

Re: Planning Consultation - case ref: 26/0007



Drewett, Pat (Elected Member)

To NCC - Planning

Cc Ostler, Marnie (Planning Officer)

Retention Policy 7 Year Delete (7 years)

Expires 17/01/2033



Mon 14:28

PROPOSAL: FELLING OF GINKGO BILOBA TREE PROTECTED BY THE
SHRUBBERY CONSERVATION AREA SITE: 12 Westfield Road Newport
NP20 4ND APPLICATION 26/0007
TYPE: Trees in Conservation Areas

Good Morning Marnie,

I am writing to object to the proposed felling of the Ginkgo Biloba tree located at 12 Westfield Road. I urge you to consider this matter carefully, that unless it can be clearly demonstrated, by independent expert assessment, that the tree is diseased beyond recovery or poses an imminent and unavoidable risk to public safety, then it should be retained.

As you know, the Ginkgo Biloba is not an ordinary tree. A **Ginkgo Biloba** is a very unusual and ancient type of tree, famous for its fan-shaped leaves and incredible resilience. It is one of the most remarkable living organisms on Earth - a true *living fossil* whose lineage stretches back more than 200 million years.

This species existed long before human civilisation, before mammals dominated the planet, and even before the dinosaurs themselves. To fell such a tree without overwhelming justification is to erase a direct, living link to deep natural history that cannot be replaced within any human timescale.



What makes the ginkgo especially precious is not only its age as a species, but its resilience and dignity. Ginkgo trees are renowned for their exceptional resistance to disease, pests, pollution, and environmental stress. They thrive in cities where many other species fail, quietly cleansing the air, stabilising the soil, and offering shade and calm to generations of people. Their survival following the atomic bombing of Hiroshima - where several ginkgo trees regenerated after the devastation - stands as a profound symbol of endurance, renewal, and hope. Few living things carry such meaning.

The aesthetic and cultural value of this species is equally significant. The ginkgo's distinctive fan-shaped leaves are instantly recognisable and universally admired. Each autumn, the tree transforms into a luminous cascade of gold, a seasonal event that brings beauty, wonder, and a sense of continuity to the surrounding community. This is not merely visual decoration; it is an emotional and psychological benefit, a reminder of rhythm, patience, and the quiet power of nature in an increasingly fragmented world.



From an environmental and practical standpoint, the case for preservation is even stronger. *Ginkgo biloba* trees are long-lived, stable, and structurally sound. They are far less prone to sudden limb failure than many commonly planted species and are widely regarded as safe urban trees when properly maintained. Routine pruning, monitoring, or targeted management should always be preferred to outright removal. Felling a healthy ginkgo is not a precautionary act — it is an irreversible one. Importantly, the loss of such a tree cannot be meaningfully mitigated by replacement planting. A sapling does not replace a mature ginkgo that may have taken decades, or even centuries, to reach its current form. The ecological services, heritage value, and emotional presence of this tree are unique and non-transferable. In a time of accelerating climate change, biodiversity loss, and widespread removal of mature trees, decisions such as this carry moral weight. We are not merely managing land; we are acting as stewards for future generations. To remove a healthy and historically significant tree for reasons of convenience, development pressure, or speculative risk would be a profound failure of that responsibility.



As you know, the **Shrubbery Conservation Area** is a designated historic and architectural zone recognised by **Newport City Council** for its special character that contributes to the city's heritage and sense of place. As with other conservation areas in Newport, it is protected under planning policy so that changes — from building alterations to streetscape works — must preserve or enhance its distinctive appearance and historic value. An **Article 4(2) Direction** applies here, meaning many external changes that normally don't need planning permission now *do* require approval, helping safeguard the area's character. All trees in the area are also protected from unauthorised work.

For all these reasons, I respectfully request that permission to fell this Ginkgo Biloba tree be refused unless clear, evidence-based proof is provided that the tree is irreversibly diseased or presents an immediate and serious danger that cannot be mitigated by any reasonable alternative. Preservation should be the default position, not the exception.

I ask you to choose caution, care, and respect for life that has endured for millions of years — and to allow this extraordinary tree to continue standing, growing, and enriching the lives of those who encounter it.

Yours faithfully,

Pat

Councillor Pat Drewett

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