142	Scots Pine	25	10			Suppressed by adjacent tree, bias to north east, minor deadwood, sparse canopy, stem decay.	Fell to ground level	
T212	Birch	10	0	500	1	Dead windblown tree, hung up in crown of T201.	Fell to ground level	
T219	Sycamore	16	8	300	3	Major dead wood throughout crown. Epicormic growth on root crown. Ivy clad stems - unable to inspect. Dog-legged stems. Sooty Mould over lower trunk. Leans over path.	Fell to ground level	
T221	Common Ash	10	8	400	1	Tree recently snapped out at 10m. Top section hung up in crown of adjacent tree	pollard to 8m monolith	
un marked	Oak					Recently snapped out limb requires removal	removal of limb	photo 4
un marked	Pine					Recently snapped out limb requires removal	removal of limb	photo 5
un marked	Leylandii Cypress					Recently snapped stem requires removal	removal of stem	photo 6

This was in a letter from Dan Townsend of the airport to the Mr. Claydon Bone (City tree officer) dated 18th February.

Felling for T119, T120 and T124 is **not** mentioned only “removal of all deadwood and all limbs hanging over private property or the permissive path”.

Who asked for these recommendations to be changed and why is this not mentioned in this timeline of 28th May?

2. Page 1 para3:

i) The report from 24th March contains the same assessment observations as that from the 17th February [published by SCC as supporting information to 20/00067/TPO on 8 April] yet has different recommendations (3/3 fells and 2/3 fells respectively). **Why is this disparity not addressed in the current timeline?**

ii) Decay detection results. No decay is recorded for T119 or T120 (17th February - appendix 4).

Why is this not mentioned in the body of the report or this timeline?

iii) T124 has decay recorded on one occasion (measurement 067, ground level south) but not on another (measurement 068, ground level south). **Why is this not mentioned?**

3. Page 2 para. 7: “This application [20/00062/TPO] was subsequently withdrawn by the Council.”

Why was this application withdrawn?

4. Page 4 “they are approximately 160 years old”.

This not only contradicts earlier statements by Simon Holmes that the trees were between 108 and 160 years old (17th February report), but is incorrect. All evidence points to them being planted around 1912:

i) They are not indicated on the OS 25 inch/mile map of 1908 but are on the 1931 map.

ii) The first Baron Swaythling (owner of Townhill Park House and founder of the Samuel Montagu Bank) died in 1911. It is common for the bereaved family (then headed by the 2nd Baron Swaythling and his wife - from the Goldsmid banking family) to commemorate the dead (particularly in his Jewish faith) by planting trees.

iii) Most other planting in Townhill Park House dates from this time.

iv) The sinking of the Titanic in 1912 with the loss of life of a likely family banking associate (Benjamin Guggenheim) and the ship’s connection to Southampton may have given added impetus to such commemoration.

v) A companion Monterey just to the east of T119 was felled (it would seem illegally) when the nearby ‘infill’ bungalows were erected - reportedly ~ 2000/2003. The tree rings would indicate that this tree was at most 90 years old when felled therefore planted ~1912.

5. The age and history of these trees not only makes them iconic but are of great importance also to their amenity value. The CAVAT (Capital Asset Value of Amenity Trees) system has been used to help establish the value of Southampton’s trees (University of Southampton and SCC 2017). **Why was CAVAT not used to calculate the value of these 3 trees?**

In addition, these trees contribute to reducing the effects of climate change through carbon sequestration and avoidance of water run-off and flooding. These two factors would increase their value further. The UoS study says that Southampton needs more of these large mature trees. **Why was this not mentioned in this report?**

6. Risk is mentioned a number of times but no attempt at quantification of this is made (for example by use of the QTRA [Quantitative Risk Assessment Analysis tool]), leaving only an ill-defined and subjective evaluation. This is simply not good enough.

i) **What empirical evidence is there for any tree-related injuries in the Copse over the last 40 years?**

ii) What empirical evidence is there that use of the Copse would be deleteriously affected by the public’s awareness of different estimated risk levels e.g. 1:1,000, 1:5,000, 1:10,000?

7. Page 5 para 4: “Diverting the access road may be possible. but construction work would result in damage to trees along the new route.” *An access **road** is not necessary. The footpath could easily be linked to the network of existing and paths within the body of the Copse (shown on maps from 1931 and extended in 1941 and used since then).*

8. Page 5 para 8: “There are few locations which provide any direct views of the five trees identified for felling.” **Simply wrong.** The trees can be seen easily from The hill to the east of Hatch Grange (West end) ~ 1.5 km, Copsewood Road (next to Bitterne Park school) ~1km and (in winter) the Itchen Valley Country Park (near the Fareham/Eastleigh railway line ~ 2km). As the pines are evergreen they are even more visible in winter.



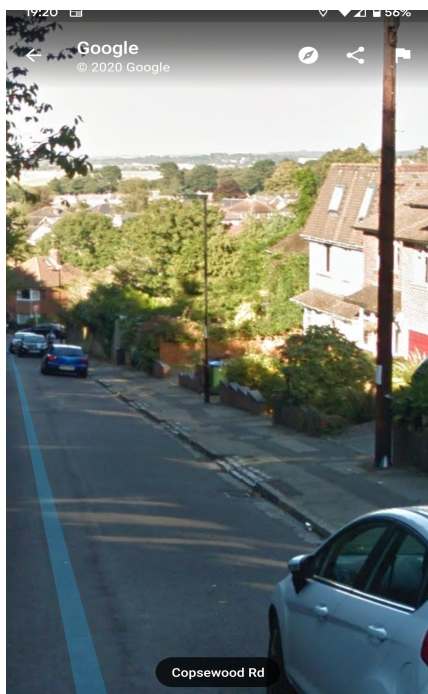
Meggeson Avenue 1976. Saints FA cup win parade. Marlhill Copse on horizon



T119 (centre) from Frog’s Copse ~0.5 km. June 2020



2003 from Copsewood Road (next to Bitterne Park School)



Dell Road June 2020. Marlhill Copse is the last line of trees before the airport temporary mortuaries (tent-like structures in the middle of the photo)

9. Page 6 para 2: “Those who live within the adjacent properties to the trees being felled would also notice the tree loss, which would have the effect of increasing their light levels.”

The trees are to the north of the houses therefore do not interfere with direct light levels.

10. Page 6 para 7: “the felling of [these] trees does not affect the special character of the woodland”

*The special character of the woodland has been heavily influenced by these Monterey pines. The very special character of this woodland is that it is wild, unusual and (whether beneficial to indigenous species or not) has **not** been managed for a long time. There are enough sanitised country parks in the locality already. Since autumn 2019 the airport has started to systematically spoil the special nature of this woodland.*

This report is not only misleading but inadequate. A decision based on it would be unsound.

PROW should defer a decision until a full, thorough and independent expert report is available.

Gareth Narbed
15.6.20